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# Security & Emergency Management Quarterly

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## 2009 Severe Weather Awareness Week

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm has declared March 29 to April 4, 2009, Severe Weather Awareness Week in Michigan. The annual observance encourages citizens to learn how to protect themselves and their families from the dangers of severe weather.

Severe weather can strike quickly and cause significant damage. Last June, thunderstorms in Michigan affected many residents, destroying homes and businesses and changing lives. Damage from the June 8, 2008, storm alone was valued at more than \$100 million.

In September, Michigan again was hit with severe storms that caused widespread flooding. These storms included five tornadoes that struck in the southern part of the state.

On April 1, 2009, a test by the National Weather Service on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Radio All Hazards will simulate a tornado warning. The test will occur between 11:15 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Throughout the week, the weather service will issue statements with important information about severe thunderstorms, tornadoes and flash floods.

Last year, DMB encouraged tenants in its facilities to participate in a tornado drill and practice severe weather safety procedures. Staff used information collected during the drills to update policies, procedures and emergency communication methods.

Over the past year, Security and Emergency Management has taken a number of measures to improve security in DMB-managed buildings. Some of these include:

- installing signs that identify emergency shelter areas in the lower level ramps.
- updating evacuation plans.
- working with local fire departments to ensure they have access to all DMB facilities at any time.

Security and Emergency Management staff will continue to pursue options and recommend ways to improve tenant services and safety.

## Tenant Emergency Preparedness Guides

New Facility Emergency Preparedness Guides for tenants and visitors are being posted in DMB-managed facilities. The department's Emergency Monitor Program volunteers also are receiving copies.

The guides, which were prepared by Security and Emergency Management staff, provide tenants and visitors with procedures they can use during an emergency. They include 16 inserts with procedures for evacuations, medical emergencies and chemical spills as well as other safety information.

Electronic interactive versions of the guide can be downloaded from DMB's intranet.

The emergency guidelines also apply to employees who work in leased facilities throughout the State.

Employees are asked to review the guides so they are prepared when an emergency occurs. The guides offer a framework that can be applied to a variety of emergency situations. Each incident, however, is unique, and employees are urged to use common sense in applying the guidelines. Online training in using the guides will soon be offered to tenants on DMB's intranet site.



## Weather Facts

- Most tornadoes are on the ground for less than 10 minutes.
- In 2008, 14 tornado touchdowns were reported in Michigan.
- Waterspouts are weak tornadoes that form over warm water. Occasionally they move inland becoming a tornado.
- 69% of all tornadoes are considered weak, while only 2% of all tornadoes are classified as violent.
- Straight-line winds can reach 120 miles per hour, just as strong as a weak tornado.
- Straight-line winds spread debris in the same direction the wind is blowing.
- Tornadoes scatter debris in different directions because of their violent rotation.
- Tornadoes have three stages: the developing stage, mature stage, and the dissipating stage.
- Tornadoes may appear nearly transparent until they pick up dust and debris or a cloud forms in the funnel.
- In 2008, 21 flash flood warnings and 137 flood warnings were issued in Michigan.
- In 2008, severe storms caused over \$300 million in damages.
- Six percent of Michigan's land is prone to flooding.
- In 2008, four lives were lost because of severe weather.

## Suspicious Package / Powder Incidents

Do you know how to identify a suspicious letter or package and what to do if you or a coworker discover one?

Agencies need a sustained and organized plan in place as part of everyday operations. An ideal program includes a detailed response and communication plan that is shared with everyone in the agency. Plans should include details about the way employees should respond, communicate and behave when they discover a suspicious package and measures they should take to protect the people around them.

Plans should include evacuation routes and rally points for offices, which provide agencies a better accountability in an emergency.

Suspicious packages may have some of the following characteristics:

- Unusual wording or symbols
- Wires or aluminum foil that protrudes
- Mechanized sounds
- Addresses that are handwritten or poorly typed
- Oily stains or color residues
- Excessive tape or wrapping
- Excessive postage

Suspicious packages are often placed in high-risk or accessible areas. Strangers may be observed in the area, or packages may be found following threats by groups or individuals.

If you receive a suspicious package or an envelop containing suspicious powder, immediately contact DMB Central Control at (517) 373-0190. Do not move or open the object and remain calm. Keep others away from the area while you wait for emergency responders.

For additional information, please refer to DMB's Facility Emergency Preparedness Guide.

## Lobby Security Pilot Program

Interactive kiosks and access control gateways will soon be installed in the lobbies of 10 DMB-managed facilities in the Capitol Complex.

The new kiosks will streamline the entry process for visitors. State employees will be able to visit a kiosk Web page to pre-register visitors, allowing visitors to check in at a kiosk. Employees will use their DMB-issued identification cards or facility access key cards at the automated turnstiles to gain entry into the facility.

The new kiosks will provide a standard, cost-effective way to manage access to State-owned DMB-managed facilities without compromising employee safety or causing visitor inconvenience. The kiosks were designed to accommodate users with a wide range of physical abilities or circumstances in compliance with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

By the end of April, kiosks and gateways will be installed in the Stevens T. Mason Building lobby as part of a pilot program. Tenants will be able to participate in training before the kiosks and gateways are activated. To accommodate busy schedules, DMB will offer Web-based training, which tenants may view at their convenience.

The change from contracted security guards to automated security systems in all DMB-managed facilities is a long-term project. The new system will allow security guards to move between buildings and assist tenants where needed.

Communication and outreach to prepare tenants for the security changes will continue as kiosks and gateway turnstiles are installed at additional locations.

