ProtectUK

Tactic EB1: Implement emergency change to shift patterns and agree plan with staff in advance

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Information and Intention

Implementing emergency changes to shift patterns can help secure your business at times of increased threat and can provide an enhanced deterrence perception to hostiles. These cannot be undertaken without pre-planning and it will be necessary to consult with those who will be affected and obtain their agreement in advance.

Emergency changes to shift patterns, including extended shifts or changes to rotation, can help to support vigilance and provide a hostile environment for terrorists to operate in. Changes can also result in uncertainty and erosion of confidence in the mind-set of the terrorist, who prefers to encounter predictable arrangements in order to feel assured of success.

Emergency changes to shift patterns are at the discretion of the individual business or organisation and will differ according to a range of circumstances. These include:

- Whether there has been an increase in the National Threat Level or Building Response Level;
- What resources are available; and
- What vulnerabilities have been identified.

The latest threat level and building response advice can be found on ProtectUK.

Method

Options regarding emergency changes to shift patterns should be identified in advance of any change to the threat level, intelligence of an impending attack, or an actual incident itself. Staff will require to be clearly notified, including those responsible for ensuring compliance with the

requirements.

A plan should be created to amend shift structures to respond to emergency circumstances. This would contain staff contact details, shift patterns and amended emergency shift patterns. It should be held by the HR department, who will also need to take into account working time regulations, health and safety considerations regarding elongated shift times, and potential welfare issues such as difficulties with public transport home due to revised shift reporting and finishing times.

It will not be possible to work to extended shift patterns for long periods of time, due to the physical and psychological impacts on staff due to work fatigue. If the organisation contains multiple sites in different geographic locations, consideration should be given to factoring this into the plan, and having security staff from other offices brought in to provide support.

Consultation should also be held with the relevant unions if these are present in the organisation to obtain their support and cooperation. If security is provided by an external supplier, discussions should be held with them to ensure that they were agreeable to the extended shift changes and that they would be capable of providing the required personnel throughout the period of the emergency activation.

Administration

Policy and procedures should outline the potential emergency changes to shift patterns in the event of a raised threat level or a terrorist incident, and how this will be managed. There is a need to Identify ownership of the process, what records are kept, and how its effectiveness is assured.

For large organisations, there should be a senior manager responsible for the strategic oversight of the process, and a more junior manager should sit under them who will oversee tactical/operational application. For smaller organisations, these roles could be combined and undertaken by one person.

It will be necessary to ensure all staff understand processes and procedures to be adopted, and how this looks when working with staff from other businesses. There should also be consultation with the police to allow them to incorporate this knowledge into any planning assumptions they may have themselves.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should identify threats and issues which could have an impact on the business and its vulnerabilities. This risk assessment can be used to define key vulnerabilities or situations, and how these should be mitigated against. Such risk assessments should clearly define organisational as well as individual duty of care to staff and others. You should risk manage the

impact of staff or contractors not following, or directly contradicting, instructions relating to the changing shift patterns.

As identified earlier, a key action for a business is to create a Crisis Communication Plan (TACTIC EB4). This should be a core component of its risk preparations. It should be developed following a detailed risk analysis looking at potential issues and possible solutions.

Typically, these issues relate to an organisation's people, assets, property and operations, and the plan is there to guide action and communications.

All activity relating to emergency shift pattern changes should be risk assessed in line with existing business/organisational policies.

Communications

Internal Stakeholder Engagement:

The business/organisation should consider how to communicate changes to emergency shift patterns to all staff effectively, including those who may not be present when shift pattern changes have been agreed and implemented. If reasonable and practicable, staff briefings to communicate the importance of why emergency shift patterns have been implemented can facilitate understanding and compliance.

It is necessary to ensure points of contact for the shift pattern changes are known to staff internally, and partners externally. Internal communications should also encourage security awareness by general staff and a positive security culture should be encouraged through internal communications.

You must provide regular information for your staff so that they can help deliver on the security plan. Your internal audience will inevitably cross over into your external audience, so you should consider the messages you want them to convey to their external networks, e.g. families and friends. Remember that social media is a potential area where this crossover may occur.

External Stakeholder Engagement:

Engagement with neighbouring businesses should be on a regular basis and should be constructive. The sharing of information with neighbouring businesses and contacts regarding emergency changes to shift patterns for your staff is desirable, as they may also be developing a similar approach.

However, internal communication is the priority in this case, and if staff and unions/representative bodies are aware of the reasons for longer working hours and changed rotas, they will usually be supportive and provide cooperation.

As with all matters relating to security and policing, the relationship with the police is key. The contact may be with either the local police or those specifically tasked with providing policing to certain sites.

External Media Engagement:

Engagement with the media should be encouraged to allow a positive and deterrent message to be disseminated to the general public, as part of a Security Minded Communications strategy.

By positively reinforcing a security deterrence message and demonstrating a collaborative security approach between businesses, it is likely that this may deter potential attackers when they carry out online hostile reconnaissance as part of the attack planning process.

Health and Safety/Other Legal Issues

Businesses/organisations that are implementing emergency shift patterns changes should ensure that all activities are assessed in line with Health and Safety and other legal/policy frameworks, such as:

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Health and Safety Acts
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Data Protection Act 2018

It is important to consider any change to shift patterns with regards to justification, proportionality, necessity, and legality.

You should ensure that there are well-defined governance arrangements and that records are kept of the issues, decisions made and the reasoning behind those decisions. Records will provide evidence to any potential investigations, or public enquiries and assist in defending against legal action, criminal charges or civil claims.

The importance of keeping accurate records and having well defined governance arrangements has been demonstrated during the Manchester Arena Inquiry.

Such changes that affect contractors and the organisation must include consideration of your organisations insurance policies. Consideration must always be given regarding the personal health and safety of security staff in the performance of their duties.

KEYWORDS
THREAT LEVEL
EMERGENCY PLANNING
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