

Emergency response planning: an occupational health and safety tool kit



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This material is current to March 2024. The law is constantly changing with new legislation, amendments to existing legislation, and decisions from the courts. It is important that you keep yourself informed of the current law.

This resource is for general information only and may be applicable to assist in establishing compliant emergency response planning at your work site. However, it is critical that you evaluate your own unique circumstances to ensure that appropriate emergency response plans are established for your work site. It is strongly recommended that you consult relevant professionals (e.g. lawyers, health and safety professionals and specialists) to assist in the development of your emergency response plans.

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Introduction

Emergency response plans are a vital part of any workplace.

A strong, well-rehearsed emergency response plan can help minimize the stress related to making critical decisions on the spot. It provides an element of control in potentially chaotic circumstances.

In developing an emergency response plan, an employer and affected workers identify all emergency situations that could reasonably occur at the work site, and figure out how to respond to each. The plan documents the response procedures; the designated emergency responders and the training they need; and equipment, supply, and facility requirements.

There's more than one way to develop an emergency response plan. This tool kit provides a step-by-step approach, along with templates that can help complete the process. You'll need to customize both to ensure your plan is effective for your operations.

To help get you started, a sample emergency response plan is completed in steps 2 through 7 of the tool kit. Because every business is unique, the specifics in the sample won't necessarily apply to yours. Rather, the sample is meant to illustrate the process. Use the sample as a guide, and make any necessary adjustments, as you develop your custom plan.



Why you need a plan

All industries have risks

There are inherent risks in every industry and at every work site. You may deal with the public, work alone, or be open 24 hours a day. You may be in a remote location or a crowded urban area.

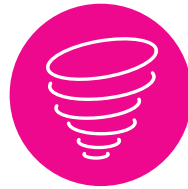
Emergency preparations must go beyond knowing how to evacuate in the event of a fire. You need to have an emergency response plan in place to prepare for both internal and external emergencies at your work site.



fire



structural failure



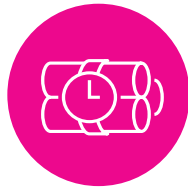
extreme weather



medical emergency



robbery



bomb threat



vehicle collision



active assailant

You never know when you might need it

Emergencies often occur with little or no warning.

An emergency response plan provides a step-by-step, clear-headed response in times of potential fear and panic. It puts you in control of a situation that might otherwise quickly spiral out of control.

Having a plan, and following it, can save lives, prevent or reduce injuries, and protect property and business operations. It is an important tool for keeping workers and others at the work site safe.

It's the law

The workplace must be a healthy and safe environment for everyone at the work site at all times, even during an emergency. **That's why Alberta's occupational health and safety laws require all work sites to have an emergency response plan.** Some requirements are very specific: Part 7 of the Occupational Health and Safety Code for instance sets out employer obligations related to emergencies that require rescue and evacuation, and Part 11 of the code states the rules that apply to first aid.



An employer must establish an emergency response plan for responding to an emergency that may require rescue or evacuation.

Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 7, Section 115(1)



Part 11 of the Occupational Health and Safety Code includes requirements for workplace first aid training, services, supplies, equipment, facilities, emergency transportation, and illness and injury reporting and records. Consult this part of the code to make sure you meet all applicable workplace first aid requirements.

As well, an employer's general duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of persons at or near the work site includes doing what is reasonably practicable to be prepared for emergencies.



Every employer shall ensure, as far as it is reasonably practicable for the employer to do so, the health, safety and welfare of

- (i) workers engaged in the work of that employer,
- (ii) those workers not engaged in the work of that employer but present at the work site at which that work is being carried out, and
- (iii) other persons at or in the vicinity of the work site whose health and safety may be materially affected by identifiable and controllable hazards originating from the work site,

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Part 1, Section 3(1)(a)

Note also that on work sites with multiple employers, health and safety responsibilities – including emergency response planning – will be either shared among the employers or led by a designated prime contractor. For more information, see *Prime contractor role and duties* in *Additional resources* on page 44.

How to develop an emergency response plan

This tool kit outlines a step-by-step approach to developing and implementing an emergency response plan for your organization. Steps 2 through 7 take you through each part of the emergency response plan template, using examples to connect the process to the document. Additional templates that can help with planning are also provided. (The customizable templates are available online at ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp040tmp.)

