

Emergency Action Plans



OSHAcademy Course 717 Study Guide

Emergency Action Plans

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Contact OSHAcademy to arrange for use as a training document.

This study guide is designed to be reviewed off-line as a tool for preparation to successfully complete OSHAcademy Course 717.

Read each module, answer the quiz questions, and submit the quiz questions online through the course webpage. You can print the post-quiz response screen which will contain the correct answers to the questions.

The final exam will consist of questions developed from the course content and module quizzes.

We hope you enjoy the course and if you have any questions, feel free to email or call:

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Course Introduction

Why should you have an Emergency Action Plan?

The importance of an effective workplace safety and health program cannot be overemphasized. There are many benefits from such a program, including increased productivity, improved employee morale, reduced absenteeism and illness, and reduced workers' compensation rates. Unfortunately, workplace accidents and illnesses still occur in spite of efforts to prevent them, and proper planning is necessary to effectively respond to emergencies.

Several Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards explicitly require employers to have emergency action plans for their workplaces. Emergency preparedness is a well-known concept in protecting workers' safety and health. To help employers, safety and health professionals, training directors, and others, the OSHA requirements for emergencies are compiled and summarized in this booklet.

This course provides a generic, non-exhaustive overview of OSHA standards for emergencies. It is not intended to alter or determine compliance responsibilities in OSHA standards or the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. Please review the current OSHA standards applicable to your work operations to ensure your compliance.

At a minimum, OSHA requires EAPs to include:

- Means of reporting fires and other emergencies
- Emergency procedures and escape route assignments
- Procedures to be followed by employees who remain to operate critical plant operations before they evacuate
- Procedures to account for all employees after an emergency evacuation has been completed
- Rescue and medical duties for those employees who are to perform them
- Names or job titles of persons who can be contacted for further information or explanation of duties under the plan

It's also a good idea to include these elements in your EAP, although they are not specifically required by OSHA:

- A description of the alarm system to be used to notify employees (including disabled employees) to evacuate and/or take other actions. The alarms used for different actions should be distinctive and might include horn blasts, sirens, or even public address systems.
- The site of an alternative communications center to be used in the event of a fire or explosion.
- A secure location, on or off site, to store originals or duplicate copies of accounting records, legal documents, your employees' emergency contact lists, and other essential records.

Module 1: Basic Questions

What is a workplace emergency?

A workplace emergency is an unforeseen situation that threatens your employees, customers, or the public; disrupts or shuts down your operations; or causes physical or environmental damage. Emergencies may be natural or manmade and include the following:

Natural Disasters	Technological	Human
Avalanche Biological Drought Sand Storms Earthquakes Extreme Heat/Cold Fire Flood Hurricane Landslide/Mudslide Lightning Snow/Ice/Hail Tornado Volcanic Eruption Tsunami	Aircraft Crash Structural Collapse Business Interruption Communication Dam/Levee Failure Explosions/Fire Extreme Air Pollution Financial Collapse Fuel/Resource Shortage Hazardous Material Release Power/Utility Failure Radiological/Nuclear Accidents Transportation Accidents	Arson Civil Unrest Economic Enemy Attack General Strike Hostage Situation Mass Hysteria Sabotage Special Events Terrorism War Workplace Violence Strikes Famine

What is an Emergency Action Plan?

The Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is an "action plan" to organize employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies. Well developed emergency plans and proper employee training will result in fewer injuries and less structural damage to the facility during emergencies. On the other hand, a poorly prepared plan may lead to a disorganized evacuation or emergency response, resulting in confusion, injury, and property damage.

Putting together an EAP that deals with those issues specific to your worksite is not difficult. It involves taking what was learned from a workplace evaluation and describing how employees will respond to different types of emergencies. It takes into account your specific worksite layout, structural features, and emergency systems. You will find it beneficial to include a

diverse group of representatives (management and employees) in the planning process and to meet frequently to review progress and responsibilities. The commitment of all employees is critical to the plan's success in the event of an emergency so ask for their help. More information...

What are the components of an effective Emergency Action Plan?

