



# Emergency Action Plans



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. This course also discusses the OSHA requirements detailed in 29 CFR 1910.38 (Emergency Action Plan). This standard is important for employers, managers, training directors, and other safety professionals.

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# 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	Technological	Human
		
Avalanche	Aircraft	Arson
Disease	Structure collapse	Civil unrest
Earthquakes	Business interruption	Economic downturns
Extreme weather	Communication	Enemy attack
Wildfires	Dam/Levee breaks	General strike
Flood/Tsunami	Explosion/Fire	Workplace violence
Hurricane/Tornado	Air pollution	Fuel/Food storage
Landslide	Hazard materials release	Sabotage
Lightning	Power/Utility failure	Terrorism

Snow/Ice/Hail	Nuclear accidents	
Volcanic eruption	Transportation failure	

### Quiz Instructions

After each section, there is a quiz question. Make sure to read the material in each section to discover the correct answer to these questions. Circle the correct answer. When you are finished go online to take the final exam. This exam is open book, so you can use this study guide.

**1. Business interruption is considered a \_\_\_\_\_ emergency.**

- a. natural
- b. technological
- c. human
- d. social

### 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.

**2. The Emergency Action Plan takes into account each of the following EXCEPT \_\_\_\_.**

- a. a specific worksite layout
- b. structural features
- c. community response
- d. emergency systems

### **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 follow 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.

**3. Which of the following is not required in an effective Emergency Action Plan?**

- a. Assignment of rescue and medical duties
- b. Evacuation procedures and escape routes
- c. Ways to report fires
- d. Local government approval

**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.

**4. OSHA may require an employer to develop an emergency action plan in which of the following situations?**

- a. Fire extinguishers are required, and employees will evacuate during a fire
- b. A trained employee fire brigade will fight fires
- c. Employee actions are not planned for a fire or emergency
- d. Local emergency responders will be contacted if an emergency occurs

**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.

**5. 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

## Emergency Systems

*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.

**6. Which protection system is used primarily to protect areas containing critical equipment?**

- a. Portable fire extinguishers
- b. Fixed extinguishing systems
- c. Fire detection systems
- d. Employee alarm systems

**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.

**7. An EAP will be useful only if \_\_\_\_.**

- a. the safety committee manages the program
- b. it meets ANSI 350.1 standard guidelines
- c. OSHA has approved the program for the industry
- d. it is up-to-date and employees are educated

## 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.

**1. EAP 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

### 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.

**2. Which of the following should be conducted to specifically identify physical and chemical hazards in the workplace?**

- a. Safety committee inspection
- b. Brainstorming session
- c. Hazard assessment
- d. Job hazard analysis

**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. Make sure that you plan for the worst-case scenario and assume no outside help.

**3. What action should be taken by small employers if an infirmary, clinic, or hospital is not close to your workplace?**

- a. Contract with Red Cross for service
- b. Ensure a 911 call process is in place
- c. Find the nearest medical clinic
- d. Conduct employee first aid training

**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.

**4. Methods to report fires and other emergencies in an EAP include each of the following EXCEPT \_\_\_\_.**

- a. 911 call systems
- b. photo security systems
- c. internal phone systems
- d. manual pull alarm systems

## Alerting 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.

### **5. What is the immediate plan if your workplace does not have adequate emergency alarms?**

- a. Run through the workplace yelling "get out!"
- b. Contract for external warning device
- c. Floor wardens will notify all employees
- d. Plan to eventually install better alarms

## How and When to Train Employees

Training should be offered to 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.

**6. What action should be taken when the EAP changes in facility design or layout, equipment, or hazards occur?**

- a. Draw up a list of new employees
- b. Train or retrain employees on the changes
- c. Check with OSHA to ensure compliance
- d. Get approval for confined space entry from local authorities

**Conducting Drills and Retraining**

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.

**7. Employers should consider retraining employees \_\_\_\_.**

- a. weekly
- b. monthly
- c. as needed
- d. at least annually

## Module 3: Policies and Procedures

### Multiple Policies

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.

**1. Because "stuff" happens during emergencies, most EAPs address \_\_\_\_\_ emergency planning, response and evaluation.**

- a. Brief
- b. Basic
- c. Specific
- d. advanced

### 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.

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

- a. Who to rescue
- b. When to abandon the operation
- c. Where to call in the order
- d. How to give the "all clear"

**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.

**3. Each of the following requirements for exit routes is true EXCEPT \_\_\_\_.**

- a. they must be wide enough to accommodate all evacuees
- b. they must be kept unobstructed and clear of debris
- c. they must be frequently revised to keep them fresh
- d. they must be clearly marked and well lit

Here are some more important requirements to consider when developing effective evacuation:

- 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.