Here are the basic steps:

Get organized

- 1 **Establish** your team

Develop the plan

- 2 **Identify** all potential emergencies
- 3 **List** emergency equipment, supplies and facilities
- 4 **Document** your emergency communication requirements
- 5 **Determine** rescue and evacuation procedures
- 6 **Figure out** response procedures for each emergency
- 7 **Assign** specific tasks

Implement the plan

- 8 **Train** the emergency response team
- 9 **Communicate** the plan and procedures to all workers
- 10 **Practice** drills
- 11 **Update** your plan and **repeat**

Adjust your approach as needed for your workplace. Just make sure your emergency response plan addresses all of the elements required by occupational health and safety law.

Part 7 requirements in the Occupational Health and Safety Code apply specifically to emergencies that potentially require rescue or evacuation.



An emergency response plan must include the following:

- (a) the identification of potential emergencies;
- (b) procedures for dealing with the identified emergencies;
- (c) the identification of, location of and operational procedures for emergency equipment and personal protective equipment;
- (d) the emergency response training requirements;
- (e) the location and use of emergency facilities;
- (f) the fire protection requirements;
- (g) the alarm and emergency communication requirements;
- (h) the first aid services required;
- (i) procedures for rescue and evacuation;
- (j) the designated rescue and evacuation workers.

Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 7, Section 116

And note that it's reasonably practicable for an employer to have a plan in place to address other emergencies – for example, when procedures such as shelter-in-place or run-hide-fight are required.



Setting up your plan

As you work through the planning process, keep in mind that the information you gather in **steps 2 through 5** may apply to all the potential emergencies you and your workers identify. If so, it can form the front end of your emergency response plan. The detailed procedures you record in **step 6** for each emergency situation can follow, listed alphabetically for easy reference.

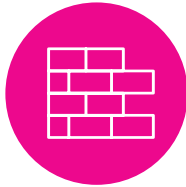
Remember that you can find this tool kit's customizable template package online at ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp040tmp.

Only a custom plan will do

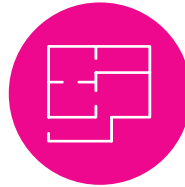
Your plan must reflect your specific situation.



location



building
structure

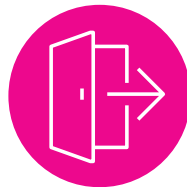


layout/
floor plan



type of
operation

Even within the same organization, **there is no one-size-fits-all formula to emergency response planning.** Different kinds of emergencies require different responses.



evacuate



lockdown



shelter-in-place





Get organized



1 STEP 1: Establish your team

2 **Identify and invite individuals to be involved in developing the plan.** A good mix of people will provide a broad range of perspectives and insight.


3  **Managers and supervisors** have the authority to assign any necessary resources (i.e. time and money) to the project. Management also has high-level knowledge of the organization, insight into individual worker skill sets, and expertise related to the industry at large.


4  You must involve **affected workers** in emergency response planning. This could include scheduling a formal meeting, inviting comments during a walk-through, or asking workers to review a draft of the plan for feedback. If applicable, include workers representing various departments and different shifts. The nature of the involvement will depend on the nature of your work site and activities, but it must be meaningful.


5  An employer must involve affected workers in establishing the emergency response plan.

Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 7, Section 115(2)

6  If your work site has a **joint health and safety committee** or **health and safety representative**, their knowledge of the organization's health and safety culture, resources, hazard control measures, and inspection records may make them a valuable resource.

7  Generally speaking, employers with 20 or more regularly employed workers must establish a health and safety committee. Those with five to 19 regularly employed workers must designate a health and safety representative. For more information, see *Additional resources* (Health and safety committees and representatives) on page 43.

8  If your organization has a **property management** company, engage them in the development of your emergency response plan. They likely have extensive knowledge about the building and related infrastructure, and can answer technical questions that others on site may not know. Depending on the type of building and work areas, they may also have emergency responsibilities under the National Fire Code (Alberta Edition).

9  Local first responder departments such as **fire, police and emergency medical services** may have information that could help in the development of your plan. Consider working with them, and with your **local municipality**.