At a minimum, the EAP must include the following elements:

- Ways to report fires and other emergencies
- [Evacuation procedures](#) and emergency escape route assignments
- Procedures to be followed by those who remain to operate critical plant operations before they evacuate
- Procedures to account for all employees after an emergency evacuation has been completed
- Rescue and medical duties for those who are to perform them
- Names or job titles of persons who can be contacted for further information or explanation of duties under the plan



You may find it helpful to also include the following in your plan:

- A description of the alarm system used to notify employees to evacuate and/or take other actions.
- Make sure alarms used for different actions are distinctive. You might include horn blasts, sirens, or even public address systems.
- The site of an alternative communications center to be used in the event of a fire or explosion; and
- A secure on- or offsite location to store originals or duplicate copies of important documents.

Do I Need an Emergency Action Plan?

Almost every business is required by OSHA to have an emergency action plan (EAP). OSHA may require you to have an EAP if:

1. fire extinguishers are required or provided in your workplace, and
2. anyone will be evacuating during a fire or other emergency.

The only exemption to this is if you have an in-house fire brigade in which every employee is trained and equipped to fight fires, and consequently, no one evacuates.

In most circumstances, immediate evacuation is the best policy, especially if professional firefighting services are available to respond quickly. There may be situations where employee firefighting is warranted to give other workers time to escape, or to prevent danger to others by spread of a fire. In this case, the employer is still required to have an EAP.

How do I evaluate my workplace?

The best way to protect yourself and others is to prepare for an emergency before it happens by doing a thorough assessment of the workplace. Think about possible emergency situations and evaluate your workplace to see if it is sufficiently prepared using the following OSHA standards:

Design and construction requirements for exit routes - 29 CFR 1910.36: This standard contains requirements for the design and construction of exit routes. It includes a requirement that exit routes be permanent, addresses fire resistance-ratings of construction materials used in exit stairways (exits), describes openings into exits, defines the minimum number of exit routes in workplaces, addresses exit discharges, and discusses locked exit route doors, and exit route doors. It also addresses the capacity, height and width of exit routes, and finally, it sets forth requirements for exit routes that are outside a building.

Maintenance, safeguards, and operational features for exit routes - 29 CFR 1910.37: This standard includes requirements for the safe use of exit routes during an emergency, lighting and marking exit routes, fire retardant paints, exit routes during construction, repairs, or alterations, and employee alarm systems.

Emergency action plans (EAP) - 29 CFR 1910.38: Again, the EAP facilitates and organizes employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies

Fire prevention plans (FPP) - 29 CFR 1910.39: The purpose of the fire prevention plan is to prevent a fire from occurring in a workplace. It describes the fuel sources (hazardous or other materials) on site that could initiate or contribute both to the spread of a fire, as well as the building systems, such as fixed fire extinguishing systems and alarm systems, in place to control the ignition or spread of a fire.

Portable fire extinguishers - 29 CFR 1910.157: Workplace fires and explosions kill hundreds and injure thousands of workers each year. One way to limit the amount of damage due to such fires is to make portable fire extinguishers an important part of your fire prevention program. When used properly, fire extinguishers can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or controlling a fire until additional help arrives.

Fixed extinguishing systems - 29 CFR 1910.160: Fixed fire extinguishing/suppression systems are commonly used to protect areas containing valuable or critical equipment such as data processing rooms, telecommunication switches, and process control rooms. Their main function is to quickly extinguish a developing fire and alert occupants before extensive damage occurs by filling the protected area with a gas or chemical extinguishing agent.

Fire detection systems - 29 CFR 1910.164: Automatic fire detection systems, when combined with other elements of an emergency response and evacuation plan, can significantly reduce property damage, personal injuries, and loss of life from fire in the workplace. Their main function is to quickly identify a developing fire and alert building occupants and emergency response personnel before extensive damage occurs. Automatic fire detection systems do this by using electronic sensors to detect the smoke, heat, or flames from a fire and providing an early warning.

Employee alarm systems - 29 CFR 1910.165: The purpose of the employee alarm systems standard is to reduce the severity of workplace accidents and injuries by ensuring that alarm systems operate properly and procedures are in place to alert employees to workplace emergencies.

What are the steps in developing the EAP?

