

# Assembly Area Management



Your Warden role is extended to the external assembly area and to oversee the return to the building on receiving the 'All Clear' from the Emergency Services. Control at the assembly area is just as critical as the evacuation itself and occupants will be more willing to accept conditions if kept informed. Information from the Chief Warden should be transmitted to a nominated person/s at the assembly area every 15 minutes and this can be achieved by a runner, mobile phone or in some cases two way radios. Quite often management of the assembly area is overlooked. In larger facilities assembly area management is crucial, especially if business continuity plans need to be invoked. Common mistakes, made at or in transit to the assembly area, include:

- Occupants not following road rules
- Occupants not attending the assembly area
- Occupants not moving well inside the nominated area
- No provision of first aid
- Little to no information regarding the emergency

Weather conditions will also affect behaviours at the assembly area. It is unlikely that building occupants will want to stand in the rain, and will seek shelter if it's not available at the assembly area. Hot conditions may also have occupants exposed to dehydration and sun exposure. Ideally occupants need to take some responsibility regarding their own wellbeing. Items including a poncho, hat, sunscreen and comfortable pair of shoes should all be considered by occupants as conditions outside the building may be far from ideal at the time of an emergency.

## LARGER FACILITIES (OCCUPANTS OVER 1000) SHOULD CONSIDER:

**The formation of an Assembly Area Management Team:** Consideration should be given to separating building occupants into Low Rise – Medium Rise – High Rise areas. This is done to ensure a smooth return back into the building once the all clear has been given. Different business units may also have critical responsibilities that need to be given priority. Major High-Rise buildings are not designed to be evacuated all at once, therefore returning to the building is just as important as the evacuation itself. Having multiple levels trying to gain access back into the building at the same time will dramatically slow the return.

**Triage Area:** This location should be well advised to all occupants and well attended by first aid officers throughout the facility. First Aid Officers should take with them a number of portable First Aid kits and/ or a Defibrillator if available. This area should offer shelter and be within close proximity of a roadway. First Aid Officers within a large facility should attend a Warden training session to formulate a plan regarding their evacuation procedures.

**Loudhailer:** Is an ideal investment and will greatly aid the communication process. The Warden team should continue to wear their identification.

Any external assembly area is an extension of the workplace; designated smoking areas should be assigned and advised.

Good control at the assembly area will ensure minimal down time, and a smooth transition back into the building or into a business.

