



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

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Evacuation Plans and Procedures

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What is an Emergency Action Plan?

An emergency action plan (EAP) is a written document required by particular OSHA standards [[29 CFR 1910.38\(a\)](#)]. The purpose of an EAP is to facilitate and organize employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies. Well developed emergency plans and proper employee training (such that employees understand their roles and responsibilities within the plan) will result in fewer and less severe employee injuries and less structural damage to the facility during emergencies. A poorly prepared plan, likely will lead to a disorganized evacuation or emergency response, resulting in confusion, injury, and property damage.

Putting together a comprehensive emergency action plan that deals with those issues specific to your worksite is not difficult. It involves taking what was learned from your [workplace evaluation](#) and describing how employees will respond to different types of emergencies, taking into account your specific worksite layout, structural features, and emergency systems. Most organizations find it beneficial to include a diverse group of representatives (management and employees) in this planning process and to meet frequently to review progress and allocate development tasks. The commitment and support of all employees is critical to the plan's success in the event of an emergency; ask for their help in establishing and implementing your emergency action plan. For smaller organizations, the plan does not need to be written and may be communicated orally if there are 10 or fewer employees [[29 CFR 1910.38\(b\)](#)].



At a minimum, the plan must include but is not limited to the following elements [[29 CFR 1910.38\(c\)](#)]:

- [Means of reporting fires and other emergencies](#)
- [Evacuation procedures and emergency 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](#)

Although they are not specifically required by OSHA, you may find it helpful to include the following in your plan:

- 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. [[More on Alarms](#)]
- 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 accounting records, legal documents, your employees' emergency contact lists, and other essential records.

Now that you have read through the basic overview of an emergency action plan, find out [how to implement your plan](#).

Means of reporting fires and other emergencies

Procedures the fire and emergency reporting procedures. Preferred procedures for reporting emergencies such as dialing 911, or an internal emergency number, or pulling a manual fire alarm are examples of emergency reporting procedures, but there are many other possibilities [[29 CFR 1910.38\(c\)\(1\)](#)].

For additional information, see [reporting an emergency and alerting employees](#).



Evacuation procedures and emergency escape route assignments

An evacuation policy, procedures, and escape route assignments so employees understand who is authorized to order an evacuation, under what conditions an evacuation would be necessary, how to evacuate, and what routes to take. Exit diagrams are typically used to identify the escape routes to be followed by employees from each specific facility location [[29 CFR 1910.38\(c\)\(2\)](#)].

Evacuation procedures also often describe actions employees should take before and while evacuating such as shutting windows, turning off equipment, and closing doors behind them.

Sometimes a critical decision may need to be made when planning - whether or not employees should fight a small fire with a portable fire extinguisher or simply evacuate. Portable fire extinguishers may be integrated into the emergency action plan, [find out how!](#)

For additional information, see [evacuation elements](#).



Procedures to be followed by employees who remain to operate critical plant operations before they evacuate

Employees may be required to operate fire extinguishers or shut down gas and/or electrical systems and other special equipment that could be damaged if left operating or create additional hazards to emergency responders (such as releasing hazardous materials) [[29 CFR 1910.38\(c\)\(3\)](#)].

For additional information, see [evacuation procedures - employees who remain](#).



Procedures to account for all employees after an emergency evacuation has been completed

Procedures to account for employees after the evacuation to ensure that everyone got out. This might include procedures for designated employees to sweep areas, checking offices and rest rooms, before being the last to leave a workplace or conducting a roll call in the assembly area. Many employers designate an "evacuation warden" to assist others in an evacuation and to account for personnel [[29 CFR 1910.38\(c\)\(4\)](#)].

For additional Information, see [evacuation procedures - account for employees](#).

Rescue and medical duties for those employees who are to perform them

The duties, responsibilities, and names of employees assigned with rescue and medical tasks. Most small organizations rely on local public resources such as the local fire department or hospital to provide these services [[29 CFR 1910.38\(c\)\(5\)](#)].

For additional Information, see [fire, rescue and medical services](#).



Names or job titles of persons who can be contacted for further information or explanation of duties under the plan

The names, titles, departments, and phone numbers of employees who can be contacted for additional information or clarification of some aspect of the plan [[29 CFR 1910.38\(c\)\(6\)](#)].



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