

# Are You Ready to Respond To an Emergency?

For over 30 years, the Self Storage Association has recognized the importance of safety, preparedness and security for your self storage business. Whether it's a natural disaster or a criminal act, the SSA is dedicated to arming our industry with the proper tools and training to deal with such an event.

We have published multiple books and developed training sessions that cover topics such as emergency planning and recovery, illegal drug lab detection, security issues that surround your facility, and how to train your managers to be diligent and effective in deterring security risks. Basic steps such as random security walks or even completing a safety meeting could mean a savings of thousands of dollars—or even a life. Our materials have been used and trusted by thousands of self storage professionals

worldwide. The cost of such materials and training is tiny compared to the possible outcome if you're not prepared. Trust your association's commitment to publishing the most accurate and complete training and educational materials in the industry.

*continued on next page*

## From: SSA Emergency Preparedness Manual

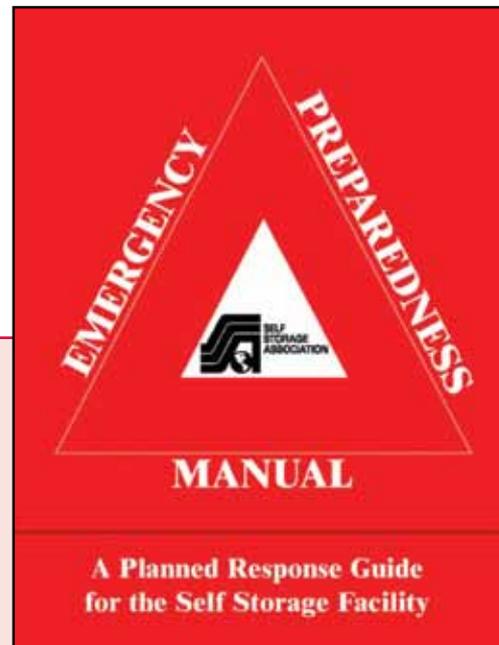
Numerous events can be categorized as “emergencies.” For this Guide, we have addressed the emergencies that are most likely to strike a business and/or inflict significant damage or interruption to normal business operations. Among the events that are addressed in this Guide are:

- Earthquake
- Explosion
- Fire
- Flood
- Hazardous materials spill or leak (including biological agents)
- Hurricane
- Radiological materials leak
- Tornado
- Winter Storm
- Terrorist or criminal incident (Special Section on Security)

### *Emergency Management Defined*

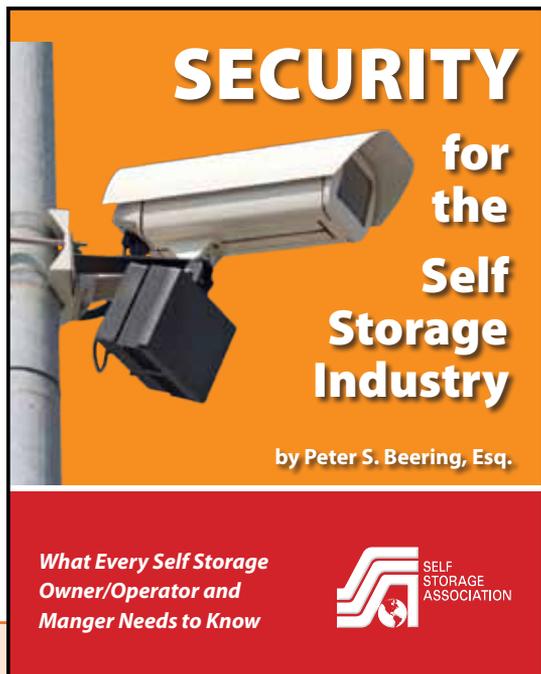
FEMA identifies four key areas of comprehensive emergency management. This Guide will address each one of them in detail. They are:

- Preparedness Planning involves activities such as assessing hazard vulnerability, determining which hazards could cause the most damage, what



damages they would cause and what can be done to minimize the impact of those hazards.