Drafting an EAP is not enough to ensure the safety of your employees. When an evacuation is necessary, you will need responsible, trained individuals who can supervise and coordinate activities to ensure a safe and successful evacuation. An EAP will be useful only if its content is up to date and employees are sufficiently educated and trained before an actual evacuation. Conduct the following steps to successfully develop and implement your plan:

1. Develop the emergency action plan
2. Establish authority
3. Conduct employee training and plan review
4. Review, coordinate and update the plan

I will be covering these four EAP steps in the following modules of this course. Now that you have read through the basic overview of an emergency action plan, find out how to develop the written plan in the next module. Ah, but first, make sure you take the module review quiz.

Module 1 Quiz

Use this quiz to self-check your understanding of the module content. You can also go online and take this quiz within the module. The online quiz provides the correct answer once submitted.

1. Which of the following is NOT required in an effective Emergency Action Plan?

- a. evacuation procedures and escape routes
- b. local government approval
- c. ways to report fires
- d. assignment of rescue and medical duties

2. Which of the following criteria must be met for OSHA to require an emergency action plan?

- a. fire extinguishers are required and provided
- b. trained employee fire brigade
- c. employee evacuation during a fire or emergency
- d. a and b above
- e. a and c above

3. Which of the following is the "exception" to the requirement for an emergency action plan?

- a. fire extinguishers are required and provided
- b. a trained employee fire brigade
- c. employee evacuation during a fire or emergency
- d. a professional emergency response team within 3 minutes

4. What is the best way to protect yourself and others from emergencies?

- a. continually remind workers what to do
- b. place poster at strategic locations around work
- c. test the 911 emergency response system regularly
- d. conduct a thorough assessment of the workplace

5. According to the text, which of the following areas need NOT be considered to evaluate your workplace to see if it is sufficiently prepared?

- a. community emergency response
- b. effective exit routes
- c. emergency action plans
- d. fire prevention plans

Module 2: Developing the EAP

Make sure the EAP meets specific needs

A simple Emergency Action Plan will work in offices, small retail shops, and small manufacturing settings where there are few or no hazardous materials or processes, and employees evacuate when alarms sound or when notified by public address systems. More complex plans may be required in workplaces containing hazardous materials or workplaces where employees fight fires, perform rescue and medical tasks, or delay evacuation after alarms sound to shut down critical equipment.

It is essential that the emergency action plan developed be site specific with respect to emergency conditions evaluated, evacuation policies and [procedures](#), emergency reporting, and alarm systems. To assist you in your planning, take a look at this [sample vulnerability analysis](#) that will help you identify issues that must be considered when drafting a comprehensive emergency action plan. An explanation of each issue and/or examples of how each issue might be addressed in typical workplaces is provided.

The best emergency action plans include employees in the planning process, specify what employees should do during an emergency, and ensure that employees receive proper training for emergencies. When you include your employees in your planning, encourage them to offer suggestions about potential hazards, worst-case scenarios, and proper emergency responses.

During development and implementation of your draft plan, think about all possible emergency situations and evaluate your workplace to see if it complies with OSHA's emergency standards.

Consider and list potential natural or man-made emergencies

Common sources of emergencies identified in emergency action plans include - fires, explosions, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, toxic material releases, radiological and biological accidents, civil disturbances and workplace violence.

It's vitally important to conduct a hazard assessment of the workplace to identify any physical or chemical hazards that may exist and could cause an emergency.

Be sure to consider the impact of these internal and external emergencies on the workplace's



operations. Get together and brainstorm the worst case scenarios asking yourself what you would do and what would be the likely impact on your operation and devise appropriate responses.

Make sure you have a list of key personnel with contact information as well as contact information for local emergency responders, agencies and contractors. Keep your list of key contacts current and make provisions for an emergency communications system such as a cellular phone, a portable radio unit, or other means so that contact with local law enforcement, the fire department, and others can be swift.

Also make sure the plan contains a list of the names, titles, departments, and telephone numbers of individuals to contact for additional information or an explanation of duties and responsibilities under the plan.

