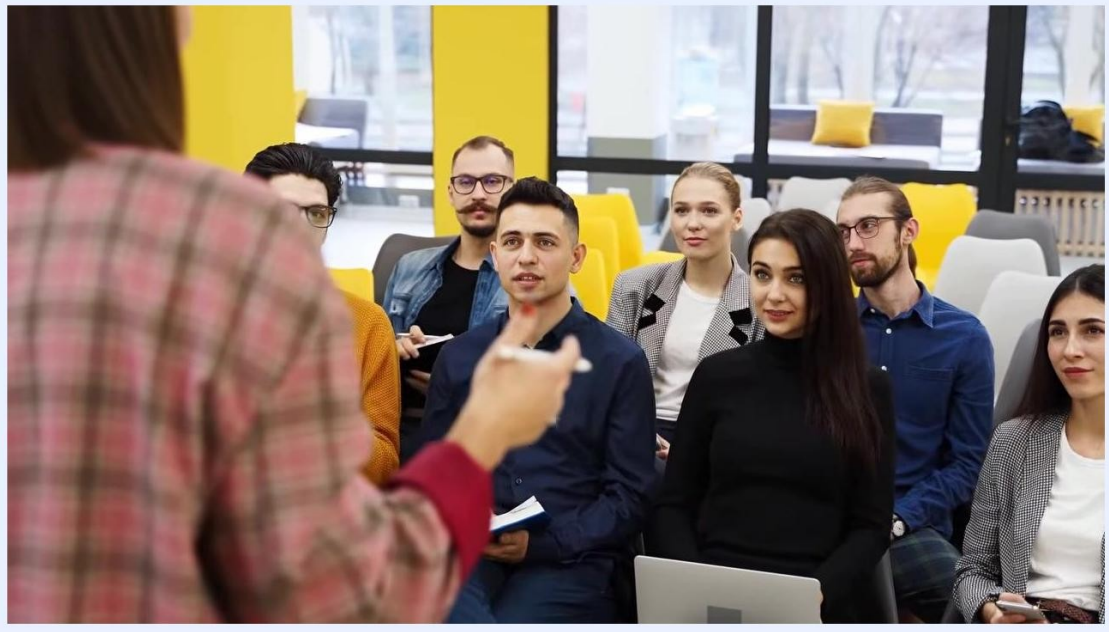


How to Make an Emergency Evacuation Plan for Your Workplace

Knowing how to make an emergency evacuation plan is essential for every workplace, because an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is what allows employees and employers to respond effectively during a workplace emergency or disaster. A well-developed EAP enables quick, safe evacuation and reduces the number and severity of injuries. This guide walks through the core elements you need to build a compliant, effective EAP.



Bold text reading "EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN" against a dramatic backdrop, emphasizing the importance of building a formal plan.



A safety trainer stands in a professional office hallway, reinforcing the importance of being familiar with the emergency action plan and staying prepared.

Purpose and Planning Area

An EAP is a structured document that outlines how your organization responds to emergencies in the workplace. It protects everyone by ensuring a coordinated and efficient response rather than a chaotic one.

Having an EAP is not optional. OSHA requires every company to maintain a written emergency evacuation plan, and that plan must be readily available for employees to review in the workplace.



A black screen with "THANK YOU FOR WATCHING!", "SUBSCRIBE FOR MORE", and "STREAM 1800+ SAFETY VIDEOS FOR NO CHARGE" in white text, indicating the end of the training and encouraging further learning.

A workplace emergency is any unexpected event or situation that threatens the safety of employees, customers, or the public, and it can cause damage to people, the environment, or property. Your planning should not stop at your immediate work area — familiarize yourself with emergency procedures for other parts of the workplace as well, since emergencies can occur anywhere.



An employee crouches under a desk with her hands over her head, demonstrating a protective action to take during certain emergencies.

Evacuation triggers and decision process

Emergencies can disrupt not only safety but also day-to-day business operations, so the first step in preparation is understanding which types of emergencies your workplace could face. These include:



The safety trainer stands in front of a wall of video thumbnails, with large text "1800+ SAFETY VIDEOS" and a subtitle about the extensive video library.

