

# Risk Management Bulletin

## DEVELOPING AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

A well-developed Emergency Preparedness Program is an important management tool which outlines for employees the correct procedures to follow when an emergency occurs. It helps ensure that, when needed, employees will be well trained to respond in a calm, orderly fashion. As a result, it minimizes the potential for injury to employees and customers and the potential for damage to property.

The program should be initiated by top management with specific input from key line personnel who may be aware of any special problems, and then written by the manager responsible for employee safety. Management backing and enforcement is crucial to the success of any new program.

In developing the overall program, remember that at the program level the goal is to create guidelines that are specific, yet not too confining or limiting. Specific middle-level management and employee-level instructions should be developed both in the overall program and in employee handouts. The program should specifically identify responsibilities and authority, such as who makes the decision to evacuate and under what circumstances. Employee handouts and posters should be distributed that spell out instructions to follow in order to leave the building in an orderly and prompt fashion. The location of fire extinguishers and fire alarms should also be shown on the posters.

Rehearsing for an emergency is the practical application of the ideas developed by top management and safety personnel. By holding regular practice drills, employees will be conditioned to react quickly and effectively. Employee handouts for Tornado and Fire Emergency Procedures should be developed and distributed to all employees on an annual basis as a refresher training.

At a minimum, guidelines should be established for the following areas:

1. Medical Emergency Procedures
  - a. Nonurgent Care—treatment of minor injuries.
  - b. Urgent Care—treatment for critical or life-threatening situations.
2. Severe Weather Emergency Procedures
  - a. Tornado Watch versus Tornado Warning.
  - b. Public address system announcements spelled out in advance.
  - c. Where to go and what routes to take.
  - d. Head count responsibility in the safe zone.
  - e. When will it be safe to return to work?
3. Fire Emergency Procedures
  - a. Immediate evacuation of the building.
  - b. Public address system announcements spelled out in advance.
  - c. Where to go and what routes to take to get there.
  - d. Notification of the proper authorities.
  - e. Possible employee action to extinguish the fire.
  - f. Head count responsibility in the safe zone.
  - g. When will it be safe to return to work?
4. Provisions for having designated employees trained in both CPR and standard first aid.
5. Ensuring that there is an adequate supply of first aid equipment and supplies on hand at all times.

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