

Emergency Action Planning

What is the hazard?

Medical emergencies, severe weather, terrorist attacks, fire, chemical spills, release of biological agents, and other emergencies can occur while employees are at work. If employers do not have an advance plan to respond to these events and protect employees when they occur, the outcome of such events will be much worse, with potentially greater injuries and loss of life.

Note: Flu pandemic does not fall specifically under worker protection regulations relative to emergency action planning, but it will be addressed under this assessment tool as it is a similar type of hazard and could pose an urgent threat in the near future. There is a fully separate assessment section for flu pandemic following the general emergency action planning questions.

Note: This assessment tool should be completed in conjunction with the Life Safety assessment tool. Exit routes and fire extinguishers are covered under the Life Safety tool.

Level of Employee Exposure

Do you have employees exposed to this hazard? YES. Every employee at every workplace is at risk from the types of events listed above.

Use of Technical Standard / Regulation / Guideline / Emergency Directives from Authoritative Source

What regulation or standard do you follow to address this hazard, if any?

What information source(s) do you use to learn of official emergency instructions / mandates in the event of a serious or wide-scale emergency?

Upper Management Support / Policy / Full Hierarchy Accountability

Is there an emergency action plan for your workplace?

If yes, what emergencies are covered?

If yes, what are the elements of your plan (e.g., procedures for reporting an emergency, procedures for evacuation, etc.)?

How does the agency ensure that emergency action planning requirements are fulfilled? How does the agency ensure that employees fulfill their duties under the plan when an emergency occurs?

Who is responsible for developing, maintaining and updating emergency action plans?

Who is responsible for ensuring that the plan is implemented during an emergency?

Training / Certification

Have employees been trained on your emergency action plan?

Note: There are specific training questions relative to protocols, equipment, etc. in almost all of the sections below. Please include these in your overall assessment of training which will be conducted following your second health and safety committee chair training.

CONTROLS

Administrative Controls

Are emergency call numbers posted by telephones?

Can outside emergency medical help respond to your facility within a reasonable period of time? (This will be yes in most locations in Massachusetts, with the only possible exception being extremely remote or difficult to reach locations). If no, has anyone at your location been trained in CPR and First Aid?

Do you have a protocol for “protect-in-place” in the event of an external chemical or biological attack or accident (meaning that employees are instructed to remain inside the building, and the HVAC system is shut down, and windows and doors are sealed to the greatest extent possible to keep the hazardous agent from getting inside the building air)?

Have employees been trained in this protocol?

Has the HVAC system been assessed relative to infiltration of toxic chemicals or biological agents? (For example, have you identified all air intakes and how to shut them off?)

Engineering Controls

Are there alternate sources of outside communication if land telephone lines are down?

How are employees notified during an emergency?

If there automated systems such as sound alarms to notify employees to evacuate the building:

Are they functioning properly?
How are they tested?
How often does testing occur?

Emergency Equipment

What emergency equipment do you have? (For example, first aid kits, chemical spill kits.)

Are employees trained in use of this equipment?

Note: Fire extinguishers are covered in the "Life Safety" assessment tool.

Do you have an automated external defibrillator (AED)? (optional, not required)
Have employees been trained in its use?

Personal Protective Equipment

Do you have any personal protective equipment to be used during an emergency?

Is there a policy as to when it should be used and who should use it?

Have employees been trained in its use?

If respirators are to be used, have employees been medically screened and fit tested?

Do you have any prophylactic medications or antidotes? (Cipro, atropine injector)

If yes, is there a policy as to when and how they are administered?

Have employees been trained on the policy and use of these medications?

FLU PANDEMIC

Use of Technical Standard / Regulation / Guideline / Emergency Directives from Authoritative Source

What information source(s) do you use to learn of public health mandates or recommendations on a flu pandemic?

Do you have a written policy relative to a flu pandemic?

Training / Certification

Is there a plan to train employees on the ways in which the flu is spread and behaviors they should use to prevent transmission of the flu (e.g., hand-washing, cover mouth when you cough)

Is there a plan to train employees on the symptoms to watch for, and when and for what duration to stay out of work?

CONTROLS

Administrative Controls

Is there a method to notify employees when they should not report to the work due to a flu pandemic?

Will some employees be required to report to work during a flu pandemic to maintain critical services?

What guidelines will be used to protect these employees?

Are some of these employees in jobs that require interface with the public?
Have methods been developed to maintain service but eliminate the face-to-face contact during a flu pandemic?

If face-to-face contact is required, what guidelines will be used to protect these employees?

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED ASSISTANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT,
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