- Natural disasters, such as floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes
- Fires, toxic gas releases, chemical spills, and explosions

- Man-made emergencies, such as bomb threats, civil disturbances, or incidents causing physical harm or trauma



Storm damage seen from above, with debris scattered across a residential street and rooftops torn away, showing the scale of disruption an alert system must account for.

Each type of emergency presents unique challenges and requires a specific response. Once a threat is identified, employees may need to take protective action, such as taking cover, before or instead of evacuating.

Your EAP must also document clear procedures for reporting an emergency. Establish step-by-step instructions for reporting a fire or any other incident, and make sure everyone knows how to "sound the alarm" and notify others of a problem.

A complete decision process should also define who approves the message and how the report is documented; the source material available for this guide does not detail an internal decision-maker hierarchy or warning-time thresholds, so your plan should specify those separately.



Storm-damaged homes with collapsed roofs and scattered debris, illustrating the kind of natural disaster impact an EAP must plan for.

Zones, routes, and traffic control

For a workplace EAP, this section defines evacuation procedures at the building level rather than at a jurisdiction level. Specify the exact exit routes for each area, and make assignments so that every employee knows exactly where to go during an emergency — do not rely on general familiarity with the exits alone.

Before evacuation can begin, identify the employees responsible for critical tasks that must be completed first, such as operating fire extinguishers or shutting off gas and electrical systems. These roles must be clearly assigned and understood in advance.



A group of employees reviews documents together at a table, representing the process of working out and assigning evacuation routes.



Employees gather in a meeting room to review plans, representing the process of assigning and understanding emergency evacuation routes for their areas.

Public warning and notifications

Your EAP needs a reliable employee alarm system that everyone in the workplace understands, and that system should be tested and maintained regularly.

Alongside the alarm, designate specific employees — by name or job title — who are knowledgeable about the EAP and can answer questions when they arise.



A safety trainer stands in a news studio setting, with an inset image of palm trees bending in strong winds, representing hurricanes or severe storms. The lower third displays "KATIE SAFETY TRAINER" and "GOT NEWS".

For a complete notification plan, you would also document your public alert channels, message approval process, language access, disability access, and rumor control; these specifics are not addressed in this material and should be defined according to your organization's communication resources.

Transportation and assistance

Within a workplace EAP, this element covers who performs rescue or medical duties during an emergency. Assign and train specific employees to provide rescue or medical assistance as needed, rather than assuming any employee can step into that role.



A close-up of a telephone being used, representing the importance of documented procedures for reporting an emergency.

Broader considerations — such as support for carless residents, school populations, correctional facilities, animals, or family reunification across a wider community — are not addressed in this material. A full plan for those situations would need to define transportation resources and assistance procedures for each affected group.

Shelters and reception

Once employees are outside, implement a system to confirm that everyone is accounted for. Use roll calls, checklists, or a designated meeting point so no one is missed.

