

OHS Program:

9. What is Emergency Preparedness and Response?

If an emergency were to happen, planning helps employers and workers be prepared and ready to respond. Emergency preparedness and response provides safety to employees and the public, protects property and the environment, and returns business functions back to normal as soon as possible.

Requirements

Emergency response plans prepare employers to effectively respond to emergencies, to prevent injury or illness in workers or minimize the negative effects of the situation. When writing emergency preparedness and response procedures, develop procedures to:

- Identify the types of emergencies and harm to people, property and the environment
- Develop response plans for all emergencies
- Identify what is needed to carry out response procedures
- Educate and train those who respond to emergencies
- Equip workers with the proper machinery and equipment (i.e. personal protective equipment) to do their jobs
- Communicate with visitors, contractors, government authorities and the community when required
- Conduct drills to make sure they work
- Review and update procedures when they don't work as intended

Tips for effective management:

Effective OHS programs have practices in place to make sure businesses are prepared to deal with emergencies. Effective emergency preparedness and response procedures should consider:



- Risk assessments where the need for rescue or evacuation is required
- Written rescue and evacuation procedures for work involving, but not limited to: high angles; confined spaces, risk of entrapment; hazardous substances; working underground; in close proximity to power lines; on or over water; and where persons require physical assistance to be moved
- Checklists and regular testing of emergency response systems and equipment
- Information about escape routes
- Staff education and training for evacuation and rescue
- Evacuation of staff and visitors, alerting neighbors, contacting emergency services and informing statutory bodies
- Coordination of senior management to liaise with the emergency services and staff
- Support that may need to be given to emergency services
- Locations for central command stations
- Chain of command for emergency response teams
- Contingency planning for returning back to normal business

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