

10 Tips to Reviewing Your Emergency Action Plan

Having an action plan is an important part of emergency preparedness. However, having a template from a consultant or corporate office is not enough. You must ensure it is updated and practical. Here are 10 tips to consider when reviewing your emergency action plan:

1. Remember do not store your action plan exclusively in digital form; ensure hard copies are readily available to key personnel.
2. List the location of important utility shutoffs, and include maps and photo images so that they can be located quickly and easily (when doing regular safety inspections or security officer patrols, check that access to shutoffs are not blocked). Include the location of any tools or keys needed to access the shutoffs.
3. List any equipment or machinery that needs to be shut down or other work areas that may have issues during an emergency. Ensure training is provided for back up personnel, in addition to primary parties. Here are a few OSHA regulations* to consider:

- **Aisles, stairways, and ladders**

see Walking/Working Surfaces; 1910.21 to 1910.30

- **Number of and ease of access to exits within each area and emergency plans**

see Means of Egress; 1910.35 to 1910.38

- **Ventilation, noise, and radiation**

see Occupational Health and Environmental Control; 1910.94 to 1910.98

- **Storing and handling of hazardous materials**

see Hazardous Materials; 1910.101 to 1910.126

- **Eye protection, protective clothing, respiratory protection, head protection, foot protection, electrical protective equipment and hand protection**

see Personal Protective Equipment; 1910.132 to 1910.139

- **Spill cleanup, safe disposal requirements, permit-required confined spaces, lockout/tag out**

see General Environmental Controls; 1910.141 to 1910.147 Appendix A

- **First aid availability and training**

see Medical and First Aid; 1910.151 to 1910.152

- **Fire extinguishers, fixed fire-suppression equipment and other systems**

see Fire Protection; 1910.155 to 1910.165

- **Air receiver installation and safety**

see Compressed Gas and Compressed Air Equipment; 1910.166 to 1910.169

- **Guard requirements for moving machinery**

see Machinery and Machine Guarding; 1910.211

- **Guarding and maintenance of hand-powered equipment**

see Hand and Portable Powered Tools and Other Hand-Held Equipment; 1910.241 to 1910.244

- **Design safety standards, safe work practices, maintenance requirements**

see Electrical; 1910.301 to 1910.399

- **Toxic and Hazardous Substances**

see 1910.1000 to 1910.1450 Appendix B

**(OSHA regulations were taken from the OSHA website. Research and Input from the Safety Daily Advisory)*



4. Consider updating contact lists. Personnel files should be updated with important contact information so that you can easily contact your employees during an emergency.
5. Management should have each department review all significant parts of the plan to ensure accuracy and proper procedures. You do not want to be stuck with someone who does not know what to do. Many times, a person unfamiliar with your building is tasked with writing the plan. The product may good on paper, but be impractical in real life.
6. Conduct periodic drills and training to ensure employees know what to do in an emergency. Be sure to analyze the drills afterward to fine-tune the plan (did employees recognize the evacuation alarm, did they turn off equipment required to be turned off, and did they evacuate in an orderly and timely fashion, etc?). Many of these procedures will be specific to floors or companies. Remind tenants to review their plans.
7. Be sure to include provisions in your plan for visitors to your facility: How do you account for their whereabouts and who is in charge of ensuring they know how to evacuate? It is essential that you maintain visitor access logs for all points of entry (lobby, dock etc.).
8. When decisions must be made quickly, a chain of command is crucial. Lives depend on quick responses. Include in your plan provisions regarding who has authority to allow employees back into buildings or restart operations.
9. Since emergencies don't always happen on your time table (Murphy's Law), when writing your plan, be sure to take into account variations in emergency procedures that account for differences in shifts or days of the week (for example, fewer or no staff at your facility, fewer supervisors, darkness, etc.). Make sure your on site vendors (security, house cleaning etc...) have a copy of the plan or at least are aware of it.
10. List in the plan the locations of special equipment and emergency supplies (food, water, etc.). Remember to do periodic inventories to verify location, ensure equipment is in working order and that food supplies have not expired.