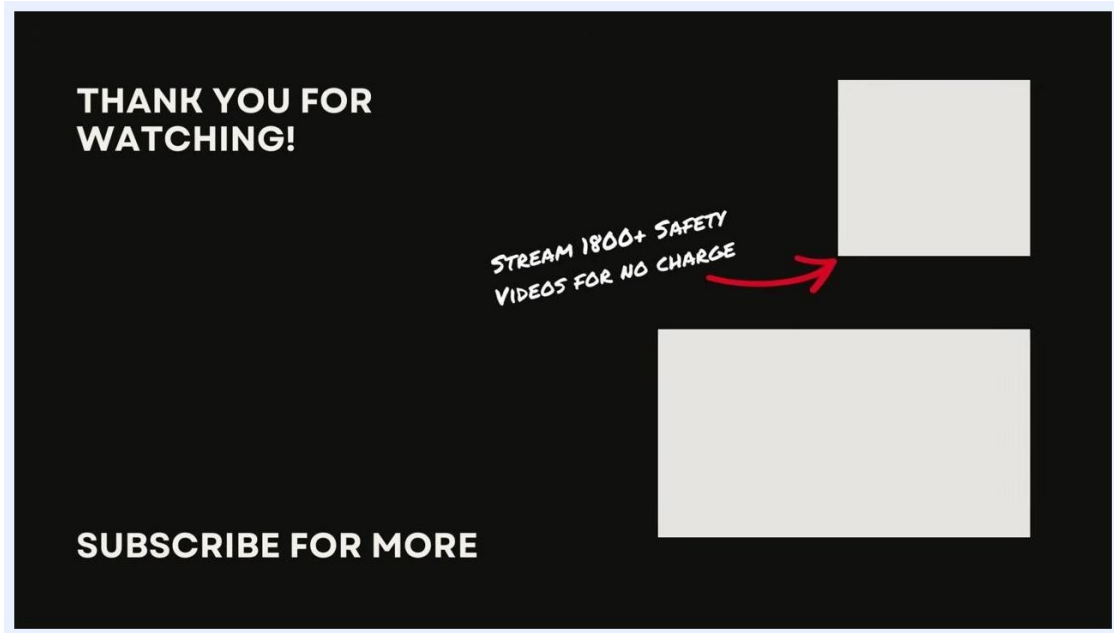
Employees should follow evacuation leaders to the designated assembly area outside the building and remain there until they are accounted for and given further instructions. Documenting shelter locations, capacity, registration, security, health services, and family assistance beyond the assembly point is not covered in this material and should be added based on your facility's resources.



Employees exit a modern office building and move toward an assembly area, following evacuation procedures.

Reentry and recovery transition

This material does not address reentry or recovery procedures. A complete plan should define safety checks, phased reentry, credentialing, debris hazards, and public information updates before employees return to the building after an evacuation.



The safety trainer stands in the office, smiling and presenting, with the text "KATIE SAFETY TRAINER" displayed, emphasizing the importance of ongoing safety awareness and training.

What's next

Regular training keeps your EAP effective. Provide ongoing training so that every employee understands the plan and their role during an emergency, and update that training whenever procedures or personnel change.

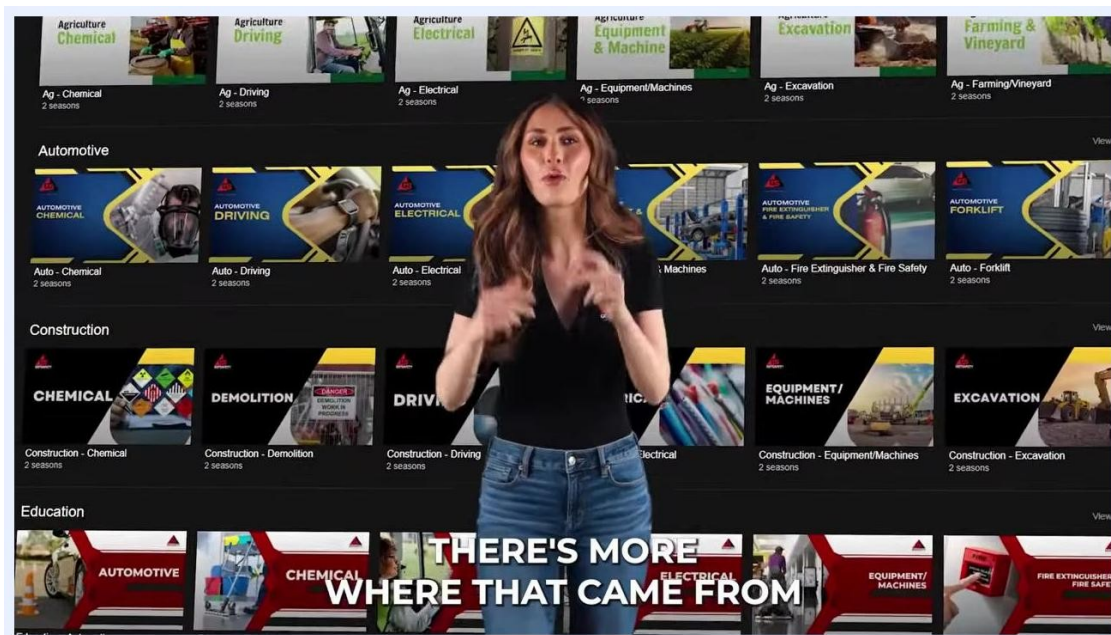
Make sure every employee knows the following before an emergency occurs:

