Meeting Room Safety

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Prior to getting underway, boat crews and air crews will check their vehicles for safety. Proper equipment in safe, working condition helps to reduce the risk of accidents and mitigate adverse outcomes if they do occur. The same should also apply to our flotilla meeting areas. Buildings without proper equipment in safe working condition can create or exacerbate a hazard.

Below is a quick check list to help assess a meeting area for hazards. As flotillas meet in various locations and types of buildings, this is only a general list. Each flotilla should review its meeting area for building and location specific hazards.

* General Facility Conditions:
  + Floors clean, dry and free of debris
  + Heating and air conditioning systems operational & effective
  + Adequate air quality
  + All occupied areas adequately illuminated
  + Furniture sturdy and in good repair – no sharp edges, splinters
  + Adequate lavatory facilities, and stocked with supplies
  + No mold, mildew or hazardous materials present
  + No evidence of vermin and insect infestation
  + Any meeting space prohibitions – e.g. no food/drink consumption
* Life Safety:
  + Building equipped with functional smoke detectors/fire alarm
  + Fire extinguishers available, accessible and serviced annually
  + First aid kit available. Contents within service life
  + AED available
  + Emergency phone or cell phone available
  + Potential trip hazards addressed – e.g. loose carpeting, uneven flooring, phone cords, cables. Extension cords covered or secured
  + Adequate, secure parking with appropriate external lighting
  + Are there security issues with the surrounding environment – need for escorts?
  + Adequate power outlets – proper use of extension cords
  + No open wiring or electrical work
  + Stacked items over 5 feet properly secured to prevent falls
  + Storage cabinets organized so heaviest items are in the lower or middle shelves.
  + Step stools available if needed
* Exits:
  + Exit signs clearly visible and illuminated
  + Facility layout does not impede evacuation
  + Evacuation routes posted
  + Exits not blocked - both inside and outside building
  + Exits not locked from the inside
  + Door panic bars function properly
  + Post-evacuation rally point and head count established
  + Evacuation procedures reviewed regularly

Sources:

(2015). *Incident Management Handbook Safety Officer - Job Aid*. US Coast Guard.

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