

Develop an Emergency Action Plan

An emergency action plan details steps to take in an emergency. It will help you be prepared and protect workers' safety and health. Use this worksheet if you need to create or update an emergency action plan. This plan should become part of your overall hazard control plan (Worksheet 4).

To-Do

- Review the possible emergency situations you identified.
- Develop an emergency action plan to address them.
- Involve workers in identifying controls for emergency situations.
- Include these controls in your hazard control plan.
- Secure resources, including supplies and response personnel.

Controlling hazards during emergencies

Under Hazard Identification, Worksheet 4a, you identified emergencies that could occur, such as a fire or chemical spill.

The best way to prepare for an emergency is to have a plan. An **emergency action plan** details actions to take to protect workers in the event of an emergency. Yours should be tailored to your workplace and consider all emergencies.

At a minimum, your plan should include¹:

- A survey of possible emergencies (see Hazard Identification, Worksheet 4a)
- Actions to reduce impacts when an emergency occurs. For example, what would you do if a fire broke out in the boiler room?
- Steps to prepare for emergencies and reduce risks beforehand. For example, if you're in an earthquake zone and store materials on shelves, you could add straps or fasteners to keep loads from falling onto workers.
- Equipment, supplies, and materials needed

¹ See 29 CFR 1910.30, Emergency action plans

- Roles and responsibilities
- A way to communicate the plan and train workers
- A schedule of emergency drills
- Periodic reviews to keep the plan current

A disorganized response to an emergency can result in confusion, injury, and property damage. Be sure to consider specifics, such as:

- What action to take (evacuate or another response)
- How to report emergencies and activate alarms such as fire alarm pull stations (all workers should know this)
- A clear chain of command, including who can order evacuation or facility shutdown
- A way to account for workers before, during, and after the emergency
- Evacuation and refuge procedures (including routes and exits) and how you will communicate with workers and responders
- Procedures for helping people with disabilities or non-English speakers
- Emergency plans for offsite workers

You should consult with local emergency departments and share your plan. Also, depending on your location, business, and materials used, you may have to meet additional requirements from state or federal agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and OSHA.

Note the controls and procedures for emergencies in your hazard control plan. Evaluate, update, and communicate the plan periodically.

Pro Tip

See OSHA's [How to Plan for Workplace Emergencies and Evacuations](#) for guidance on developing an emergency action plan.

NIOSH has a webpage with resources on emergency preparedness and response:
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/emres/business.html>

Activity

Visit OSHA's "Evacuation Plans and Procedures" eTool at <https://www.osha.gov/etools/evacuation-plans-procedures/eap/develop-implement>. An "OSHA expert" guides you to "fill in the blanks" to write your emergency action plan.