Develop rescue and medical assistance strategies

Unless you are a large employer handling hazardous materials and processes or have employees regularly working in hazardous situations, you will probably choose to rely on local public resources, such as the fire department, who are trained, equipped, and certified to conduct rescues. Make sure any external department or agency identified in your plan is prepared to respond as outlined in your plan. Untrained individuals may endanger themselves and those they are trying to rescue.

Most small employers do not have a formal internal medical program and make arrangements with medical clinics or facilities close by to handle emergency cases and provide medical and first-aid services to their employees. If an infirmary, clinic, or hospital is not close to your workplace, ensure that onsite person(s) have adequate training in first aid.

The American Red Cross, some insurance providers, local safety councils, fire departments, or other resources may be able to provide this training. Treatment of a serious injury should begin within 3 to 4 minutes of the accident. Consult with a physician to order appropriate first-aid supplies for emergencies. Establish a relationship with a local ambulance service so transportation is readily available for emergencies.



Don't forget, if a real catastrophe like a major earthquake or hurricane occurs, local rescue services or government will probably not be able to come to the rescue. You'll be on your own for a number of days or weeks (remember Katrina?). Make sure that you plan for the worst case scenario and assume no outside help.

Important communications considerations

In the event of an emergency, it could be important to have ready access to important personal information about your employees. This includes their home telephone numbers, the names and telephone numbers of their next of kin, and medical information.

Identify methods for reporting fires and other emergencies

Dialing 911 is a common method for reporting emergencies if external responders are utilized. Internal numbers may be used. Internal numbers are sometimes connected to intercom systems so that coded announcements may be made. In some cases employees are requested to activate manual pull stations or other alarm systems.



Develop methods to alert employees

Make sure alarms are distinctive and recognized by all employees as a signal to evacuate the work area or perform other actions identified in your plan. Sequences of horn blows or different types of alarms (bells, horns, etc.) can be used to signal different responses or actions from employees.

Consider making available an emergency communications system, such as a public address system, for broadcasting emergency information to employees. Ideally alarms will be able to be heard, seen, or otherwise perceived by everyone in the workplace including those that may be blind or deaf. Otherwise floor wardens or others must be tasked with ensuring all employees are notified. You may want to consider providing an auxiliary power supply in the event of an electrical failure.

Identify how and when employees will be trained

Training should be offered employees when you develop your initial plan and when new employees are hired. Employees should be trained or retrained as required when your plan changes due to a change in the layout or design of the facility, when new equipment, hazardous materials, or processes are introduced that affect evacuation routes, or when new types of hazards are introduced that require special actions.

General training for your employees should address the following:

- Individual roles and responsibilities;
- Threats, hazards, and protective actions;
- Notification, warning, and communications procedures;
- Emergency response procedures;
- Evacuation, shelter, and accountability procedures;
- Location and use of common emergency equipment; and
- Emergency shutdown procedures.



You may also need to provide additional training to your employees (i.e. first-aid procedures, portable fire extinguisher use, etc.) depending on the responsibilities allocated employees in your plan.

Address how and when drills and retraining will be conducted

If training is not reinforced it will be forgotten. Consider retraining employees annually.

Once you have reviewed your emergency action plan with your employees and everyone has had the proper training, it is a good idea to hold practice drills as often as necessary to keep employees prepared. Include outside resources such as fire and police departments when possible. After each drill,



gather management and employees to evaluate the effectiveness of the drill. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of your plan and work to improve it.

Module 2 Quiz

Use this quiz to self-check your understanding of the module content. You can also go online and take this quiz within the module. The online quiz provides the correct answer once submitted.

- 1. Emergency action plan evacuation policies and procedures, emergency reporting, and alarm systems should be _____.**
 - a. standardized within the community
 - b. site specific
 - c. generic
 - d. approved by OSHA

- 2. Which of the following should be conducted to identify physical and chemical hazards in the workplace?**
 - a. safety inspection
 - b. brainstorming session
 - c. job hazard analysis
 - d. hazard assessment

- 3. What action should be taken if an infirmary, clinic, or hospital is not close to your workplace?**
 - a. contract with Red Cross for services
 - b. ensure a 911 call process is in place
 - c. conduct employee first aid training
 - d. find the nearest medical clinic

- 4. What is the immediate plan if your workplace does not have adequate emergency alarms?**
 - a. floor wardens will notify all employees.
 - b. run through the workplace yelling "get out!"
 - c. contract for external warning devices
 - d. plan to eventually install better alarms

- 5. What action should be taken when your plan changes due to a change in the layout or design of the facility, when new equipment, hazardous materials, or processes are introduced**

that affect evacuation routes, or when new types of hazards are introduced that requires special actions?

