

Baylor University Digitizes and Maps Building Emergency Action Plans with Veoci

The Issue

Baylor University's Office of Emergency Preparedness has developed building emergency action plans (BEAPs) for all of its campus buildings. The plans were being kept and updated in individual spreadsheets, which was not an optimal method. It complicated the process of updating and maintaining the BEAPs by making it difficult to track and manage them, and limited their visibility and accessibility.

For a university with 17,000 students, 3,600 faculty and staff, and a 1,000 acre campus with 98 buildings, a better way to manage their BEAPs needed to be found.

Maintaining and Utilizing BEAPs

As with other emergency management offices at institutions of higher education, Baylor University's Office of Emergency Preparedness utilizes BEAPs. Each of these plans designate one or more of the university's 400 Building Emergency Coordinators and capture information for responding to emergency scenarios.

The Building Emergency Coordinators (BECs) go through trainings, update building information and equipment status, and maintain their own contact information for the Office of Emergency Preparedness. This, in turn, helps the team maintain the official list of on-campus buildings.

Spreadsheets, which lend themselves well to storing and organizing the strings of information BEAPs collect, were the tool of choice for this operation. Spreadsheets, however, are not able to make the information directly actionable, which means that the data they contain needs to be translated into another system (if such a system is available) before it can be

used. For example, given the importance of the physical location of a building on a large campus, BEAPs greatly benefit from being able to show exactly where an impacted site is on an interactive map.



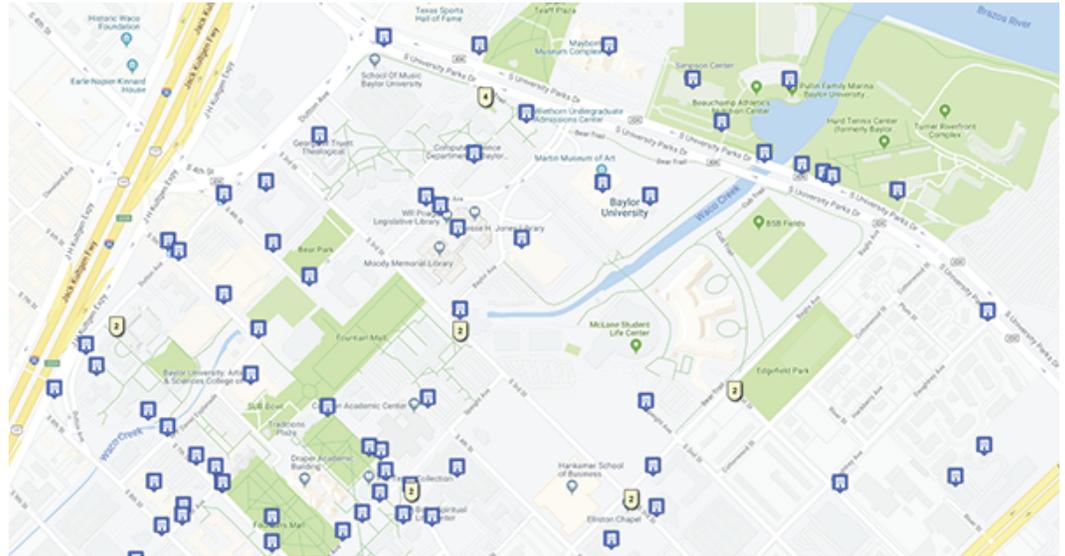
The Challenges

BEAPs contain critical information that students, faculty, staff, and responders need during an incident. Evacuation points, meet-up spots, and equipment locations all serve a vital function in these scenarios. This means BEAPs need to always be accessible and easy to find. Spreadsheets stored on shared drives (or individual hard drives) aren't within easy reach of the people who need it most.

Instead, a centralized, quickly accessed, and organized plan that anyone can access from the web or their phone ensures that everyone is in the know.

BEAPs also need to constantly evolve as the campus grows and changes - they need to be as up to date as possible to be of use. If people's roles change, or equipment is moved, BECs have to make the necessary changes to each affected plan. When buildings are built or renovated or redesignated, the plans need to be updated. Having to do that in a spreadsheet, then chase down and replace previous versions, and inform team members, is not how BECs should be spending their time.

Making it easy to perform updates expedites this part of the process, and



results in more accurate and effective plans.

Mobilizing and Mapping Data

With Veoci, key pieces of information for a given BEAP are captured through an easy to use digital Form. This solution enables the department to do much more with the data. Not only is the data now mobilized for operations through this solution, but it can be easily updated during yearly reviews or when necessary.

More importantly, that information is used directly to launch tasks and actions, and can be referenced by situation dashboards, communications, and any other incident response activity with no manual intervention whatsoever.

The solution makes the data “live” - it doesn't just sit in spreadsheets, but instead is referenced directly by the system in a number of different ways, all geared towards offering an accurate and complete view of the campus. Selected data points within the BEAPs, which are stored in Veoci as Form entries, can be easily accessed without having to search through spreadsheets and tabs, using Saved Views, which are essentially complex data filters that can

be used not just to narrow down rows of data, but also to provide scoped data to different methods of display.

For instance, if the department wants to only see each building's BECs and their contact information, they can quickly build a Saved View for solely displaying these points of data, and use that Saved view to show that specific information in a Dashboard tile which can serve as a critical roles list during an incident.

Another example of the versatility of Saved Views is with GIS mapping. Maps are a built-in feature of any Veoci Room; choosing what to display on the map is just a matter of selecting a Saved View of data. For Baylor, the result is a publicly available map with campus building information, usable by students, faculty and staff, and also responder in times of emergency.

Icons on the map correspond to the real locations of each building thanks to an address field within the BEAP Form. And by interacting with the icons on the map, users can directly drill into the data to gather required information, assess risk and impact, and perform updates.

Anyone with the right permissions can



view the map through this Saved View, including:

- Baylor University students, faculty, and staff, to get important information and instructions
- The university's dispatchers, who can relay situation reports to responders and stakeholders in the event of incident
- Families and the surrounding community, who, through a publicly available Saved View, can view a redacted version of the plan and vetted updates

The Results

The Baylor University Office of Emergency Preparedness saw these results from this solution:

- An accurate map of BEAPs that increased the visibility and accessibility of the data within
- A robust tool for building, maintaining, and using BEAPs
- A platform to track pertinent information in BEAPs for 98 facilities across campus

BEAPs no longer sit in spreadsheets for Baylor University; instead, the plans are visualized, easy to update, and always available to both Baylor University's users and the public when necessary. Translating the plans to a mappable, digital process has made more efficient, and therefore more effective, during emergencies - in any crisis, time is of the essence. With Veoci, the Baylor University Office of Emergency Preparedness has the tools needed to make the program and its plans accessible and effective.