**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

## Assisting People During Evacuations

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.

If there are any employees with special needs at your worksite it will be important to be aware of their needs once evacuated. You may want to consider evacuating all special needs employees to the same location if possible. At the very least consider whether the designated evacuation area is suitable to meet the needs of any special needs employees while an emergency is being addressed.

**5. Employees designated to assist in emergency evacuation procedures should \_\_\_\_.**

- a. get certified as a qualified evacuator
- b. be identified by EAP wardens
- c. be trained on using the "buddy system"
- d. always carry emergency phones

## Accounting 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.

## Accounting for Visitors

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.



**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. Take a head count of all employees
- c. Line everyone up against the wall
- d. Recheck workstations for others

## Module 4: Duties, Responsibilities and Training

### Establish a Chain of Command

A chain of command links one person with overall responsibility for managing an emergency to others who are responsible for carrying out specific emergency-response tasks. A chain of command establishes who is in charge and ensures that everyone in the chain responds to emergencies in an organized way.

At the top of the chain is the trained emergency evacuation coordinator who has overall responsibility for managing emergencies. Just below the emergency evacuation coordinator are the volunteer evacuation wardens.

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

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

### Who is in Charge?

It is common practice to select a responsible individual to lead and coordinate your emergency plan and evacuation. 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.

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.

It is critical that employees know who the coordinator is and understand that this person has the authority to make decisions during emergencies. The coordinator should be responsible for assessing the situation to determine whether an emergency exists requiring 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.

**2. When multiple emergency officials arrive, who will assume the incident command role directing all response activities?**

- a. The employer
- b. Evacuation warden
- c. EAP Coordinator
- d. Highest ranking responder

**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.

**3. Which position assesses the situation, oversees emergency procedures, coordinates with outside emergency services, and directs the shutdown of plant operations?**

- a. Evacuation warden
- a. Highest ranking employee
- b. EAP Coordinator
- c. Emergency responder

### **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.

**4. One evacuation warden should be assigned for every \_\_\_\_\_ employees.**

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

### **EAP Instruction and Training**

Before implementing the emergency action plan, the employer must designate and train enough people to assist in the safe and orderly emergency evacuation of employees. Employers should review the plan with each employee when the initial plan is developed and when each employee is initially assigned to the job. Employers should review the plan with each employee when his/her actions or responsibilities under the plan change or when the plan changes.

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.

Be sure all employees understand the function and elements of your emergency action plan, including types of potential emergencies, reporting procedures, alarm systems, evacuation plans, and shutdown procedures. Discuss any special hazards you may have onsite such as flammable materials, toxic chemicals, radioactive sources, or water-reactive substances.

Effective EAP training should include hands-on practice and drills. Effective plans often call for retraining employees annually and include a requirement to conduct drills in which employees can practice evacuating their workplace and gathering in the assembly area.

**5. What is the recommended frequency employees should receive emergency action plan (EAP) training?**

- a. Often
- b. Prior to OSHA inspections
- c. At least annually
- d. After each emergency

### **General Responsibilities**

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 to and review with each employee those parts of the fire prevention plan necessary for self-protection.

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.

**6. The employer's EAP training requirements are determined by all of the following EXCEPT**

\_\_\_\_\_.

- a. size of the workplace and workforce
- b. psychosocial environment at the facility
- c. materials used onsite
- d. available EAP resources

### Retraining and Practice Drills

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

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

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.

**7. It is a good idea to hold practice drills \_\_\_\_\_ to keep employees prepared.**

- a. weekly
- b. as often as necessary
- c. every couple of years
- d. before each emergency

## Module 5: Plan Review, Coordination, and Update

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.

**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

### 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.

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.

**2. You should review and coordinate the company's EAP with each of the following EXCEPT \_\_\_\_\_.**

- a. the local OSHA office
- b. company employees
- c. other companies
- d. local emergency responders



### 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.

#### **3. What action is recommended if you rely on local emergency responder services?**

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

### Update the EAP regularly

<http://www.safetyworld.com/> 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.

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

- a. Outdated EAPs are of little value
- b. OSHA requires quarterly updates
- c. Bomb scares are on the increase
- d. Global warming is causing more weather extremes