Emergency planning team list (template)

Management

Department	Name
	Position

Health & safety committee members or representative

Name	Position
------	----------

Workers

Name	Position	Shift
------	----------	-------

Property management company

Contact name	Phone
--------------	-------

Fire | Police | EMS

Name	Phone
Name	Phone
Name	Phone

Municipality

Department	Name
	Phone

This form is for example purposes only. Completing this form alone will not necessarily put you in compliance with the legislation. It is important and necessary that you customize this document to meet the unique circumstances of your work site. Further, it is essential that this document is not only completed, but is used, communicated, and implemented in accordance with the legislation. The Crown, its agents, employees, contractors or content contributors will not be liable to you for any damages, direct or indirect, arising out of your use of this form.

Develop the plan



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STEP 2: Identify all potential emergencies

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4

Emergencies can generally be grouped into **four main categories**. Consider all four as you make your list of potential emergency situations. Here are some examples:

5

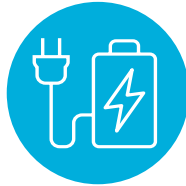
6

Site/location-based

7



structural failure



power outage



gas leak/shut-off



carbon monoxide



fire

8

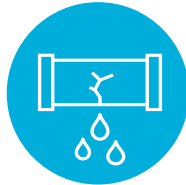
9

10

11



explosion



water main break/
leak/shut-off



mechanical
failure



crash
(plane, train, vehicle)



wildlife

Biological/chemical/medical



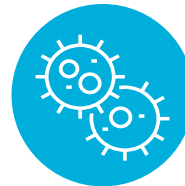
chemical exposure



drug exposure



biohazard cleanup



disease/pandemic



heat/cold exposure



heart attack/stroke



slip, trip, fall



mental health



drowning



finding a body

2 Identify all potential emergencies

Workplace violence



bomb threat



suspicious package



robbery



active assailant



riots/civil unrest



aggressive
behaviour/threats



physical assault



sexual assault



domestic assault



kidnapping

Extreme weather/natural disasters



tornado



wind storm



snow/ice storm



hail storm



flood



earthquake



landslide/avalanche



wildfire

2 Identify all potential emergencies

What kinds of emergencies could affect you?

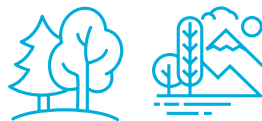
This is the “What if?” stage of emergency response planning. Think about worst case scenarios. Don't get ahead of yourself by trying to figure out how to manage the emergencies. What you want from this step is a complete list of emergencies that could realistically happen at your work site.

To help ensure your list is complete, consider factors specific to your operations. Draw upon what you already know, and think about both your work site and its surroundings. The examples below can help you get started.

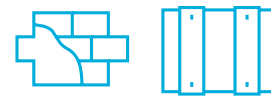
Hazard assessments



Local environment



Building materials, age, and condition



Worker and customer demographics



Nearby buildings and infrastructure



Services you provide



Industry-specific resources



Neighbours



What's on site



2 Identify all potential emergencies

Be thorough as you list the types of emergencies that could affect your workers, other people at the work site, and your business operations. **Consider everything that could realistically require rescue or evacuation from your site.**

If you are working with a corporate emergency response plan developed for multiple sites, make sure you tailor the hazards listed to your specific work site.

Vehicles and mobile equipment are also considered to be work sites when they are used off site for work purposes – for example, driving to do an errand, make a delivery, or between work sites.



"Work site" means a location where a worker is, or is likely to be, engaged in any occupation and includes any vehicle or mobile equipment used by a worker in an occupation.

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Section 1(uu)

Order the list

Once your list is complete, it's a good idea to order it. **Put the situations that are most likely to occur and have the greatest risk of harm at the top of the list.** Ordering the list will help you prioritize as you work through the planning steps. But please note that all emergencies, regardless of the potential you assign them, must be addressed in your plan.

Emergency response plan (sample)

Employer Pi Retailer	
Address 1234 Main St, Our Town, AB	
Completed by Taylor Miller	
Date March 14, 2022	
Potential emergencies (e.g. medical event, flood, fire, robbery) Refer to your hazard assessment to determine which hazards could require rescue or evacuation. List those here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- robbery- medical event- building fire- violence- extreme winter storm- gas leak- wind storm/tornado- structural collapse (car hits our building)- major train event at/near the Main St. crossing- active assailant

1

2

3

STEP 3: List emergency equipment, supplies and facilities

4

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An employer must provide workers designated under section 117 with equipment and personal protective equipment appropriate to the work site and the potential emergencies identified in the emergency response plan.

Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 7, Section 118(1)

8

9



Make sure you know:

- What you have or need to acquire.
- How the equipment works.
- Where everything is or will be stored.

10

11

Think through your needs carefully. Resources that work in one situation may not be the best choice in another. Your plan may need to present options.



alarm



bullhorn



cell phone

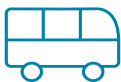


two-way radio

You may have access to more resources than you think.



If your muster point is outdoors, is your neighbour's parkade the sheltered **muster point** you might need in bad weather? You should identify a secondary muster point to use if needed.



Can you arrange **emergency evacuation** with the local public transit authority or school bus company?

3 List emergency equipment, supplies and facilities

Figure out exactly what **equipment and facilities** you have access to during an emergency, how things work, and where they are located. A record with this kind of detail will help you make informed decisions during an emergency.

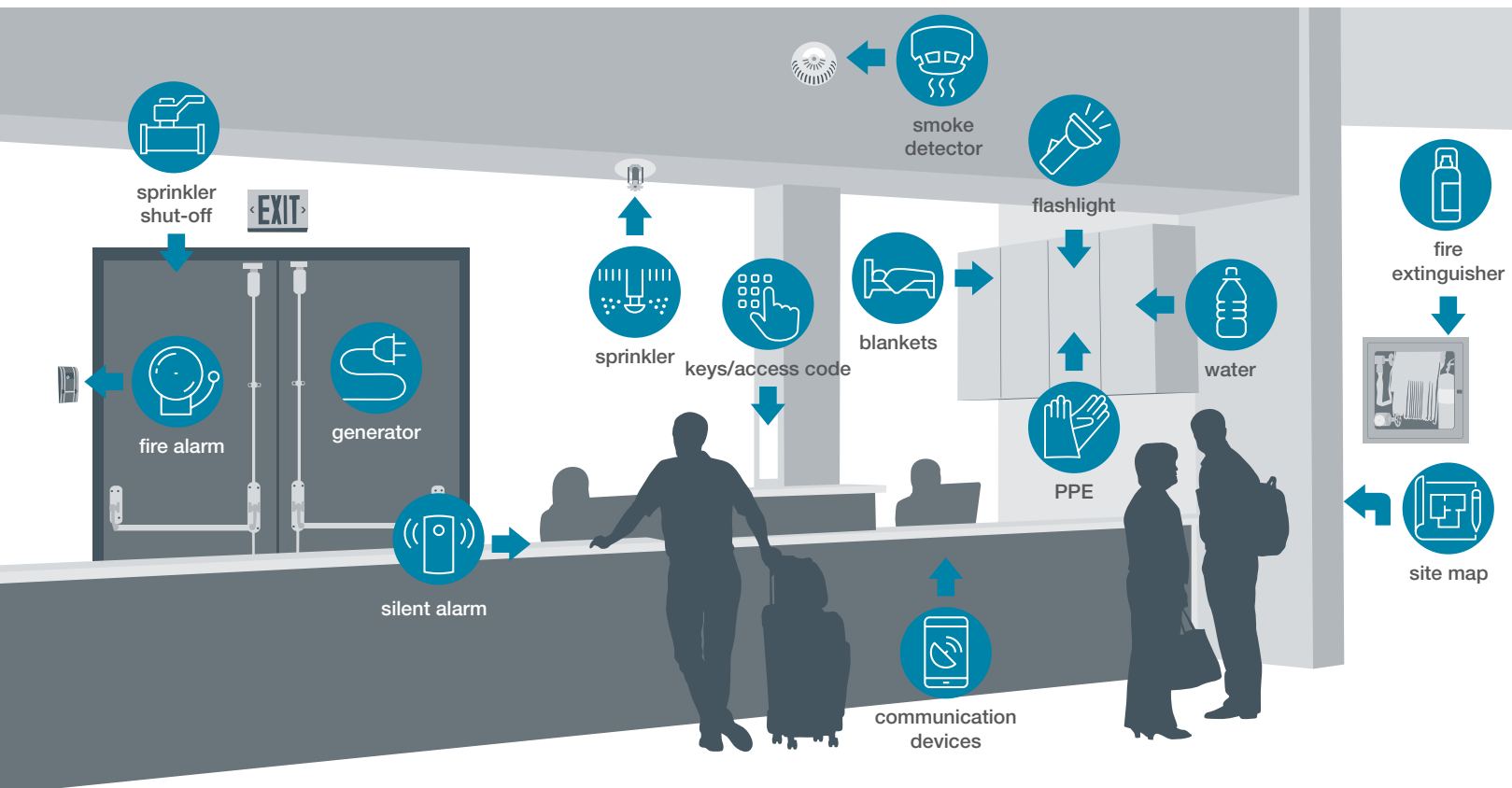
Organization pays off

Emergencies usually demand a quick response. **Know where everything is ahead of time.**



Make sure you have:

- Access to emergency facilities and transportation.
- Knowledge about fire protection system(s) in place.
- A properly stocked and well-organized emergency supply area.
- Trained first aiders, and trained rescue and evacuation workers.



Additional emergency equipment may be located throughout the work site. It's a good idea to identify these items for quick reference on a posted map.

3 List emergency equipment, supplies and facilities

Your first aid requirements

Every Alberta workplace must meet first aid requirements in Part 11 of the Occupational Health and Safety Code. Your emergency response plan must reference your required first aid services. Your first aid requirements are specific to your work site.

To calculate the number of first aiders, the level of first aid training, and the first aid supplies, kits, equipment and facilities required at your work site, consider the following three things:

1) The hazard level of the work performed at the work site



low



medium



high

2) The number of workers per shift

3) The distance of the work site to the nearest health care facility



close

up to 20 minutes under
normal
travel conditions



distant

20 – 40 minutes under
