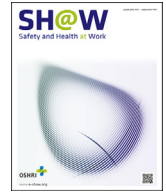




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Safety and Health at Work

journal homepage: www.e-shaw.org

Short Communication

Employee Perceptions of Their Organization's Level of Emergency Preparedness Following a Brief Workplace Emergency Planning Educational Presentation



Lauren A. Renschler, Elizabeth A. Terrigino, Sabiya Azim, Elsa Snider, Darson L. Rhodes, Carol C. Cox*

Department of Health Science, Truman State University, Kirksville, MO, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 8 July 2015

Received in revised form

2 September 2015

Accepted 6 October 2015

Available online 21 October 2015

Keywords:

disaster preparedness

emergency plan

employee training

ABSTRACT

A brief emergency planning educational presentation was taught during work hours to a convenience sample of employees of various workplaces in Northern Missouri, USA. Participants were familiarized with details about how an emergency plan is prepared by management and implemented by management-employee crisis management teams – focusing on both employee and management roles. They then applied the presentation information to assess their own organization's emergency preparedness level. Participants possessed significantly ($p < 0.05$) higher perceptions of their organization's level of emergency preparedness than non-participants. It is recommended that an assessment of organizational preparedness level supplement emergency planning educational presentations in order to immediately apply the material covered and encourage employees to become more involved in their organization's emergency planning and response. Educational strategies that involve management-employee collaboration in activities tailored to each workplace's operations and risk level for emergencies should be implemented.

Copyright © 2015, Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute. Published by Elsevier. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Emergency preparedness, including developing crisis/disaster plans and training employees [1], is crucial for workplaces today. Whether it is a natural disaster, such as flooding, or a man-made disaster, such as a fire, emergencies cannot be predetermined. Businesses are the economic drivers of communities, and many even become important in community-wide emergency situations through provision of services and goods essential in emergency response [2]. Although businesses that have prepared for emergencies by training employees and creating disaster plans were more likely to have experienced a previous disaster [3], predisaster preparation is ultimately the key to successful workplace emergency response [1].

Key workplace preparedness activities specifically include developing emergency evacuation plans and providing emergency information to employees as well as outlining employee

emergency-response roles [2]. Workplaces with over 10 employees are required to have written emergency plans that are continually reviewed, train employees in the details of the plan, and designate emergency-response coordinators and their assigned roles [4]. Specific principles in preparing business for all types of emergencies include creating these formal plans and assigning responsibilities, coordinating efforts and encouraging employee ownership of the plan, overcoming organizational resistance and reluctance, and adapting response in light of surprise challenges [2].

Emergency preparedness plans attempt to prevent infrastructure and inventory loss as well as secure continuity of business operations both before and after a disaster. Emergency preparedness and business continuity plans should protect the firm from threats as well as outline recovery and resilience strategies [5]. Although emergency preparedness training and action plans better enable businesses to respond and recover from adverse conditions, many firms are still unprepared for disasters [2]. Some reports have

* Corresponding author. Department of Health Science, Truman State University, 2123 Pershing Building-HES, Kirksville, MO 63501, USA.
E-mail address: ccox@truman.edu (C.C. Cox).

suggested that even managers may not be active in the emergency planning process of their businesses [6]. Managers cite safety and emergency-response training regulations as drivers to their choice of educational and training offerings to their employees, but noted that they would provide fewer offerings if mandates were lessened [7]. However, those businesses that do provide emergency and crisis management training are better prepared for both safety and financial stability [8].

Managers, though, seem to have higher levels of perceived emergency preparedness than their employees [9]. Both management and employees need to be aware of emergencies that may occur and having procedures set aside beforehand can help address a number of workplace situations that may potentially arise. Planning can help reduce employee stress, anxiety, and overall fear, which are often experienced during a disaster or crisis. Having an emergency plan can insure that there is time for employees to become familiar with procedures and how to fulfill all steps within the plan. Creating an emergency plan and preparing in advance can help reduce property damage, help prevent injuries, and may even save lives [4].

