

**Whether they're weather related or otherwise, catastrophes can—and will—occur. Have you conducted a Vulnerability Assessment or developed an Emergency Management Plan? Maybe it's time to do so.**

In light of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, I can't help but think of the business owners who lost all of their assets in this terrible event. However, this is not the only weather-related hazard that can and will happen at some point, and keep in mind that there are fires, hazardous-materials incidents, and technological emergencies that can affect us that are not even related to the weather. Has your company prepared by creating an Emergency Management Plan for events such as these? Have you done a Vulnerability Assessment on your business? Do you know what the hazards are that you may be susceptible to, and have you prepared yourself and your employees for these eventualities?


The reason I bring this up is that there is help available to all of us concerning these subjects. The American Red Cross, in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has a booklet available that is titled "Emergency Management Guide for Business & Industry." I highly recommend that you obtain a copy of this booklet. It's a 78-page, comprehensive guide to conducting a Vulnerability Assessment and creating an Emergency Management Plan that can be a lifesaving guide in the unfortunate event that you should face one of these disasters. And while I'm on the subject, The American Red Cross also offers a Community Disaster Education program with excellent literature that should be in the hands of all your employees. The literature will help them to prepare their homes and families just as you prepare your business. As concerned citizens, we all should support organizations such as The American Red Cross,

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and this is just an example of what they are capable of doing for us. I suggest that it will be well worth your time to acquire this information, but it's even more important that you make use of it—you may just save your business as a result.

In our industry we often employ protective gear such as hearing and eye protection, as well as protection for our feet and hands. I recently came across a pamphlet titled "Personal Protective Equipment" that is published by the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA 3077). This is another very helpful piece of literature, and it's free for the asking. It is a generic overview of a standards-related topic, and as such will help you maintain your compliance with the published standards that OSHA judges us on. Even beyond the OSHA requirements, however, it's just good common sense to keep up with the proper protection for ourselves and our employees.

In this same vein, I also would like to recommend a book titled *Keller's Official OSHA Safety Handbook*, published by J.J. Keller & Associates, Inc. This is a well-written book meant to be read by the employee. It is written in easily understandable language and covers many of the safety standards that OSHA has issued, such as Electrical Safety (1910.303-306), Ergonomics, Fire Prevention (1910.38), Forklift Safety (1910.178), Lockout/Tagout (1910.147), Machine Guarding (1910.212), and many others. This is a book that you should consider putting in the hands of all your employees.

I hope that you are all attending GEAR EXPO and will take into consideration my suggestions in last month's column about paying special attention to the safety features of the equipment on display. After all, the safer we can make our workplace for our employees, the better off we all will be. 

### WEB RESOURCES

- **Occupational Safety & Health Administration** [[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)]
- **The American Red Cross** [[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)]
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency** [[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)]
- **J.J. Keller & Associates, Inc.** [[www.jjkeller.com](http://www.jjkeller.com)]

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

With more than 30 years of experience in the gear industry, Terry McDonald is a manager with Repair Parts, Inc., a partner with Re-New Machine & Maintenance, Inc., and a current member and past-chairman of the American National Standards Institute B11.1.1 Subcommittee on Safety Requirements for Construction, Care, and Use of Gear Cutting Equipment. McDonald writes this monthly column specifically for *Gear Solutions* magazine. He can be contacted through the magazine at [editor@gearsolutionsonline.com](mailto:editor@gearsolutionsonline.com). Responses and reactions to his column are also welcome.