- The location of the nearest exit from their work area
- Their specific role and responsibilities during an emergency
- The designated assembly area where everyone should gather after evacuation
- The correct procedure for reporting an emergency
- Who to contact for more information about the EAP

Emergencies do not wait for an invitation, so treat your own awareness and readiness as your first line of defense. Review your EAP regularly, participate in drills, and encourage coworkers to stay informed so your workplace remains prepared to respond effectively and safely at all times.



A safety trainer named Katie stands in an office environment, introducing herself as the safety trainer. The background shows a typical office with desks, chairs, plants, and wall posters. The text "KATIE SAFETY TRAINER" is prominently displayed.



The safety trainer stands in a spacious office hallway, reinforcing the importance of being familiar with emergency procedures throughout the entire workplace.



The safety trainer gestures while speaking in the office environment, encouraging viewers to learn about emergency action plans.



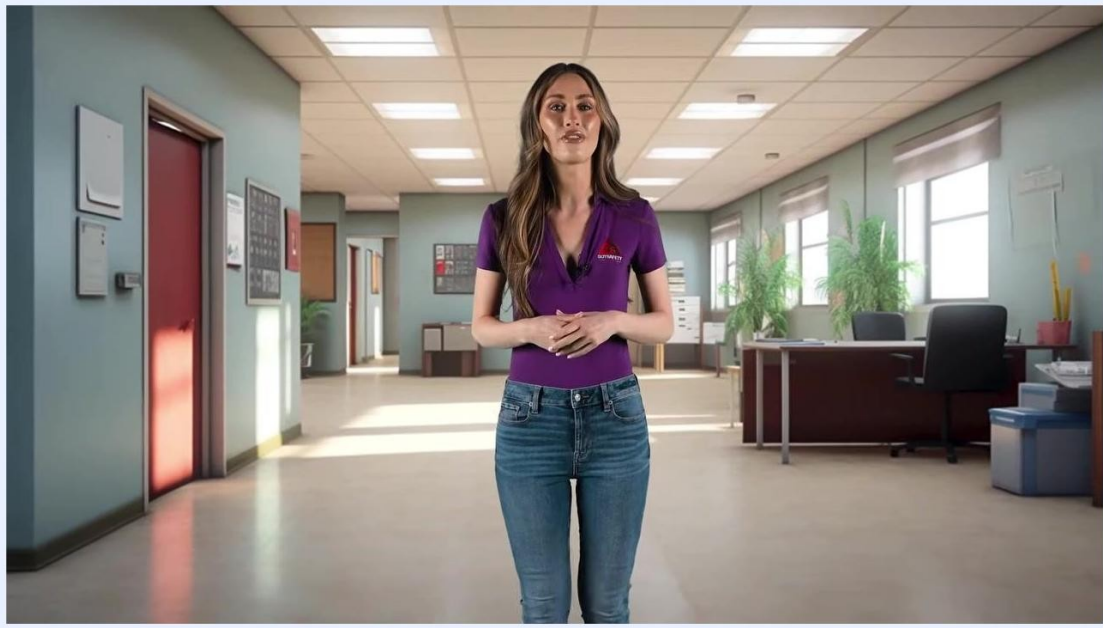
The safety trainer stands in front of a digital library of safety training videos, with categories such as Agriculture, Automotive, Construction, and Education visible. The text "THERE'S MORE WHERE THAT CAME FROM" is displayed.



The words "WORKPLACE EMERGENCIES" are displayed in bold white text on a blurred background of an office environment, emphasizing the topic.



The safety trainer stands in an office environment, emphasizing the importance of knowing who to contact for more information about the emergency action plan.



The safety trainer stands in the office, reinforcing the need for a reliable alarm system and regular employee training as part of the emergency action plan.



Employees listen attentively to a trainer in a meeting room, taking notes as part of a workplace safety training session.