normal
travel conditions



isolated

more than 40 minutes under
normal
travel conditions

Refer to the Occupational Health and Safety Code (Part 11 and Schedule 2) to see what your workplace requires.

Emergency response plan (sample)

Work site resources and procedures

Emergency and personal protective equipment, including fire protection requirements (e.g. alarms, fire extinguishers, hoses, fire doors)	Equipment AED (automatic defibrillator)	Location Beside door to office (rear of store)	Operating procedures Follow instructions on the case and the AED voice prompts.
	First aid kit	At the front cash (shelf under counter)	Complete first aid record after use.
	Fire alarm pull station	Next to washroom (rear of store)	Pull lever down.
	Fire extinguisher	Next to washroom (rear of store, in wall bracket under the fire alarm)	Remove from bracket, pull pin, aim at base of fire, squeeze trigger, sweep nozzle side to side across base of fire.
	Panic button (silent)	Front cash – underside counter, right of the cash register	Press button.
	Security cameras	Monitors at front cash and on manager cell phone	3-week data storage.
	Emergency vest and hard hat	At the front cash (shelf under counter)	Wear if leading evacuation.
First aid (e.g. type and location of first aid kit and supplies; first aiders/shift; first aid room if applicable; transportation)	First aid kit CSA Type 2 Basic, small	Location At the front cash	
	First aid supplies 1) blankets 2) AED	Location 1) In office (middle shelf) 2) Beside door to office	
	First aiders		
	Morning shift Ali C or Melinda Y	Afternoon shift Jeff M or Scot H	Evening shift Jan R or Rocky S
	Transportation plan Call 911 for ambulance		
List and location of emergency facilities (e.g. fire station, hospital, police)	Facility name	Address/distance	
	City Hospital	101 Hospital Ave./2 km	
	Fire Station	422 Grand Blvd./4.5 km	
	Police	10 Centre St./ 3 km	

Return to this part of the plan to update your equipment, supplies and facilities requirements as you work through the next steps and your emergency response procedures.

2

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STEP 4: Document your emergency communication requirements

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An emergency communication system is a required part of every emergency response plan. It can include anything from cell phones or a two-way radio system, to a single- or multi-stage alarm system, to a designated media spokesperson.