- a. training or retraining
- b. recall of all employees
- c. review of chemical and physical hazards
- d. revision of the plan

Module 3: Policies and Procedures

One policy doesn't fit all situations

It may be impossible to provide a one-fits-all plan for all situations. There is no guarantee that a perfect response to disaster emergency incidents will be practical or possible. In fact, "stuff" will happen during an emergency that may have been impossible to foresee or plan for. Therefore, most EAPs address basic emergency planning, [response procedures](#) and evaluation.

At the time of an emergency, employees should know what type of evacuation is necessary and what their role is in carrying out the plan. In some cases where the emergency is very grave, total and immediate evacuation of all employees is necessary. In other emergencies, a partial evacuation of nonessential employees with a delayed evacuation of others may be necessary for continued plant operation. In some cases, only those employees in the immediate area of the fire may be expected to evacuate or move to a safe area such as when a local application fire suppression system discharge employee alarm is sounded. Employees must be sure that they know what is expected of them in all such emergency possibilities which have been planned in order to provide assurance of their safety from fire or other emergency.

Duties and Responsibilities of the EAP Team

The EAP may specify different actions for employees depending on the emergency. For example, employers may want to have employees assemble in one area of the workplace if it is threatened by a tornado or earthquake but evacuate to an exterior location during a fire.

Designate who, if anyone, will stay to shut down critical operations during an evacuation

You may want to include in your plan locations where utilities (such as electrical and gas utilities) can be shut down for all or part of the facility. All individuals remaining behind to shut down critical systems or utilities must be capable of recognizing when to abandon the operation or task and evacuate themselves.

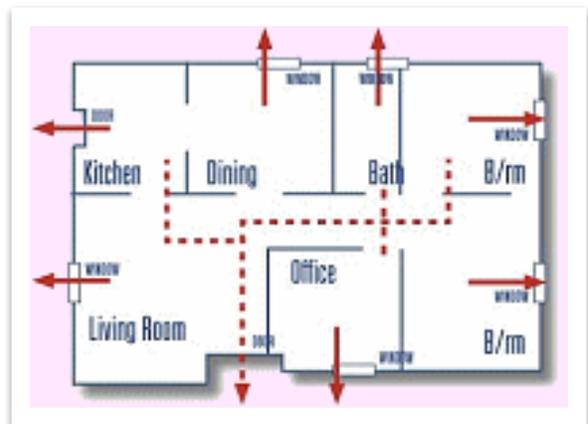


Determine specific evacuation routes and exits

Most employers create maps from floor diagrams with arrows that designate the exit route assignments. These maps should include locations of exits, assembly points and equipment (such as fire extinguishers, first aid kits, spill kits) that may be needed in an emergency. Exit routes should be clearly marked and well lit, wide enough to accommodate the number of evacuating personnel, unobstructed and clear of debris at all times, and unlikely to expose evacuating personnel to additional hazards. Here are some important requirements to consider:



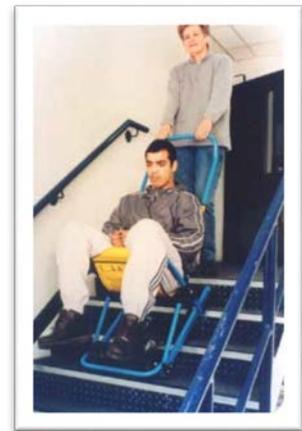
- Make exit route design permanent.
- Ensure that the number of exit routes is adequate based on the number of employees, the size of the building, its occupancy, and the arrangement of the workplace.
- Separate an exit route from other workplace areas with materials that have the proper fire resistance-rating for the number of stories the route connects.
- Ensure that exit routes meet width and height requirements. The width of exit routes must be sufficient to accommodate the maximum permitted occupant load of each floor served by the exit route.
- Ensure that doors used to access exit routes have side hinges and swing in the direction of travel (depending on occupancy and hazard areas).
- Design exit routes that lead to an outside area with enough space for all occupants.
- An outdoor exit route is permitted but may have additional site-specific requirements.
- Maintain the fire-retardant properties of paints and solutions that are used in exit routes.
- Ensure that required exit routes and fire protections are available and maintained, especially during repairs and alterations.



