

Take emergency drills seriously

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FIRE and Rescue Department director-general Datuk Wan Mohd Nor recently said that the Malaysian public has yet to grasp the importance of participating in safety drills because they have not faced a devastating natural disaster or massive fire.

As one who is passionate about safety and is working towards promoting safety, I share his view.

The fact is that Malaysia is regarded as a safe country unlike others which are often hit by natural disasters like earthquakes, typhoons, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis etc.

Malaysians are generally in a comfort zone and take the issue of safety for granted.

The irony is that although Malaysia is safe from major natural disasters, our road safety record is horrendous judging by the 6,000 road deaths annually.

A matter raised by Wan Mohd Nor pertaining to the lack of urgency involving occupants of commercial buildings, airports and train stations each time when fire and safety drills are carried out is a case in point.

Occupants of the buildings are supposed to be out of the premises in about 30 minutes but in Malaysia many take their own sweet time to vacate the premises, with some still making telephone calls or taking time to finish their drinks.

There should never be such a lackadaisical attitude as it can prove to be disastrous or fatal in the event of a fire engulfing a building or in an emergency.

Participating in a fire and rescue drill or any other form of safety drills is very important and all those affected must have a sense of urgency as it is a matter of life and death.

I believe there are buildings in Malaysia which do not have annual fire and safety drills.

It is time for the parties involved to look at this matter seriously and act to rectify the situation.

Organising safety and fire drills in respect of all buildings must be done annually.

Drilling safety into Malaysians must be a way of life and be made a core value and a culture.

We must never be under the assumption that Malaysia is forever safe from natural disasters. We had our fair share of the 2008 tsunami. With the global climatic change, we may encounter some natural disasters in the future.

As such Malaysians must take an active interest in all forms of safety drills and learn some useful lessons which are beneficial and prepare them for the worst in the event of a disaster.

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