8



During an emergency, social media posts can release information that may cause confusion or endanger workers. For example, in an active shooter event, a social media post could give the assailant information about the number or location of workers. **Your plan should identify how and when information is released**, including when consultation with law enforcement is required.

9

10

11

Emergency response plan (sample)

<p>Alarm and emergency communication requirements (e.g. type of alarm, paging or PA system)</p>	<p>Fire alarm connects automatically to fire department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audible signal is steady beeps. - Visible signal is flashing emergency light. <p>Silent alarm connects to the alarm company. Company monitors the alarm 24/7, will dispatch police immediately.</p> <p>Work site cell phones located at front cash and in office are for emergency use.</p> <p>Alberta Emergency Alert app on work site cell phones will sound if there are municipal emergency alerts.</p>
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Triggering the wrong alarm in an emergency can introduce a hazard by causing confusion. **The type of alarm should match the nature of the emergency.**



silent alarm for a robbery



code words or hand signals when threatened by an individual



facility-wide alarm to begin an evacuation

4 Document your emergency communication requirements

Include communication protocols

There may be people inside or outside your organization who need to know what's going on if an emergency occurs. Make sure your plan includes information about who needs to be contacted when, and how to reach them.

It's a good idea to keep an emergency contact list with your emergency response plan. See the sample template on the next page. (This is part of the customizable template package online at ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp040tmp.)



Emergency contact list (template)

Employer address	Business phone
Prepared by	

Emergency response contacts

Police	911
Police (non-emergency)	
Emergency Medical Services (ambulance)	911
Fire	911
Poison and Drug Information Service	1-800-332-1414

Employer contacts

Owner/general manager	
Manager	
Health and safety coordinator	
Maintenance	
Security	
Public relations (designated)	
Other	

Government of Alberta contacts

Occupational Health and Safety	1-866-415-8690 (toll free) 780-415-8690 (in Edmonton)
Workers' Compensation Board (WCB)	1-866-922-9221 (toll free)
Alberta Environment	
Other	

Other contacts

Power company	
Gas company	
Telephone company	
Insurance company	

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3
4
5

STEP 5: Determine rescue and evacuation procedures

6

Your plan must include rescue and evacuation procedures. The procedures you identify here will apply to any emergency requiring rescue or evacuation. (If specific emergency situations require a different response, you'll develop those separately and document them in appropriate sections of the emergency response plan. Step 6 covers this.)

7
8

Calling 911

9

In some situations, it may be effective and appropriate to base rescue and evacuation procedures on providing required first aid equipment and services, and calling 911.

10

But in others, 911 services may not be able to provide a timely response – or may not have the equipment or technical knowledge to perform specific types of rescues or evacuations. **Make sure your rescue and evacuation procedures will work for all the potential emergencies you've identified.** Consider the work site location (i.e. how long will it take for emergency services to reach the site under normal conditions), the nature of work being carried out, and the hazards involved.

11

Revisit steps 3 and 4 at this point to make sure you have the equipment, facilities, supplies and communication systems you need.



5 Determine rescue and evacuation procedures

Some provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Code require specific emergency rescue or evacuation measures.



If a licensed ambulance service is not available to your work site, or if weather conditions pose a transport risk, you must have **alternate transportation** in place. Read more in *First aid in the workplace* in *Additional resources* on page 43.



Certain types of work may require **on-site rescue capability**. These include work in confined or restricted spaces, in conditions that require a fall protection plan, or in a location that requires rope access. Read more in *Guideline for Developing a Code of Practice for Confined Space Entry* or *Occupation health and safety fall protection plan* in *Additional resources* on page 44, or consult Part 41 of the Occupational Health and Safety Code in relation to rope access work.



Mine and mine sites, and oil and gas wells have specific emergency requirements. Consult Parts 36 and 37 of the Occupational Health and Safety Code to find out more about these requirements.

Emergency response plan (sample)

Rescue and evacuation procedures	Procedures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 911 for police, fire or ambulance if required. • Emergency warden on duty leads evacuation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put on emergency vest and hard hat. - Stay calm, take control and direct other workers and customers to the exit routes. - Workers meet at the main muster point in the NE corner of the parking lot. (Alternate/bad weather location: inside the main lobby of ABC building next door.)