- Ensure that employee alarm systems are installed, operable, and in compliance with [29 CFR 1910.165](#) (Note: See Section I.A.5.).
- Direct employees through exit routes using clearly visible signs. These signs must meet the required letter height and illumination specifications.
- When openings could be mistaken for an exit, post appropriate signs stating “NOT AN EXIT.”
- Arrange exit routes so that employees are not exposed to the dangers of high hazard areas.
- Exit routes must be free and unobstructed. Prevent obstructions, such as decorations, furnishings, locked doorways, and dead-ends within exit routes.

Procedures for assisting people during evacuations

Many employers designate individuals as evacuation wardens to help move employees from danger to safe areas during an emergency. Generally, one warden for every 20 employees should be adequate, and the appropriate number of wardens should be available at all times during working hours. Wardens may be responsible for checking offices and bathrooms before being the last person to exit an area as well as ensuring that fire doors are closed when exiting. Employees designated to assist in emergency evacuation procedures should be trained in the complete workplace layout and various alternative escape routes. Employees designated to assist in emergencies should be made aware of employees with special needs (who may require



extra assistance during an evacuation), how to use the buddy system, and any hazardous areas to avoid during an emergency evacuation.

Assembly areas and methods to account for all employees

Accounting for all employees following an evacuation is critical. Confusion in the assembly areas can lead to delays in rescuing anyone trapped in the building, or unnecessary and dangerous search-and-rescue operations. To ensure the fastest, most accurate accounting of your employees, consider taking a head count after the evacuation. The names and last known locations of anyone not accounted for should be passed on to the official in charge.



Address how visitors will be assisted in evacuation and accounted for

Some employers have all visitors and contractors sign in when entering the workplace. The hosts and/or area wardens, if established, are often tasked with assisting these individuals evacuate safely.

Module 3 Quiz

Use this quiz to self-check your understanding of the module content. You can also go online and take this quiz within the module. The online quiz provides the correct answer once submitted.

1. Most EAPs address _____ emergency planning, response and evaluation.

- a. brief
- b. basic
- c. specific
- d. advanced

2. What must you know if you are assigned to stay behind to shut down critical systems during an emergency?

- a. who to rescue
- b. where to call in the order
- c. how to give the "all clear"
- d. when to abandon the operation

3. The adequacy of exit routes is based on all of the following, EXCEPT:

- a. number of employees
- b. number of primary exits
- c. size of the building
- d. arrangement of the workplace

4. What action should be taken if an opening could be mistaken for an exit?

- a. post a yellow arrow pointing to exit
- b. post a guard to redirect employees
- c. post a "USE OTHER DOOR" sign
- d. post a "NOT AN EXIT" sign

5. Exit routes must always be _____.

- a. determined by OSHA
- b. free and unobstructed
- c. marked with a yellow arrow
- d. located on each side of a building

6. What action should be taken to ensure the fastest, most accurate accounting of your employees after an evacuation?

- a. arrange everyone in alphabetical order
- b. line everyone up against the wall
- c. take a head count of all employees
- d. recheck workstations for others

Module 4: Duties, Responsibilities and Training

Establish authority

It is common practice to select a responsible individual to lead and coordinate your emergency plan and evacuation. It is critical that employees know who the EAP coordinator is and understand that this person has the authority to make decisions during emergencies. The EAP coordinator should be responsible for assessing the situation to determine whether an emergency exists that requires an activation of the emergency procedures, overseeing emergency procedures, notifying and coordinating with outside emergency services, and directing shutdown of utilities or plant operations if necessary.