Provision of information not only on the emergency action plan but also on employee emergency roles requires the involvement of all employees, not just management. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe employee perceptions of their organization's level of emergency preparedness following a brief workplace emergency planning educational presentation focused on both employee and management roles. Any effect of the presentation on employee emergency planning knowledge was also assessed.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Sample

Managers from various workplace settings (food service, military, university physical plant, and juvenile justice) in Northern Missouri, USA were asked by the researchers if they would allow their employees to attend an hour-long emergency planning educational presentation during work hours. With management approval, a convenience sample of 45 adult employees from these workplaces were asked by the researchers to participate in the emergency planning educational presentation that included pre-post assessments (experimental group). A convenience sample of 37 adult employees from similar workplace settings in Northern Missouri were also asked by the researchers to participate in the pre-post assessments only (control group). All volunteered and freely agreed to participate in the study.

2.2. Instruments

The *Pre-Post Emergency Planning Knowledge Quiz* [10] was the evaluation tool that accompanied The Marcom Group's standardized Emergency Planning curriculum. The quiz included six knowledge items based on content contained in the curriculum. Three questions were true-false style, and the other three questions were multiple-choice questions that asked about groups involved in coordinating an emergency plan, changes incorporated into an emergency plan, and the best test of an emergency plan.

The 21-question *Crisis/Disaster Preparedness Scale/Paper and Pencil Version* [9] has been demonstrated to be a valid, reliable instrument to measure perceptions of level of an organization's crisis/disaster emergency preparedness. Statements such as "I am very familiar with our building's evacuation plan," "If my organization suffered a serious crisis, I would still have my job," "Most of our employees are familiar with my organization's crisis/disaster plan," and "My organization's emergency plan has been coordinated with local agencies" were rated on a Likert-style scale (1 = strongly

disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree). The instrument was used as a self-assessment.

2.3. Procedure

During spring 2015 and after Institutional Review Board's approval from Truman State University, Kirksville, MO, USA and participant consent, all experimental and control group participants were given the anonymous, confidential Pre-Emergency Planning Knowledge Quiz to complete before the emergency planning educational presentation. Completed instruments were placed in a clasp envelope, sealed, and returned to the researchers. The control group participants were free to go on their way for an hour after completing and returning the instruments. The experimental group participants attended the educational presentation, "Emergency Planning," following The Marcom Group's standardized curriculum [10].

The educational presentation was taught during work hours by undergraduate health education students from the local university and covered the concept of how an emergency and evacuation plan is prepared by management and implemented by management-employee crisis management teams. Although the presentation did not include a detailed review of the specific plans of each participant's organization, it focused on both employee and management roles for standard emergency plans. Specific topics included devastating effects of emergencies, the importance of the emergency plan, what and who needs to be included in an emergency plan, the importance of familiarity with your workplace emergency and evacuation plan, and testing the plan. Instructors followed the curriculum using lecture and visual aids as well as the active-learning techniques of role-plays, demonstrations, and scenario-based learning. Immediately following the educational presentation, the experimental group participants completed the anonymous, confidential Post-Emergency Planning Knowledge Quiz in addition to the Crisis/Disaster Preparedness Scale. After 1 hour, the control group participants also completed the anonymous, confidential Post-Emergency Planning Knowledge Quiz and the Crisis/Disaster Preparedness Scale. Completed instruments from both groups were placed in a clasp envelope, sealed, and returned to the researchers. Control group participants were then invited to attend the same emergency planning educational presentation that was given to the experimental group and scheduled by their managers for the near future.

2.4. Analysis

An analysis of covariance was used to assess pre-post changes in emergency planning knowledge among and between experimental group and control group participants. Measures of central tendency were assessed on the Crisis/Disaster Preparedness Scale for both experimental and control group participants.

3. Results

Possible scores on the 6-item emergency planning knowledge quiz ranged from 0 to 6. Among control group participants ($n = 37$), mean [standard deviation (SD)] pretest and post-test scores were 3.89 (1.26) and -3.97 (1.55), respectively. Among experimental group participants ($n = 33$), mean (SD) pretest and post-test scores were 4.46 (1.16) and 4.59 (1.09), respectively. After adjusting for pretest scores, results of the one-way between-group analysis of covariance revealed no statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups' post-test scores $F_{1,67} = 0.73$, $p = 0.40$, and partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$. Therefore, there was no significant difference between the groups in knowledge of workplace emergency planning after the presentation (Table 1).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1092026>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1092026>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)