

# Emergency Preparedness Has Multiple Layers

Take advantage of technology to prepare for natural disasters and man-made emergencies

**A**s hurricane season got serious in Hawaii during the month of September, National Preparedness Month served as an opportunity to remind property owners and facility managers that we must prepare now and throughout the year. The overarching theme of National Preparedness Month this year is “Disasters Happen. Prepare Now. Learn How.”

Our Hawaiian Islands have seen their share of natural emergencies this year, including Hurricane Lane, Tropical Storm Olivia and the Kilauea volcano that spewed lava and hazardous gases on Hawaii’s Big Island.

With the realistic possibility of being hit with grave damage, it was imperative for our security teams to stay ahead by communicating the most up-to-date information, forward-thinking preparedness and resources to protect our accounts and their assets.

Emergencies, both natural and man-made, can wreak havoc and result in loss of lives and property. However, not all emergencies become disasters—the difference is in how effectively and quickly people assess, prepare and respond to a crisis.

## Plan in Advance

Whether you’re operating a commercial office building, residential apartment building, hospital or other facility, it is important to have an emergency plan in place to help raise awareness and prepare for these events, and strengthen the response capability of communities at risk. No one wants to think about a future emergency, but without appropriate preparedness planning, your next emergency could truly turn into a disaster. To reduce the impact of emergencies, it is vital to prepare with real-world plans designed



to aid in response and recovery.

Plans should be reviewed regularly to ensure information is accurate and revisions are made to address changes in personnel, processes or facility infrastructures. Take necessary safety measures appropriate for your location, and ensure that appropriate emergency/safety kits are updated and the contents reviewed regularly. Companies should determine how they will maintain business continuity. Do you have a way of alerting your employees of an impending emergency? How will you account for them following a crisis? Where will you set up your command center to address the emergency?

A well-developed and rehearsed plan executed by trained security personnel can minimize the impact of an emergency. A good plan includes prevention, detection, notification, evacuation and relocation procedures.

## Reassess Training

For building management and security professionals, emergency preparedness training is critical for high-profile events and localized situations including civil disturbances, medical emergencies, hazardous material release and power failures. The Federal Emergency

Management Agency (FEMA) advises preparation for a variety of natural disasters including weather events such as major hurricanes, landslides, wildfires, tornadoes, extreme heat and cold as well as man-made issues, including cybersecurity and terrorism.

Security professional training needs to be comprehensive, available in many formats and must target the most pressing issues that include emergency preparedness. With the proper training, security officers can secure a dangerous area, evacuate buildings and coordinate emergency response. Additionally, security officers play a key role in preventing emergencies by monitoring building access, conducting patrols and ensuring that safety and security procedures are followed. But before any of those can occur, the proper training, specific to a particular site, is needed.

## Exploit Technology

Property owners and facility managers face more threats than ever before, but today they can take advantage of technology to help prepare for natural disasters and man-made emergencies.

One such tool is TX360, a cloud-based, 24/7, all-hazards threat monitoring and situational awareness platform that enables highly secure and targeted delivery of critical information to security professionals and corporate leaders—when and where they need it on a dashboard. This tool provided real-time updates from several national and local news and social media platforms and live local camera views for intelligence gathering during Hurricane Lane. It not only kept clients, such as Shidler Pacific Advisors, informed during the storm, but it also enabled our security professionals in the field to monitor the impact of the storm and respond accordingly in real time. “The



Lynette Yi

TX360 platform consolidates all the info and makes it readily digestible and actionable,” says Steve Sullivan, vice president of operations, Shidler Pacific Advisors.

## Partner with Civilians

Expanded emergency training for security officers has led to improved relationships with law enforcement, government agencies and the general public. But security officers and law enforcement personnel aren’t the only individuals who can benefit from emergency preparedness training.

Civilians can take a proactive approach to emergency preparedness so they too can take an active role during an emergency. In some communities, people can voluntarily sign up for Community Emergency Response Training (CERT), spearheaded by the local municipality.

Moreover, readily available Automatic External Defibrillators and a general public that is well-versed in such equipment and accustomed to seeing them in public is just one example of our nation’s acceptance of the individual’s role in emergency response. A prepared individual is better equipped to evacuate, help others and do whatever is needed in an emergency.

Be proactive and plan ahead to #be-safe. Visit [ready.gov/business](http://ready.gov/business) or ASIS International to learn more. View more about threat awareness and situational intelligence tools at [www.aus.com/MaRC](http://www.aus.com/MaRC).

*Lynette Yi serves as the business development manager for Allied Universal’s Hawaii branch. Ms. Yi brings 10 years of experience in the intelligence and special security field, operations and executive level management. Prior to becoming a member of the Allied Universal team, she served eight years active-duty Army and also worked as a private contractor for Science Application International Corporation and Lockheed Martin in the intelligence and security community. She executed assignments such as Special Security Directorate, Senior Military Intelligence All-Source Analyst and Staff Operations. She is an active member of Building Owners Management Association Hawaii. Reach her at 670-3350 or [lynette.yi@aus.com](mailto:lynette.yi@aus.com).*

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