



Emergency Safety Guide

Don't risk it — plan ahead! The best way to stay safe in any emergency is to be prepared. Seton has everything you need to develop a complete plan of action. We have you covered!

The best way is to prepare to respond to an emergency before it happens. Few people can think clearly in a crisis, so it is important to do so in advance, when you have time to adequately plan for a wide array of scenarios.

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:

- Floods
- Hurricanes
- Tornadoes
- Fires
- Toxic gas releases
- Chemical spills
- Radiological accidents
- Explosions
- Civil disturbances
- Workplace violence resulting in bodily harm and trauma

According to OSHA, the minimum requirements for your emergency action plan must include the following:

- A preferred method for reporting fires and other emergencies
- An evacuation policy and procedure
- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments, such as floor plans, workplace maps, and safe or refuge areas
- Names, titles, departments, and telephone numbers of individuals both within and outside your company to contact for additional information or explanation of duties and responsibilities under the emergency plan
- Procedures for employees
- Procedures for employees who remain to perform or shut down critical plant operations, operate fire extinguishers, or perform other essential services that cannot be shut down for every emergency alarm before evacuating
- Rescue and medical duties for any workers designated to perform them
- You also may want to consider designating an assembly location and procedures to account for all employees after an evacuation

Alarms and Communication:

Your plan must include a way to alert employees, including disabled workers, to evacuate or take other action, and how to report emergencies, as required. Among the steps you must take are the following:

- Make sure alarms are distinctive and recognized by all employees as a signal to evacuate the work area or perform actions identified in your plan
- Make available an emergency communications system such as a public address system, portable radio unit, or other means to notify employees of the emergency and to contact local law enforcement, the fire department, and others
- Alarms must be able to be heard, seen, or otherwise perceived by everyone in the workplace. You might want to consider providing an auxiliary power supply in the event that electricity is shut off. (29 CFR 1910.165(b)(2) offers more information on alarms.)

Although it is not specifically required by OSHA, you also may want to consider the following:

- Using tactile devices to alert employees who would not otherwise be able to recognize an audible or visual alarm
- Providing an updated list of key personnel such as the plant manager or physician, in order of priority, to notify in the event of an emergency during off-duty hours

When developing your emergency action plan it is important to determine the following:

- Conditions under which an evacuation would be necessary
- A clear chain of command and designation of the person in your business authorized to order an evacuation or shutdown. You may want to designate an “evacuation warden” to assist others in an evacuation and to account for personnel
- Specific evacuation procedures, including routes and exits. Post these procedures where they are easily accessible to all employees
- Procedures for assisting people with disabilities or who do not speak English
- Designation of what, if any, employees will continue or shut down critical operations during an evacuation. These people must be capable of recognizing when to abandon the operation and evacuate themselves
- A system for accounting for personnel following an evacuation
- Consider employees’ transportation needs for community-wide evacuations

Ensure that evacuation routes and emergency exits meet the following conditions:

- Clearly marked and well lit
- Wide enough to accommodate the number of evacuating personnel
- Unobstructed and clear of debris at all times
- Unlikely to expose evacuating personnel to additional hazards

If you prepare drawings that show evacuation routes and exits, post them prominently for all employees to see

Accounting for all employees following an evacuation is critical.

To ensure the fastest, most accurate accountability of your employees, consider including these steps in your emergency action plan:

- Designate assembly areas where employees should gather after evacuating
- Take a head count after the evacuation. Identify the names and last known locations of anyone not accounted for and pass them to the official in charge
- Establish a method for accounting for non-employees such as suppliers and customers
- Establish procedures for further evacuation in case the incident expands

If your company does not have a formal medical program, you may want to investigate ways to provide medical and first-aid services.

If medical facilities are available near your worksite, you can make arrangements for them to handle emergency cases. Provide your employees with a written emergency medical procedure to minimize confusion during an emergency.

Keep a copy of your emergency action plan in a convenient location where employees can get to it, or provide all employees a copy. If you have 10 or fewer employees, you may communicate your plan verbally.

General training for your employees should 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
- Emergency shutdown procedures

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.

About Seton

Signs, Labels & Safety Solutions

We understand that today's businesses exist in a world of risks. No matter how large or small your business is, you need to remain compliant with current safety regulations, while staying productive, protecting your people and defending your bottom line. For you, maintaining a safe workplace is not an option, it's business critical. That's why we're here — to help you stay safe and compliant.