

How Mature is Your Emergency Response Program?

Situation:

You are away at a conference today. You just received a call from your office informing you that a major regional disaster has just occurred. The call was from your assistant who is frantic because everyone is asking questions. Another staff member is at your office, and he is now calling you on your cell phone. Once he is able to get through to you, you must keep this connection open because the telephone network is overloaded. The following are the questions he asks:

INSTRUCTIONS: Place an X in front of each question for which you **DO NOT** have a ready answer.

X = Don't Know

- _____ 1. Everyone is scared, and they don't want to stay in the building. Who should decide whether we need to evacuate?
- _____ 2. Who should inspect the building for structural damage?
- _____ 3. When and how will we know that it is safe to let the employees back in?
- _____ 4. Bookshelves, PC's, and file cabinets are strewn all over the floor. Windows are also broken. Who should we get to repair the damage?
- _____ 5. Toner and other hazardous materials have spilled. We know they are considered hazardous, but we don't know what to do to clean them up. We can't get through to anyone to report the spill.
- _____ 6. Some of the employees want to go home to check on their families. Can they leave? They want to know if they will get paid for the rest of the day.
- _____ 7. Employees at one of your other locations have been told they cannot go back into their building. What do we do with them? If we send them home, do they get paid?
- _____ 8. The building maintenance people need to buy lumber to board up the broken windows, and tarps to protect the equipment from sprinkler damage. We can't reach our normal suppliers. The few suppliers who are open will take cash only. How do we get it?
- _____ 9. Several of the managers we need to restore the business have children at school which they must pick up. Can they bring them back here? Who knows how to set up a shelter?

- _____ 10. The radio is telling us major freeways are blocked, and people at work should not attempt to go home yet. Our electricity is out. Do we have any emergency food, water, and other supplies? Where are they?
- _____ 11. We are starting to get calls from our other locations. Who do you want to take damage reports? What should they do with them?
- _____ 12. Who should prioritize what we try to reopen first? What are the most vital functions we should be concentrating on?
- _____ 13. Several of our locations are asking for guards to keep the public from coming and looting their computers and other supplies. Who should activate our security measures?
- _____ 14. The telephone network is totally congested. How do we get word out to our customers about whether we are able to do business with them?
- _____ 15. The IT group will have their alternate hot site activated in two hours. All computers are currently down. Which applications should they activate first?
- _____ 16. With the roadways blocked, what should we use to deliver our product/service to our customers, or where should we tell them to go to get to us?
- _____ 17. Someone just showed up from the local TV news station. They want to film your damage, and have someone from the company give a live report for the 4:00 PM news. Who should we get, and what should they say?
- _____ 18. Your family just called. You were so tied up answering my questions, you haven't called your out-of-area relative which you promised to do if a disaster hits. They are frantic to reach you. Your child has been injured. How do they get to you? How soon will you be home?

How many of the above items did you mark? _____

How many people in your organization can answer these questions as well as you? _____