

*Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce
Safety Procedures, Disaster/Emergency Evacuation Plan*

May 16, 2002

Office Safety Procedures

The Chamber is concerned about the safety and security of all employees and strives to provide this in the workplace. To accomplish this goal, employees must diligently undertake efforts to promote safety and security. The Chamber believes that the establishment and maintenance of a safe and secure work site is truly a shared responsibility, not just for the Chamber, but for all employees in every level of the organization. Employees are encouraged to exercise caution in all work activities and to immediately report unsafe, unsecured or hazardous conditions, equipment, or acts to their supervisor. If applicable, employees will receive specific training designed to promote safety and security.

Some helpful hints for maintaining a safe work environment appear below:

- Be observant of all visitors. Practice writing down a description of a visitor. Observe the type of clothing worn such as bulky garments that could conceal a weapon or box.
- A deranged person seems to “pick on” an employee who is alone. There must be two Chamber employees downstairs at all times.
- Visitors should be escorted through the building by a staff member. Upstairs staff should be notified if a visitor is coming upstairs unescorted.
- Employees should try to leave the building before dark when possible.
- Employees should lock the door behind them immediately after entering the building.
- Only one exterior entrance should be unlocked during work hours – the visitors’ entrance. The front doors and employee entrance should be locked at all times.
- If a downstairs employee has a sensitive situation with a visitor, call an upstairs employee and say, “Please don’t forget your appointment with Ola Belle.” In that event, the Chamber president or the Financial/H.R. Coordinator will be notified immediately.
- The last employee to leave the building in the evening is responsible for double-checking all lamps, heaters, fans, and locks, and for setting the burglar/fire alarm.
- The downstairs Administrative Assistant has an emergency buzzer under her desk. In the event of a sensitive situation, he/she will activate the buzzer, which alarms on the second floor. The President will walk downstairs to assist, while other upstairs staff will gather quietly at the top of the stairs to listen to the conversation. Upstairs staff will call 911 if appropriate.

Disaster/Emergency Evacuation Plan

- There are three exterior exits on the first floor. In case of emergency evacuation, downstairs staff will note the sign-out board to determine who is in the building at the time, and then exit the appropriate door and gather at the gazebo. One staff member will go to the Federal Building to call 911, if the call could not be made from the building. In case of fire, the smoke/fire detector will notify the building occupants

and the fire department of the emergency. Fire extinguishers are located on both floors: One is located in the kitchen/work room downstairs, one is located next to the upstairs elevator closet, and one is located in the upstairs master bathroom.

- There are two exterior exits on the second floor. In case of emergency evacuation, if unable to use the staircase to exit a first floor door, staff will use the folding emergency ladder or the 10-foot ladder, both of which are stored in the upstairs closet, to evacuate from one of the balconies. Staff on the ground will assist with the ladder. All staff will gather at the gazebo. Chamber President (or Financial/HR Coordinator) will determine that all staff are accounted for.
- In the event of severe weather, such as a tornado, all staff will gather in the basement. Chamber President (or Financial/HR Coordinator) will note the sign-out board to determine who is in the building. A weather radio will be on alert 24/7. A flashlight with fresh batteries will remain on the doorknob of the door to the basement.
- In the event of a national emergency or terrorist threat to the community, the Chamber staff will follow the directives of the Lowndes County Disaster Plan.

Staff Training

- The Financial/HR Coordinator and the Office Coordinator will be responsible for quarterly training updates for Chamber staff on these safety procedures.