

Kenya adopts mass evacuation standard

*In 2014, ISO published **ISO 22315, Societal security – Mass Evacuation – Guidelines for Planning**. This document provides guidelines for mass evacuation planning in terms of establishing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, reviewing, and improving preparedness. It establishes a framework for each activity in mass evacuation planning for all identified hazards. It can be used by any organization to develop plans for mass evacuation to gain a more effective response during an actual evacuation.*

Recent disasters such as Hurricane Irma in September 2017 show how important it is to have plans in place for mass evacuations to save and protect the lives of people exposed to actual or imminent danger. In advance of the hurricane, almost 7 million people in the south eastern US were told to evacuate and it is estimated that over 700,000 did evacuate to safety. Planning for such situations is critical to effectively mobilize and coordinate capacity and resources and manage the safe and timely evacuation of all persons at risk, to meet emergency needs for shelter and assistance, and to ensure evacuees and other affected people can recover from the disruption and risks created by their displacement as safely and quickly as possible.

One country that has recognized the value of putting this Standard into practice is Kenya. Shortly after the publication of the Standard, Angellah Wekesah, an expert member of Working Group 5 on Community Resilience, consulted with members of her mirror committee and was successful in getting the Standard adopted and launched locally in her region. The response was immediate with numerous requests to disseminate the Standard more widely within Kenya.



Angellah spearheaded a proposal to the National Standards Body, KEBS, to promote the use of the Standard. As a result, three dissemination workshops have been conducted in Kenya. Angellah says,

“I would like to do more to promote implementation of the Standard given the applause it has received in my country”.

While there has not been a major disaster in Kenya that would necessitate a mass evacuation, Angellah notes that Standard has been very useful in helping the National Disaster Management of Kenya in developing plans, following several smaller incidents.