- Mitigation Activities include taking the required steps to reduce hazards in the structure of the facility, the equipment it contains, the operations that take place there and the risk to the personnel involved in those operations.
- Response Planning involves making provisions for key support operations such as first aid, search and rescue, building evacuation, coping with floods, fires and/or hazardous materials, emergency communications and general personnel training in all of the above.
- Recovery Planning involves prioritizing operations for efficient business continuation, how to protect and restore those elements, who can assist in a disaster situation if in-house resources are overtaxed and ways to communicate with key vendors and customers in the wake of the emergency.



## From: Security for the Self Storage Industry

### *The Ds of Security*

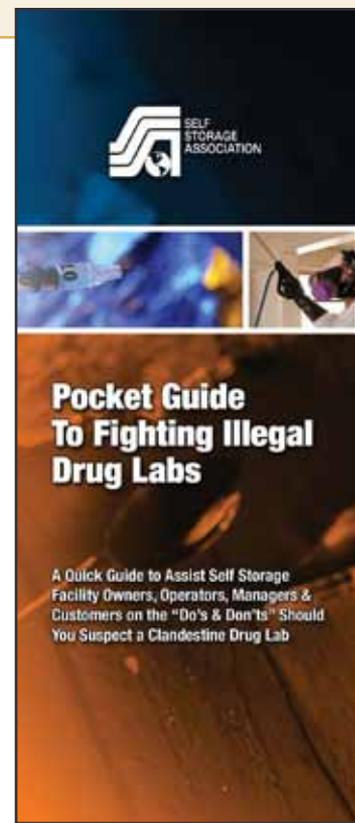
Security measures are usually designed to keep an attacker out of an area, slow down their progress to a target, notify someone that the target is threatened, or allow apprehension of the attacker. Some measures perform other tasks like documenting the attack.

- **Deter:** The objective of the collected security measures is to deter an attacker. Terrorists and criminals generally will select less protected (soft) targets instead of more protected (hardened) targets
- **Deny:** Fences, doors, barriers, and barricades deny access to an area. Denial of access can also be by posting guards, employing chemical defense measures, or placing obstacles to deny access.
- **Delay:** Layered access, multiple fences, doors, and other barriers are designed to delay an attacker making progress toward the target more difficult and slowing the getaway.
- **Detect:** Alarm sensors, motion detectors, laser beams, and other detection technologies seek to alert someone that an attack is underway. Sometimes the possibility of detection deters the attacker. Other times the detection allows apprehension of the attacker.
- **Dispatch:** Most alarm systems also serve as dispatchers of help. Ideally help arrives in time to apprehend the attacker and assist the victims.
- **Document:** Surveillance systems serve a vital role in documenting the attack, identifying the attacker, and providing key evidence needed to support a criminal prosecution.
- **Disable:** Some systems, particularly several emerging electronic systems are able to disable both the attacker and a potential escape using various kinds of energy. These systems typically use less than lethal force.

## From: Pocket Guide to Fighting Illegal Drug Labs

Here are some things to be on the lookout for in identifying an illegal "meth lab:"

- Individuals who insist on renting a self storage unit with cash
- Unusual, strong odors (like cat urine, ether, ammonia, acetone or other chemicals) coming from the unit
- Lots of unit traffic – different people coming and going at unusual hours or late night hours; different vehicles coming and going to the unit; people exiting the unit to smoke
- Excessive trash including large amounts of items such as: antifreeze containers, discarded batteries, discarded cold tablet or diet aid boxes, lantern fuel cans, chemically stained (red) coffee filters, rocksalt/epsom salt boxes or drain cleaner containers, used wooden matches, duct tape and unusual amounts of used clear glass containers and/or chemical beakers
- If you see a renter trying to move a propane cylinder or a hot plate into the unit
- Unit rollup door bottoms sealed with sheets or blankets



## From: Self Storage Operations Manual & Training Guide (Training)

Conduct several security rounds throughout the day. To be effective, you should make 5 tours per day. Be sure to document your rounds on a written report.

