

Update and Improve Your Emergency Action Plan

Ready for Level 2?

	YES (✓)	NO (X)
You have identified possible emergencies and developed a plan to address them	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit Develop an Emergency Action Plan (1HPC_3)
You have made your emergency action plan part of your overall hazard control plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit Develop an Emergency Action Plan (1HPC_3)
You have secured resources, including supplies and personnel, needed to respond to emergencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit Level 1, Worksheet 3

To-Do

- Revisit and update your emergency response plan to account for changes in the workplace.
- Include potential emergencies for contractors and temporary personnel in the plan.
- Conduct “what-if” and job hazard analyses to better understand potential emergencies.
- Make sure all workers are trained and equipped to respond to emergencies.
- Regularly test the plan and inspect associated controls.

Once you’ve developed a basic emergency response plan, it’s important to:

- Revisit it regularly.
- Update it according to new conditions in the workplace or changes in the workforce.
- Test it regularly.
- Improve it as you get better at recognizing hazardous situations that could lead to emergencies.

When considering emergencies, remember that OSHA’s other emergency response requirements may apply to you, such as standards for [Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response \(HAZWOPER\)](#) and [Employee Emergency Plans and Fire Prevention Plans](#).

Here are some recommendations for updating and improving your emergency response plan, preparing to implement it, and practicing key responses.

Plan

- Make sure you have written procedures for all types of emergencies (fire, chemical spill, terrorist threat, natural disaster, etc.). They should cover all work areas and shifts.
- Specify a clear [chain of command](#). Specify who is authorized to order an evacuation or shutdown.
- Specify clear evacuation procedures, including [routes and exits](#).
- Make sure to address hazards that could result from contractors' short-term activities.
- Conduct "what-if" analyses and job hazard analyses (JHAs). These will help you fully understand potential emergencies, as well as prevention and mitigation measures. (See the [standalone fact sheet on JHAs](#) and Prioritize Hazards and Select Controls [1HI_5] for more on "what-if" analyses.)
- Remember to add emergencies that can be prevented to the Hazard Identification table (Implement Inspections and Other Hazard Identification Processes [2HI_2]) for prioritization and control.

Prepare

- Provide a routine class to teach all workers—especially new workers—about the plan and their individual responsibilities within it.
- Make first aid and CPR training available to all workers.
- Create an emergency response team. It should include any on-site medical staff and people trained in first aid, CPR, and bloodborne pathogen requirements.
- Provide automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and ensure that people trained in their use are available on all shifts.
- Inspect controls and equipment (such as fire extinguishers, eyewash stations, showers, and alarms) for emergency response often. Make sure expendable supplies are regularly restocked and refreshed.

Practice

- Develop plans to send outside response personnel to the location of an emergency and to get people to urgent care facilities as needed.
- Test your emergency plan regularly—at least once a year—with drills and exercises. (For example, read about the tabletop exercise in the case study below.)
- Where appropriate, involve community emergency responders in the facility's drills and exercises.

Case Study: Tabletop Exercise to Improve an Emergency Response Plan

A 200-person company that makes chemicals for the pharmaceutical industry had an emergency response plan that had not been reviewed or updated for several years. Top management decided to run a tabletop exercise to make sure it was current and effective and to find any gaps.

The company got the town's emergency management office to help run the exercise. Workers from various departments including production, maintenance, security, human resources, and senior management took part in the exercise. The emergency management official helped them come up with a realistic scenario for a chemical spill that caused injuries and required evacuation.

Exercise participants were asked to work together to respond to the scenario. They asked "what-if" questions to identify the potential hazards, assess the situation, and activate the current emergency plan. The exercise showed several needs:

- More detailed evacuation procedures
- Clarification of worker's roles and responsibilities in an emergency
- Better training to help them fulfill those roles
- Updated contact information for emergency services
- A communication plan to keep the community around the facility informed

The company revised the plan to address these issues and communicated the results to all workers. Finally, the company looked at measures it could take to prevent emergencies in the first place. It added several of these to its hazard control plan.

Activity

Review your emergency action plan. Update it using the recommendations in this worksheet. Consider running a tabletop exercise like the one in the case study. You can also use the checklists from OSHA's [Evacuation Plans and Procedures](#) eTool to help ensure your plan is up to date and complete. Include your updated emergency action plan in your overall hazard control plan (Update and Implement Your Hazard Control Plan [2HPC_3]).