3

4

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6

STEP 6: Figure out response procedures for each emergency

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For this step, write down what workers are expected to do in response to each of the possible emergency situations you have identified. This section could be anywhere from a few lines to several pages long for each emergency situation, depending on the nature of the emergency and your operations.

9

10

Be specific

Provide clear direction. The clearer and more specific your procedures are, the easier they will be to follow.

11

Be systematic

Your emergency response will require specific tasks to be completed in a timely manner during the emergency. Think things through carefully from start to finish for each emergency situation.

Keep it practical

Make sure what you're planning will actually work in the event of an emergency. Details can be important.



Will the **time of day** or year impact the plan? A **muster point** in the outside parking lot won't work on an icy winter day when workers and others will need shelter.



If your place of business is open 24/7 to the public, **can you secure the site?**

Do you need to...

- Call 911?
- Sound an alarm?
- Determine the need to evacuate, lock down or shelter in place?
- Shut down equipment?
- Meet and brief first responders when they arrive and provide access for them?
- Confirm everyone on site is safe and accounted for?
- Address emergency contact requirements?

6 Figure out response procedures for each emergency

Emergency response plan (sample)

Emergency response procedures	Emergency situation	Procedures
Detailed procedures to be followed for each identified emergency, including who is responsible for what.	Building fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate fire alarm immediately. • ... to extinguish if safe to do so.
	Medical event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 911 and summon first aider.
	Emergency situation	Procedures
	Robbery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If safe, press panic button (silent). • Cooperate with the robber's demands. • Lock door when robber leaves. • When safe to do so and if the police haven't arrived yet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Call 911. - Call manager (evening shift). - Make notes about what happened.

Your emergency response plan must address every situation you identify on your list, but it may not be feasible to address them all equally, right away. Prioritize the situations that are most likely to occur and pose the greatest risk of harm as you develop your plan. You must still **make sure you have interim resources and procedures in place** for any situations that need to wait for more permanent measures.

After the emergency

After an emergency situation is over, there are still certain things management will need to take care of. Keep the following information handy as part of the materials at the front of your emergency response plan binder. **Consider the following best practices:**

- If the emergency was traumatic in any way, workers may benefit from crisis counselling.

Note: You must ensure workers reporting an injury or adverse symptoms resulting from a violence or harassment incident are advised to consult a health professional (of the worker's choice) for treatment or referral.
- Consider providing access to spiritual care.
- Have pre-sourced, pre-approved service providers in place to deal with any biohazard issues or other cleanup and restoration work.
- Report to authorities, if required.

6 Figure out response procedures for each emergency

Reporting to Occupational Health and Safety

Make sure you include legal reporting requirements in your emergency planning. Prime contractors – or employers, if there is no prime contractor – must report specific incidents to Occupational Health and Safety as soon as possible. These are:

- Serious injuries, illnesses and incidents (described in Section 33(2) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*).
- Radiation overexposures (worker has been exposed to radiation above the limits in Schedule 12 of the Occupational Health and Safety Code).
- Incidents at a mine or mine site (described in Section 544 of the Occupational Health and Safety Code).

Prime contractors – or employers, if there is no prime contractor – must also report potentially serious incidents to Occupational Health and Safety. A potentially serious incident is an event:

- that had a likelihood of causing serious injury or illness, and
- where it's reasonable to believe that corrective action may be needed to prevent recurrence.



Call the OHS Contact Centre as soon as possible to report serious injuries, illnesses, incidents or radiation overexposures.

1-866-415-8690 (toll-free in Alberta) | **780-415-8690** (Edmonton area)

If you're not sure whether you have to report, call.

Notify Occupational Health and Safety about mine, mine site or potentially serious incidents **online** at oportal.labour.alberta.ca/pre-screening.

- Report mine or mine site incidents as soon as possible.
- Report potentially serious incidents after your incident investigation is complete.

Find more on reporting incidents to Occupational Health and Safety in *Additional resources* (Injuries, illnesses and incidents) on page 44.

Notifying Occupational Health and Safety is separate from any notice you are required to give to the Alberta Workers' Compensation Board or other authorities, such as the police. As a prime contractor or employer, a best practice is to assign reporting duties to a particular role, rather than an individual – for instance, to the shift supervisor, not to Joe Smith.

