

Description

Being prepared for emergencies requires planning and training and the better the preparation, the fewer the losses. Emergencies are easier to handle if everyone knows their assigned duties and how to perform them. This training program introduces employees to the emergency action plan and how it is used as a tool to provide for organized responses to fires or other emergency situations.

Objectives

After your training program, the trainees should be able to:

- Provide examples of emergency situations.
- Discuss considerations in developing emergency action plans.
- Demonstrate how to report an emergency.
- Describe the alarm system.
- Demonstrate evacuation procedures.
- Identify critical plant operations that certain employees need to operate before evacuating.
- Explain how employees are accounted for following an evacuation.
- Identify who is responsible for providing rescue and medical duties.
- Identify who to contact for more information about the emergency action plan.

Audience

All employees who will need to evacuate the facility in case of an emergency need training in the facility's emergency action plan. The employer must train and designate employees to assist in the evacuation, and the employer must review the plan with all employees affected by it.

Requirements

This training program focuses on the requirements of OSHA's regulation on emergency action plans. The OSHA regulation at 29 CFR 1910.38(e) simply states, "An employer must designate and train employees to assist in a safe and orderly evacuation of other employees." And, at 1910.38(f): "An employer must review the emergency action plan with each employee covered by the plan." This review must take place when an employee is initially hired, when the employee's responsibilities under the plan change, and when the plan is changed.

The manner in which the training is conducted is up to the employer, and will depend on the characteristics of the facility. Such training should include:

- How to report fires and other emergencies.
- Emergency escape procedures and emergency escape routes.
- Procedures to be followed by employees who remain to operate critical plant operations before they evacuate.
- How all employees will be accounted for after the evacuation.
- Identifying personnel designated to perform rescue and medical duties.
- A demonstration of the employee alarm system.

No specific training documentation is required. The written emergency action plan must be kept in the workplace, and it must be available to employees for their review.

Technically, this regulation applies only to those companies who are required to have an emergency action plan by a particular OSHA standard (e.g., process safety management, hazardous waste operations and emergency response (HAZWOPER), portable fire suppression equipment, various chemical-specific standards, etc.). However, for all practical purposes, all employers must develop a plan to ensure the safety of their employees should an emergency occur. Most reasonable people would agree that this action makes sense.

A number of OSHA regulations involve emergency response. Some of them are as follows:

- 1910.37 — Means of egress.
- 1910.38 — Emergency action plans.
- 1910.39 — Fire prevention plans.
- 1910.119 — Process safety management of highly hazardous chemicals.
- 1910.120 — Hazardous waste operations and emergency response.
- 1910.156 — Fire brigades.
- 1910.165 — Employee alarm systems.