In other instances, local emergency officials, such as the local fire department, may order you to evacuate your premises. If you have access to radio or television, listen to newscasts to keep informed and follow whatever official orders you receive.

Determine who is in charge

When emergency officials, such as the local fire department, respond to an emergency at your workplace, they will assume responsibility for the safety of building occupants and have the authority to make decisions regarding evacuation and whatever other actions are necessary to protect life and property. The highest-ranking responder will assume the incident command role and will work with the onsite emergency coordinator, but will be responsible for directing all response activities.

Designate Evacuation Coordinators

When drafting your emergency action plan, you may wish to select a responsible individual to lead and coordinate your emergency plan and evacuation. It is critical that employees know who the



coordinator is and understand that person has the authority to make decisions during emergencies.

The coordinator should be responsible for the following:

- Assessing the situation to determine whether an emergency exists requiring activation of your emergency procedures;
- Supervising all efforts in the area, including evacuating personnel;
- Coordinating outside emergency services, such as medical aid and local fire departments, and ensuring that they are available and notified when necessary; and
- Directing the shutdown of plant operations when required.

You also may find it beneficial to coordinate the action plan with other employers when several employers share the worksite, although OSHA standards do not specifically require this.

Designate Evacuation Wardens

In addition to a coordinator, you may want to designate evacuation wardens to help move employees from danger to safe areas during an emergency. Generally, one warden for every 20 employees should be adequate, and the appropriate number of wardens should be available at all times during working hours.



Employees designated to assist in emergency evacuation procedures should be trained in the complete workplace layout and various alternative escape routes. All employees and those designated to assist in emergencies should be made aware of employees with special needs who may require extra assistance, how to use the buddy system, and hazardous areas to avoid during an emergency evacuation.

Conduct employee EAP training

Before implementing the emergency action plan, designate and train enough people to assist in the safe and orderly emergency evacuation of employees. Review the EAP may occur for several reasons:

- Review the EAP with all employees when the initial plan is developed or changed.
- Train each new employee when he or she is initially assigned to the job.
- Review the plan with each employee when his/her actions or responsibilities under the plan change.

Effective plans often call for retraining employees annually and include drills in which employees can practice evacuating their workplace and gathering in the assembly area.

What everyone should know how to do

Educate your employees about the types of emergencies that may occur and train them in the proper course of action. The size of your workplace and workforce, processes used, materials handled, and the availability of onsite or outside resources will determine your training requirements.



- Make sure all employees understand the function and elements of your emergency action plan, including types of potential emergencies, reporting procedures, alarm systems, and evacuation plans.
- For those employees that are assigned to perform the task, make sure they are trained on emergency shutdown procedures.
- Discuss any special hazards you may have onsite such as flammable materials, toxic chemicals, radioactive sources, or water-reactive substances.
- Inform employees of the fire hazards to which they are exposed and review with each employee those parts of the fire prevention plan necessary for self-protection.

Clearly communicate to your employees who will be in charge during an emergency to minimize confusion. General training for your employees should also address the following:

- Individual roles and responsibilities;
- Threats, hazards, and protective actions;
- Notification, warning, and communications procedures;
- Means for locating family members in an emergency;
- Emergency response procedures;
- Evacuation, shelter, and accountability procedures;
- Location and use of common emergency equipment; and
- Emergency shutdown procedures.

Retraining and Practice Drills

If training is not reinforced it will be forgotten. Consider retraining employees annually.

You also may want to train your employees in first-aid procedures, including protection against bloodborne pathogens; respiratory protection, including use of an escape-only respirator; and methods for preventing unauthorized access to the site.

Once you have reviewed your emergency action plan with your employees and everyone has had the proper training, it is a good idea to hold practice drills as often as necessary to keep employees prepared. Include outside resources such as fire and police departments when possible. After each drill, gather management and employees to evaluate the effectiveness of the drill. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of your plan and work to improve it.

Module 4 Quiz

Use this quiz to self-check your understanding of the module content. You can also go online and take this quiz within the module. The online quiz provides the correct answer once submitted.

1. This position assesses the situation to determine whether an emergency exists, oversees emergency procedures, notifies and coordinates with outside emergency services, and directs the shutdown of utilities or plant operations if necessary.

