'Best Practice' Checklist

The following points will be of assistance in the establishment of the **"Best Practice".** It is recommended that these are adopted as **aims**. Not all can be put into immediate effect, indeed some may never happen, but it is important to make sure that a Company is aware of what makes effective **Best Practices** and that they strive to achieve this whenever and wherever the opportunity presents itself.

The key points are far from exhaustive and indeed much more detailed advice is available, as required.

Fire Separation/Spread

- If openings are necessary, use fire doors with at least 2 hours resistance
- Where fire doors are fitted, keep the openings free from obstruction
- In un-manned areas, leave them in the closed position
- When they are open during the day, use night staff to close them later
- Holes in floors and walls to accommodate services should be immediately back-filled with concrete

'Hot Work'

This is one of the most common causes of fire today. It is essential that contractors using equipment for cutting, welding, grinding and soldering (and others) are properly controlled, particularly as contractor's employees will not have any knowledge of the hazards in the area where they are working. In addition, they will often be poorly supervised and may seek to take short cuts.

- Implement a 'Hot Work Permit' system

(See www.cityrisk.co.uk for further information and examples)

Kitchens

- Supply adequate extinguishers and fire blankets
- Make sure they're located on escape routes, not next to hazards
- Clean grease filters regularly, preferably with spares for immediate replacement
- Clean ducting regularly
- Ask for photographs (before and after) as part of contract

Heating and Air Conditioning

- Prohibit unauthorised heaters from being introduced
- Prohibit portable heaters
- Maintain boilers and other plant as part of a planned programme
- Fit flame failure devices to cut off gas supply

Electricity

- Regularly inspect and test the electrical installations as part of a planned programme
- Use NICEIC approved contractors for inspections or installation work
- Keep switchgear rooms free of combustibles
- Keep switchgear rooms locked to prevent unauthorised access
- Minimise amount of adapters and extension cables in use by fitting permanent sockets
- If electric irons are supplied, fit neon indicators to plugs order to show if power is still on

Housekeeping

- Remove combustible waste on a daily basis
- Do not burn waste
- As collected, deposit in metal bins with metal lids
- Keep passages, fire exit doors and escape routes free of waste or other goods
- Do not stack waste against the external walls

Terrorism

- Stay alert at all times
- Train staff in what to look for and what to do
- Don't relax - the threat may never disappear

Explosion

- Stay alert and minimise the potential
- Use fire doors to maintain compartments and restrict area of damage

Storm

- Create a regular inspection programme for roof areas
- Make sure all roof plant, aerials and suchlike are properly secured
- Inspect slates, tiles and other roof coverings for damage and repair defects immediately
- Clean gutters, downpipes and drains as part of planned maintenance programme

Flood

- Minimise amount of storage in basements
- Use racking or stillage to keep goods off the floor
- Inspect and clean drains regularly - arrange contract

Bursting or Overflowing of Pipes

- Consider notices in welfare facilities as a reminder of the dangers
- Restrict inflow rates to less than the overflow capability of the bath or basin
- Ensure adequate heating is provided, even in 'cold' areas

Water Supplies

- Keep hydrants free of parked vehicles or other obstruction

Fire Extinguishing Appliances (Hand Appliances and Fire Blankets)

- Prepare checklists for own inspection, say as part of the night fire and security patrol
- Make sure the appliances are easily accessible
- Ensure missing or used appliances are replaced as soon as possible
- Create 'Fire Points' where appliances can be found
- Use signs to highlight their locations
- Maintain these under contract

Automatic Fire Detection

- Upgrade protection to ensure all rooms are fitted with detectors
- Arrange maintenance contracts
- Link to fire brigades (via Central Stations) using BT's Redcare system

Fire Security

Although most security precautions are taken in an attempt to prevent intrusions which will result in the theft of goods, security measures which will reduce or eliminate the possibility of malicious fires are equally, if not more, important. Arson is unfortunately one of the most common causes of fires today and there is a need to re-examine procedures in order to minimise the risk.

- Fit 24 hour alarms to all fire exit doors with signalling to local point e.g. reception
- Secure other doors and minimise the number of entry points whenever possible
- Provide good perimeter lighting

Security/Night Personnel

- Provide proper training in emergency, fire and security procedures
- Provide necessary equipment including torch, pager, telephone
- Consider option of remote Personal Attack alarm
- Monitor performances by regularly reviewing logs and making spot checks

Attractive Goods

- Limit access to the rooms/areas containing attractive items
- Review physical and alarm protection
- Review the location of computers
- Avoid ground floor locations or visible/accessible from windows

Money

In general the following should be considered:

- Use of a security company to carry 'cash' to and from the bank

This will reduce the risk of attack and possible injury to employees (often key and trusted ones). Note that failure to provide a 'safe system of work' for cash handling may be construed as negligence and lead to a claim under the Employer's Liability insurance.

- Adhere to the terms of the Cash in Transit warranty
- Minimise the number of transits during the hours of darkness
- Reduce the amounts at risk by increasing the frequency
- Use the bank opening hours to reduce the amounts held on the premises
- Transfer unused/unnecessary floats to a safe
- Keep safe and other security keys on the person at all times
- Review transit methods e.g. times, routes, escorts, persons, vehicles
- Review cash requirements and minimise amounts held where possible

Business Interruption

Whilst the above points may appear to be geared directly towards eliminating or reducing the potential losses from fires, storms and other material damage perils, any progress that is made in this direction will undoubtedly have a beneficial effect on the Company's capacity to continue to earn revenue. It is recommended that further reviews are undertaken in order to determine:

- The extent to which assistance is available

- To identify the critical areas

- To ascertain where the exposure and risk can be reduced or eliminated

- To determine what plans have been prepared to enable the company to cope with and recover from a disaster

- To review the effectiveness of any plans

Health and Safety

There needs to be a concentrated effort to stay abreast of legislation, which if ignored or given low priority, could create considerable difficulty. Many of the points detailed above are already subject to the wide variety of Health and Safety legislation and the penalties for non compliance can be severe. The need to comply with legislation and create a policy aimed at improving and maintaining the health and safety of all employees is essential. Further benefits will arise as standards improve. Education and training are very important ingredients in the achievement of high standards.

Public Liability

The aspect of Public Safety can probably be catered for in three ways:

- The involvement of a consultant in Health and Safety for employees will have a knock-on effect on the welfare of the public when training and education starts to bear fruit

- The Fire Risk Assessment requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 which came into effect on 1 October 2006

- The quality standards of the Company, as well as the expectations of the clientele, all play a part in ensuring a safe environment for the public