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SafetyNet™
Every Life Counts

US Patent Application #: US 2004 / 0140899 A1

Chinese Fire Drills – Fact or Fiction?

If you are like me your brain engages neutral whenever the airline attendant starts their speech '*In case of an emergency*….". Subconsciously, I'm thinking that should this plane crash no amount of little yellow oxygen masks are going to help. Much the same goes for the annual visit at the office from the fire marshal. "*Each floor shall designate an individual who is responsible for making sure everyone is accounted for, and remember, don't use the elevators!"* I can forgive my brain for taking all this well meaning advice with a grain of salt, after all planes rarely crash and office buildings rarely have emergencies.
The concept of safety changed radically on 9/11/2001 when it was made abundantly clear that we were not as safe as we thought we were and our previously well thought out evacuation plans were woefully inept. Unfortunately, despite our concept of safety changing our evacuation processes have not.
The vast majority of organizations still rely on the manually intensive process of an orderly exit of the premises to a pre designated mustering point at which stage a safety officer will manually check headcounts and names.

Why this current process does not work

It is a well worn statement that the strength of a system is only as strong as its weakest link and the traditional process has too many points of potential failure. What if:

- The safety officer is injured and fails to show
- Who has accounted for absentees that day?
- Who has accounted for visitors?
- What if I'm not at my appointed mustering spot?
- And many more

Chinese Fire drill

The original definition of a Chinese fire drill is "organized chaos which achieves little". Although used to describe the game of changing seats in a car in the USA, it was originally coined in the early 1900s in the British Navy. The Navy planned that in case of an engine fire at sea, apparently quiet common back then, three teams of bucket brigades would be formed. The team on the starboard side would fill the buckets and pass to the second team to douse the fire. The empty buckets were then passed to the third team who would then scoop the remaining water over the port side so the ship didn't sink. The navy practiced this religiously but rather that douse a real fire and to allow them to practice on dry land they amended the drill so that the second team passed the buckets to the third team still full. Unfortunately, when a Naval frigate had an engine fire off the coast of China, the three teams formed and carried out the drill beautifully, completely by passing the "dousing fire" step and simply transferred water from the starboard to the port side of the ship.

What is the point?

The point is that well thought out plans can fail from simply misunderstandings or digressions particularly if the plan is formulated under controlled conditions. In an emergency evacuation, it is no longer reasonable to expect personnel to exit the building in an orderly fashion and be immune to panic. The less we rely on human intervention and the more we use available technology, the more chance we have of a successful evacuation

SafetyNet™ Solution

The **SafetyNet™** solution is a simply, cost effective yet powerful, patented technology solution that seamlessly augments your current security process. It consists of a number of static **SafetyNet™** stations that can be placed in your current mustering areas and can be further augmented by mobile **SafetyNet™** devices that can be particularly useful in "**Shelter in Place**" situations. The **SafetyNet™** stations are solar powered and can read all current industry standard id tags, bar codes or biometrics (fingerprints). They remain in a dormant state until triggered by an emergency, or for testing. They feed a remote database server which is immune to any problems being encountered by the emergency event or by your onsite hardware.

How does it work?

Once **SafetyNet™** is installed it integrates directly with your current security system keeping a real-time status of all personnel in your building. Should an emergency occur, the system immediately activates all the **SafetyNet™** units. Personnel exiting the building can be scanned at any **SafetyNet™** station, and in the case of "**Shelter in Place**" or injured personnel, by a mobile **SafetyNet™** device. The system will then constantly update the remote database moving personnel from the "**At Risk**" list to the "**Safe**" list. The database can also store documents that will identify contact numbers and work station locations that can be accessed remotely by safety personnel and/or First Responders who can then plan rescue operations. Additional actions such as contacting the "**At Risk**" personnel by cell phone or planning search and rescue based on personnel location can be assisted by additional system configurations.

Why is this important?

In any Disaster Recovery or Business Continuity plan the safety of your personnel is paramount. The ability of quickly and easily accounting for each person can speed the correct actions from the First Responders. Personnel who have not been scanned by **SafetyNet™** can be contacted and First Responders can then plan their search process accordingly. By providing a structured evacuation process, both the facility and the First Responders are working jointly to achieve the same objectives which are saving lives and preserving property and equipment.

Other benefits

Obvious benefits are the creation of a safer workplace both for your personnel and the First Responders. This will not only lead to kudos in the community but could also very well result in lower premiums from your insurance carrier as you have reduced their risk in the areas of Workmen's Comp, Umbrella and Liability insurances. In addition, the **SafetyNet™** platform provides the ability to be enhanced for numerous additional functionality specific to your requirements. Among other benefits it can therefore:

- ∞ save lives
- ∞ reduce costs to manufacturer
- ∞ reduce higher claims to insurance companies
- ∞ allow for a shorter time frame to get back to normal operation functions (Business continuity)
- ∞ can provide triage info

Conclusion – Increase Safety and Reduce Risk

SafetyNet™ provides a streamlined evacuation which reduces the amount of human interaction and therefore creates an increased level of safety while reducing risk. Utilizing **SafetyNet™**, the employee simply has to exit the building by any means and scanning their existing security badge at any **SafetyNet™** station. You are no longer putting employees or First Responders at risk by having them enter a dangerous building to search for personnel who may or may not still be in the structure. You are also no longer relying on human headcounters or communication between muster points that could be prone to error due to the stressful situations as well as event logistics. In addition, **SafetyNet™** provides a sound technology platform on which to build other functionality that further increases safety and reduces risk.