- a. HSE manager
- b. EAP coordinator
- c. Evacuation warden
- d. Chief Evacuation Officer (CEO)

2. Who assumes the incident command role and is responsible for directing all emergency response activities?

- a. evacuation warden
- b. EAD coordinator
- c. highest ranking employee
- d. highest ranking responder

3. In which of the following situations should the EAP be reviewed with all employees?

- a. when the OSHA inspection cycle changes
- b. when the EAP is developed or changed
- c. when an employee is initially assigned
- d. when an employee's responsibilities change

4. Which of the following EAP topics, responsibilities and actions does NOT need to be understood by all employees?

- a. evacuation procedures
- b. reporting procedures
- c. alarm systems
- d. shutdown procedures

5. It is a good idea to hold practice drills _____ to keep employees prepared.

- a. weekly
- b. as often as necessary
- c. annually
- d. before each emergency

Module 5: Plan Review, Coordination and Update

Review, coordinate, and update the plan

Once you have completed your emergency action plan, review it carefully with your employees and post it in an area where all employees will have access to it.

Make sure to review with each employee upon initial assignment those parts of the EAP and Fire Prevention Plan (FPP) that the employee must know to protect him or herself in the event of an emergency. Remember, the EAP and FPP go hand in hand. You may want to combine the two plans into one document.



The written plans must be available to the employees and kept at the workplace. For employers with 10 or fewer employees, the plans may be communicated orally.

Coordinating with other organizations

Your EAP should be reviewed with other companies or employee groups in your building to ensure that your efforts will be coordinated with theirs, enhancing the effectiveness of your plan.



In addition, if you rely on assistance from local emergency responders such as the fire department, local HAZMAT teams, or other outside responders, you may find it useful to review and coordinate your emergency plans with these organizations. This ensures that you are aware of the capabilities of these outside responders and that they know what you expect of them.

Coordinate practice with other organizations

It is a good idea to hold practice evacuation drills in coordination with other organizations. Working with emergency responders, other building occupants, and community organizations help their employees to become familiar with your emergency procedures, egress routes, and assembly locations, so that if an actual emergency should occur, they will respond properly.



Don't forget to include outside resources, such as fire and police departments, when possible. After each drill, gather management and employees to evaluate the effectiveness of the drill. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of your plan and work to improve it.

Update the EAP regularly

Operations and personnel change frequently, and an outdated plan will be of little value or use in an emergency. You should review and evaluate the effectiveness the contents of your plan regularly.

Update the EAP whenever:

- employee emergency actions or responsibilities change,
- when there is a change in the layout or design of the facility, new equipment, hazardous materials,
- processes are introduced that affect evacuation routes,
- new types of hazards are introduced that require special actions.

The most common outdated item in plans is the facility and agency contact information. Consider placing this important information on a separate page in the front of the plan so that it can be readily updated. Here's a sample [EAP Audit Checklist](#) you can use to help design your own review process.

Module 5 Quiz

Use this quiz to self-check your understanding of the module content. You can also go online and take this quiz within the module. The online quiz provides the correct answer once submitted.

1. According to OSHA, a written EAP must be kept at the workplace unless the company has _____ or fewer employees.

- a. 5
- b. 10
- c. 15
- d. 20

2. Which of the following was NOT mentioned as a situation in which the EAP should be updated?

- a. changes in new equipment or hazardous materials
- b. changes to evacuation routes
- c. employee responsibilities change
- d. local government suggests it

3. The EAP goes hand in hand with the _____.

- a. Violence Prevention Plan (VPP)
- b. Fire Prevention Plan (FPP)
- c. Voluntary Prevention Plan (VPP)
- d. Employee Assistance Plan (EAP)

4. What action is recommended if you rely on local emergency responder services?

- a. Coordinate with those agencies.
- b. Have written contracts
- c. Determine least expensive alternatives
- d. Do not rely on local responders

5. Why do EAP reviews and updates need to occur often?

- a. OSHA requires quarterly updates
- b. operations and personnel change frequently.
- c. outdated EAPs are of little value
- d. b and c above