

Emergency Preparedness and Response Overview for OSHA Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP)

Worksites seeking Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) approval are required to establish minimally effective written emergency response procedures (e.g., fire, chemical spills, accidents, natural disasters) for all work shifts. These procedures ensure your workforce understands how to respond to different emergencies. Your emergency procedures and plans must address the following:

Components of Emergency Procedures		
Assessment of the emergency	Assignment of responsibilities	Means of reporting emergencies
Responsible person to contact about emergency procedures	Procedures to follow for each type of emergency, including accountability of employees	Routine and emergency exits
First aid	Medical care	Emergency meeting places
Emergency telephone numbers	Training exercises and frequency	Coverage of critical operations
Personal protective equipment, where needed	Procedures to critique and document drills	Procedures to identify and implement recommendations for improvement

The information in this one pager can help you with implementing and sustaining OSHA VPP emergency preparedness and response expectations. Additionally, integrate these requirements and information into your written plans: 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) [Subpart E](#) – Means of Egress; [29 CFR 1910.38](#), Emergency Action Plans; and [29 CFR 1910.39](#), Fire Prevention Plans.



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WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT

Identify the types of emergencies possibly impacting your organization. Consider utilizing a committee or working group to evaluate workplace risks and vulnerability during emergencies. Involve the fire department and other life safety professionals. Evaluate emergency equipment, egress routes, and structural features of facilities to determine if existing egress is sufficient and when to exit/shelter in place. Evaluate and prioritize the risk posed by each type of emergency. Use this information to develop emergency procedures.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING TOPICS AND FREQUENCY

Communicate emergency procedures so your employees, as well as contractors and visitors, know which actions to take during an emergency. Inform them of basic evacuation procedures, shelter-in-place plans, individual roles and responsibilities, and the specific sounds/visuals of your alarms and emergency notification systems. Also, review the location and use of emergency equipment, including any policies specific to your organization (e.g., only trained fire extinguisher users are permitted to operate fire extinguishers). Tell personnel how to report emergencies, perform critical operations, and account for everyone during an emergency. Incorporate this information into new employee orientation and contractor/visitor briefings.

When to share emergency procedures with employees:

- Initially assigning the employee to a job
- When the employee's responsibilities change
- When the plans or procedures change

EMERGENCY EVACUATION MAPS

Post emergency evacuation maps throughout your facility to help employees, contractors, and visitors locate an egress route or shelter-in-place location, when needed. Incorporate the following elements into your evacuation maps so they are readable and easy to understand:

- ✓ Ensure no emergency exits in restrooms, through rooms with hazardous materials, or into narrow passages
- ✓ Ensure no use of elevators to reach an emergency exit
- ✓ Designate primary and secondary exit routes
- ✓ Mark the location of the assembly area(s)
- ✓ Indicate exits with wheelchair access
- ✓ Indicate the employee's current location ('You Are Here')
- ✓ Orient maps to the direction faced when viewing

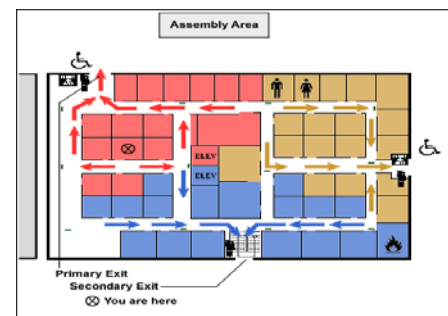


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EMERGENCY DRILLS

Annual evacuation drills and periodic emergency drills are essential in verifying the effectiveness of your emergency procedures. Hold emergency drills on all work shifts so every employee has the opportunity to participate. Put measures in place to give absent employees a chance to participate in drills (e.g., additional drills, make-up training walking egress routes and visiting assigned rally points). Work with emergency officials to set up the drill and consider setting up obstacles to see if employees can find their way if they encounter difficulties. Critique the drill, focusing on whether employees know where to go and what to do, as well as the effectiveness of the process to account for personnel. Share lessons learned with management and employees so they know how to improve.

REVIEW, COORDINATION, AND UPDATES

Review written plans and procedures when any facility change occurs. Establish temporary plans and interim life safety measures, when needed (e.g., during facility renovations, maintenance on alarm systems). Review and update the workplace hazard assessment periodically to make sure it reflects the current status and risks of your workplace. Conduct periodic testing and inspections of emergency equipment to verify they will function as intended. Communicate all updates to the workforce.

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website at: <https://www.smcx.org/>.

