

The Hidden Costs of Extreme Weather: 40% of Organisations Fail to Support Mental Health of Impacted Employees

Extreme weather intensifies globally, posing risks to operations and workforces. International SOS Foundation shares insights on business and health impacts.

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, December 6, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As extreme weather events



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Dr Irene Lai

intensify across the world, organisations face mounting risks to both operations and their workforces. Today, the International SOS Foundation is releasing research into this pressing issue, revealing key insights into the business disruptions and health challenges posed by extreme weather.

Key Findings Include:

- **Widespread Impact:** 65% of respondents reported their organisation had been affected by extreme weather in the past five years.
- **Mental Health Gaps:** 40% of organisations fail to provide

mental health support for employees and their families impacted by extreme weather events.

- **Top Threats:** Flooding emerged as the most common issue, with heavy rain being the primary cause, for over 72% of respondents.
- **Disruption Levels:** Among those significantly affected, 80% reported operational disruptions, 54% experienced infrastructure damage, and nearly a quarter saw physical injuries among employees or their families.
- **Lack of Preparedness:** 36% of organisations lack comprehensive plans and policies for extreme weather events, while 57% haven't conducted risk assessments on such threats.

These findings highlight how extreme weather events are already impacting organisations in profound ways, disrupting operations, damaging infrastructure, and putting employee wellbeing at risk. Yet, many organisations remain unprepared for the growing frequency and severity of these events. One critical area of concern is the failure to address health risks associated with extreme weather.

For organisations with plans in place, only a quarter specifically address the health risks to

employees, leaving many unprepared to manage injury, illness, or fatalities during an event. With over a quarter of organisations reporting that they would be unable to locate employees during a crisis, emergency response and effective crisis management are further complicated. This poses a significant risk to both employee safety and organisational continuity.

Moreover, the mental health impact of extreme weather events is often overlooked. After such incidents, many employees are left to cope with trauma, stress, and anxiety, yet 40% of organisations do not offer any mental health support to affected employees and their families. The aftermath of these events can be just as devastating as the physical damage, and without the right support, the long-term consequences can be significant for both individuals and the organisation as a whole.

Dr Irene Lai, Global Medical Director at International SOS, stresses the importance of addressing these health and wellbeing risks in a comprehensive approach:

“In today’s world, businesses are navigating increasingly complex challenges due to extreme weather. It’s not just about bracing for a flood or a heatwave; it is about the human side of resilience—understanding how these events can profoundly impact health, mental wellbeing, and security. Many organisations still overlook the comprehensive planning needed to safeguard their workforce in these moments of crisis. True resilience involves more than just infrastructure; it requires proactive, people-centred planning that prepares both individuals and communities to withstand and recover from these impactful events. This means establishing reliable communication channels, ensuring access to medical and mental health resources, and embedding flexibility in response plans to adapt to evolving situations. When organisations address these elements, they not only protect their people but strengthen their long-term ability to thrive.”

The rising frequency and magnitude of extreme weather events necessitate organisations to adopt more robust solutions. Advances in weather forecasting and monitoring technology provide organisations with greater insight and predictive capabilities, enabling them to prepare and respond more effectively. By integrating early warning systems and enhancing preparedness planning, organisations can mitigate the risks associated with extreme weather and reduce the impact on their operations and workforce. Those who invest in proactive planning will be better positioned to protect their people, maintain business continuity, and navigate the growing challenge of extreme weather. This includes ensuring access to immediate health and mental health support, so employees can receive the care they need to recover and remain resilient in the face of crisis.

The findings are part of the International SOS Foundation’s latest report, “Extreme Weather: Health Impacts on the Global Workforce”, aimed at equipping organisations with insight and to address these critical issues in the evolving climate landscape.

International SOS Foundation provides CPD-certified training courses enabling health and safety professionals and ESG specialists to better integrate workforce health and safety management

and monitoring into ESG strategies and manage occupational health and safety as a core ESG component. The next ESG training, 'ESG: Adapting to the Changing Climate', is taking place on 12 December 2024. For more information and registration, [click here](#).

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About the International SOS Foundation

As ambassadors for Duty of Care for over a decade, the International SOS Foundation drives and promotes best practices in protecting employee safety, security, health and wellbeing. Through a range of groundbreaking thought-leadership, CPD and IOSH accredited training and expert-led events, the Foundation helps to share vital insight, understanding, and practical risk mitigation measures. All employees need to be protected, at home or away, and the COVID-19 pandemic has created an evolving and complex Duty of Care landscape for organisations to navigate.

The Foundation is an independent non-profit and registered charity. For more information on Duty of Care and the International SOS Foundation, please visit

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