

Supporting Employees

Disasters can be shocking and take an emotional toll on people. Employers can be impacted too. Employees impacted by a natural disaster may find it hard to balance job demands while trying to rebuild their personal lives. Below are ways you can support your employees during these difficult times.

- **Address the organization immediately.** Senior management should meet with all levels of the organization. Discuss ways to promote counseling services and community resources to help the employees.
- **Designate a contact for assistance.** Designate a person in human resources or leadership as a contact person to whom employees can turn for help and resources.
- **Promote communication among employees.** Allowing employees to discuss their feelings and experiences with co-workers can help during difficult times. Consider providing additional break times and have conference rooms available where employees can meet.
- **Help the community.** Organize a blood drive, clothing drive or fundraiser to help those impacted. Many people not directly affected may feel helpless and unsure of how to help. When people are able to make a difference by contributing to their community, they will feel better about themselves.

Communication tips for managers:

What to do:

- Be sensitive to employees with mixed emotions. These are normal reactions to a critical incident.
- Allow employees to express any reactions they may have about this event.
- Answer any questions employees may have to the best of your ability.
- Offer support to employees and try to be flexible.

What to avoid:

- Avoid statements like, “I know how you feel” or “Everything will be all right.” These statements may make some people feel that their concerns are not understood or validated.