

2.1 BCI Good Practice Guidelines

The EEP lifecycle model in this book has its roots in the Good Practices Guidelines of the BCI, which can be adapted to EEP. Of course, you recognize that business continuity (BC) is a rather more complex subject with innumerable side issues; therefore, BC planners may need to communicate a slightly more involved set of messages. On the other hand, your EEP messages are equally valuable and are important to every single soul who ever enters your premises.

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The BCI notes that having a proper management system in place brings a number of advantages both to the subject area and to the organization as a whole. The same principle applies in the case of EEP, although the specific advantages are slightly different due to the nature of our cause. The benefits of a fully functioning EEP program include ensuring that an organization can:

- ▶ Manage an emergency evacuation much more efficiently.
- ▶ Instill confidence in its stakeholders, especially staff and customers, in its ability to deal with an emergency.
- ▶ Enhance its emergency response and human welfare capability over time by including EEP implications in strategic and tactical decisions at all levels.
- ▶ Minimize the impact and likelihood of emergencies.

These benefits are likely to be fully realized only if the culture of the organization understands and appreciates the need for EEP and actively promotes its growth across the organization. Therefore, you should ensure that:

- ▶ The EEP program is set up in a manner fit for its purpose.
- ▶ Confidence is instilled in stakeholders, particularly staff and customers, that anyone who is on the premises at the time of an incident would manage to reach safety without being subjected to trauma or unnecessary delay.
- ▶ Probability of such incidents will be reduced and (if they should occur) their impact on those present and on the business operation will be minimized.

Awareness, training, and communication are the main tools to achieve this recognition within the corporate culture; these tools need to be used on a regular and ongoing basis. Throughout the program you have to consider the “What’s in it for me?” factor. Without a perceived personal benefit, most people tend to ignore or forget much of the information with which they are bombarded daily in the world of mass communication. Other phases of the planning lifecycle have an identifiable beginning, middle, and end. In contrast, maintaining awareness, as part of the organization’s culture, will be an ongoing project.

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2.1.1 What is the message?

A natural question might be: If we don’t yet have an EEP, what is the content of the “training” at this point in the process? That’s a good question. At the beginning, you will be talking about work in progress; the emphasis will be on awareness and a review of current practices and policies. The company may have in place some emergency procedures and supplies, sufficient to comply with minimum legal requirements. Procedures and supplies may include regular fire drills, some fire extinguishers, some first aid supplies, and fire exits with appropriate signage. Therefore, of necessity, your initial messages will be simple and contain a limited amount of information. Your purpose will be to announce your presence and make your audience aware of the benefits to the workforce of your policy and plans. One of the early messages or lessons will be making everyone aware of the new EEP policy (from Phase 1 of this process) and its implications. Remember that this training will consist of a series of lessons. As in any other training course, you will start out with basic information and build upon their knowledge gradually. In this case, you will also be learning as the program grows and develops.

Gradually, as you move forward with your investigations, you will have more concrete information to communicate to your audience. During this initial awareness phase, you will begin the education process with some basic knowledge and a few facts. As you progress through subsequent phases you will be building up from that knowledge base and adding to it in order to ensure that certain emergency behaviors become an integral part of the culture.

2.1.2 Training as an Ongoing Requirement

Training will be required as part of the ongoing requirements for employees. Thus, it will change and gain more detail as your project proceeds. At key points during the subsequent phases of the methodology, you will be adding

2.2 Developing the Training Program

Before you embark on any sort of training program, you have to establish just what this program is supposed to achieve. You need to put into practice the same plan-do-check-act model that we outlined in Phase 1 – although in this case your starting point should be the check stage. You need to establish what your audience members already know about the subject and compare this with what you have determined that they need to know. This is what is known in the trade as a training needs analysis.

Plan: The *plan* stage of this training program is the point at which you figure how, when, and where you are going to deliver the training. If your organization has some sort of regular training program in place already, then you should tap into that and use the resources, tools, and skills of the existing training to plan and deliver your EEP training and awareness program. On the other hand, you may need to start from scratch, which means you have to become embroiled in the planning aspect of this program.

It doesn't need to be a massive research project, but you will need to ask a number of those to be trained what they know about the subject, what they think they ought to know, and how they think this knowledge level might be achieved. I always think it is a smart move to get those to be trained to help design the course material and develop the objectives. This participation ensures you get their buy-in and also means the training will cover the subject from their perspective and at their pace. Of course, you have to retain a degree of control and make sure that the outcome is a sensible and rational training plan; sometimes you have to take some of their comments or suggestions with a pinch of salt, especially where there may be hidden motives or a misunderstanding about some aspect of the subject.

There are two main areas of consideration in this training program.

1. For most, if not all, of the people who spend time on the premises in question, the principal concern will be getting the message across that specific emergency evacuation plans are in place, or under development. This audience needs to know the detail of the basic procedures, be reminded from periodically of the planned exit and escape routes, and be instructed about what is expected of them when they eventually reach the safe assembly areas.
2. The second area of consideration when putting together an EEP training program will be addressed to those who have special needs or interests beyond that of the population at large. Here I am thinking of those who will need to play an active role in the evacuation procedures or anyone who may need or want to be involved in the development or customizing of plans to suit particular individuals, groups, or areas.

Do: In order to achieve either or both of these aims, you will obviously need to choose a way to create a productive dialog which suits both the culture and the population concerned. This dialog may be achieved through formal training sessions or workshops, through the intranet, or in face-to-face conversations. It is probably best that you liaise with the human resources or personnel department because training and communication with the workforce are tasks for which they have overall responsibility. They may even have someone dealing specifically with the development and delivery of training courses and programs who can prove useful in helping you develop and deliver your messages in the most efficient and effective ways.

For the longer term, it might be useful to link up your awareness program with HR's existing orientation procedures which familiarize new employees with the ways and means of working within the organization. Sometimes the orientation process is supplemented or replaced by a staff handbook, in which case a page or so on EEPs and procedures would be a great help towards developing the requisite awareness and confidence which you are striving for.

Check: When you have completed your survey, you must collate and verify the data which you have gathered before analyzing it to determine what is needed and wanted in the way of training and the dissemination of information regarding EEP.

Awareness training and publicity are aimed at informing and consequently embedding the subject within the culture of the organization. This embedding in the culture is important because, according to the BCI, it is only when the culture is appropriate that an effective strategy can be implemented. It is here that you are trying to develop the backdrop for the action which is due to unfold upon the EEP stage. Later on, you will be asking the actors to take part in rehearsals or exercises which will give them the practical experience to develop the necessary confidence and competence in the plans and procedures.

Act: Once you have completed the check stage of the training program it is time to move on to the act stage where you work on how to correct any deficiencies which you discovered and reinforce the good qualities which you came across. In almost any organization, you can identify someone already responsible for managing, organizing, and possibly delivering in-house training, probably someone within the HR or personnel department. You and that person will need to agree who will arrange and deliver this program. Because EEP is a relatively straightforward subject, the instruction will not depend upon the use of high-level education skills; anyone who is a good communicator should be able to deliver this type of training. You will probably be given the opportunity to prepare and deliver these lessons yourself, perhaps with a little assistance at first, but you will soon get the hang of it.