**Be sure to watch for customers who:**

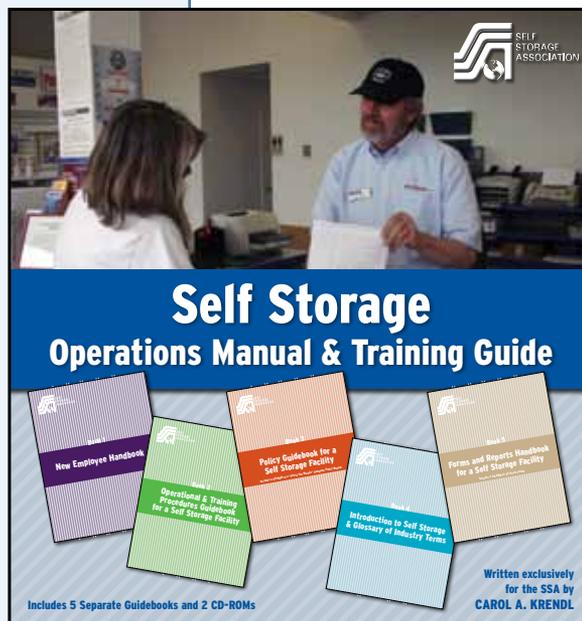
- Loiter around the property.
- Roam areas that are not immediately adjacent to their space.
- Pull their door down when they are in the space.
- Out-of-state plates on their vehicle.
- Trucks that have lift gates or have tarps covering their belongings.
- Attempt to become too friendly and cordial with you.
- Ask to rent your smallest space and who pay with cash.
- Ask too many questions about your security system and procedures.
- Ask you too many questions about your personal habits (e.g., movies, kids, days off, etc.).
- Offer to assist or help other tenants unload their belongings.
- Ask for extended or after-hour access.
- Access their space too frequently, considering the size of their space.
- Rent a large rental truck for the size space that they have rented.
- Tailgate another into the facility.

You should complete at least one thorough Lock Check *every day*. A thorough lock check consists of actually looking at each and every lock on every space. cursory security rounds are designed to minimize the time away from the office, yet provide effective deterrence. Always talk to customers who are on-site while conducting your rounds. Approach the customer while making idle conversation, and quickly scan the area around and inside their space. If you notice the customer attempting to store gasoline, paints, thinners or other forbidden chemicals or materials, advise the customer that storing such materials is forbidden in the lease.

Document all security rounds when they are made. In many instances, the cross-referencing of your security rounds with the video records and gate record of entry will isolate suspects. Try to vary your rounds each day. Do not always conduct your rounds at the same time or take the same route. Be sure to instruct your relief/assistant managers to make security rounds as well. Thieves will analyze your facility and will know that assistants rarely leave the office.

A good patrolling technique used by professional law enforcement is to always note any suspicions when patrolling. For example, a good technique is to write down license numbers of trucks while on the property. If you think a customer appears suspicious, write down their license number, unit number, description, etc. If nothing happens, nothing is lost. If something does happen during the day, you already have a good start in solving the crime.

Watch for evidence of sawdust, coffee grounds or kitty litter. Drug labs routinely use these absorbents to pack chemicals, explosives and finished product.



## Where Can I Find These Materials?

You can find these materials and additional information by calling 703-575-8000 or going to [www.selfstorage.org](http://www.selfstorage.org). Many of our publications are on sale, and can be purchased in bulk for each of your locations for additional savings (such as the *Emergency Preparedness Manual*).

We also publish multiple legal books that are designed to guide the owner/operator through the maze of legal issues that surround the self storage industry.

The Self Storage Association considers industry education to be of the utmost importance and takes executive education and employee training very seriously. This is why the SSA has been the leading source of self storage publications and training. ❖