

WEEKLY SAFETY TIP – 8/29/11 – SOCIAL MEDIA TO THE RESCUE

A friend of several members of the SCM Team was visiting North Carolina when Hurricane Irene arrived, storming the state. We knew he was okay, because he was able to regularly update his status on facebook. Another friend of the SCM team has family living in the Washington DC area. During the earthquake earlier this past week, her family kept her updated on their status through facebook and twitter.

These people were not the only ones to reach out through social media networks to update friends and family regarding their status during recent natural disasters. Follow this link to an article from the Washington Post about how social media can help people to stay connected when other methods of communication are overwhelmed or unavailable:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-tech/post/facebook-twitter-report-record-earthquake-messages/2011/08/23/gIQA4Y09ZJ_blog.html. The social media sites have become important communication tools as even cell phone communication can be jammed and/or disabled during a disaster.

When SCM presents a business continuity/Emergency Action Plan program, we frequently advise businesses and organizations that it is important for businesses as well as for families to have a remote contact point for checking in to report status. The ability to learn of the welfare of your service providers, contractors and employees who might be working away from your main office is an important tool in disaster recovery and business continuity. The SCM Team, based out of the Northern California earthquake country, used a contact point in Nevada. Why? Because local phone lines and now even local cell phone traffic might be jammed or disabled. Long distance communication was the recommended check-in point. Now, SCM has our own facebook page, and can use that page as our method of emergency communication. (If you haven't seen it, click the link on the page to view and "like" us.)

Many organizations are becoming concerned with business continuity and disaster recovery. While related to some promotional information, Verizon Wireless/Business services can provide assistance in planning Business Continuity. To look at what they offer, follow this link: http://aboutus.vzw.com/Business_Continuity/Overview.html?email=Responsys&CMP=EMC-B-S-Em-Prep-1. We also recommend taking a look at Ready.Gov, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s page on disaster assistance, linked here: www.ready.gov.

As you may have heard multiple times before Hurricane Irene hit the US East Coast, the time to prepare is before a disaster strikes. OSHA requires that you have Emergency Action Plans, and advise your employees what you expect them to do to stay safe during emergencies.

Communication during and following an emergency is a large part of planning to stay safe. Your employees need to know how to report in when the usual methods of communication are not available. You can create a facebook page, twitter account, or devise a method of checking in. The time to do that is now.