STEP 7: Assign specific tasks

Assign individual workers to each task



An employer must designate the workers who will provide rescue services and supervise evacuation procedures in an emergency.

Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 7, Section 117(1)



Where possible, **assign different tasks to different people** and cross-train as needed. The plan needs to be flexible enough to account for varying levels of staffing. One person cannot realistically be responsible for every task.



Make sure the **individuals** you designate to lead the response **are willing, capable and trained** to do the task competently.



Assign **designated emergency response workers for every shift**. Ideally, backup workers trained in a specific role will be available to respond if they are needed. However, organizations with limited staff during particular shifts may want to assign multiple roles to an individual worker.



By law, workers must not be assigned to or undertake tasks or assignments that they cannot do in a healthy and safe manner.



Every employer shall ensure that workers engaged in the work of that employer are adequately trained in all matters necessary to perform their work in a healthy and safe manner.

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Part 1, Section 3(2)



A worker who is not trained in extinguishing grease fires can't be expected to fight a kitchen fire.



Without proper training, a worker can't be expected to clean up blood or bodily fluids.

Emergency response plan (sample)

Emergency response training and requirements	Position or name			Training received	Frequency
	Morning shift	Afternoon shift	Evening shift		
List the positions or names of workers trained to use each type of emergency equipment and those trained in rescue and evacuation procedures.	Manager	Manager	Attendant	Fire extinguisher	Annual refresh
	Cashier	Cashier	Attendant	Intermediate First Aid	Every 3 years with annual CPR
	Manager	Manager	Attendant	Emergency warden	Annual refresh

You will need to update this part of the plan every time there are changes to related staffing and worker training.

Now that we've worked through the emergency response plan template step-by-step, please take a look at the full template on the next pages. (Remember, you can find the customizable templates for this tool kit online at ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp040tmp.)



Emergency response plan template



Emergency response plan

Employer	
Address	
Completed by (your name)	
Date (today's date)	
Potential emergencies (e.g. medical event, flood, fire, robbery) Refer to your hazard assessment to determine which hazards could require rescue or evacuation. List those here.	

Work site resources and procedures

Emergency and personal protective equipment, including fire protection requirements (e.g. alarms, fire extinguishers, hoses, fire doors)	Equipment	Location	Operating procedures
First aid (e.g. type and location of first aid kit and supplies; first aiders/shift; first aid room if applicable; transportation)	First aid kit		Location
	First aid supplies		Location
	First aiders		
	Morning shift	Afternoon shift	Evening shift
	Transportation plan		
List and location of emergency facilities (e.g. fire station, hospital, police)	Facility name		Address/distance



<p>Alarm and emergency communication requirements (e.g. type of alarm, paging or PA system)</p>																
<p>Rescue and evacuation procedures</p>	<p>Procedures</p>															
<p>Emergency response procedures Detailed procedures to be followed for each identified emergency, including who is responsible for what.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="553 705 646 741"></th> <th data-bbox="646 705 922 741">Emergency situation</th> <th data-bbox="922 705 1380 741">Procedures</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="553 741 646 768">E</td> <td data-bbox="646 741 922 768"></td> <td data-bbox="922 741 1380 768"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="553 768 646 795">E</td> <td data-bbox="646 768 922 795"></td> <td data-bbox="922 768 1380 795"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="553 795 646 823">E</td> <td data-bbox="646 795 922 823"></td> <td data-bbox="922 795 1380 823"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Emergency situation	Procedures	E			E			E		
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	<p>Morning shift</p>	<p>Afternoon shift</p>	<p>Evening shift</p>													

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Implement the plan



STEP 8: Train the emergency response team

The workers who are given roles in your emergency response plan must be trained for those roles.

First aiders must be trained as required in Part 11 of the Occupational Health and Safety Code.



A prime contractor or, if there is no prime contractor, an employer must ... except as provided in subsection (3), ensure a worker who is designated as a first aider has successfully completed training in first aid from an approved training agency,

Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 11, Section 181(1)(b)

Rescue and evacuation worker training requirements are in Part 7 of the Code.



An employer must ensure that designated rescue and evacuation workers are trained in emergency response appropriate to the work site and the potential emergencies identified in the emergency response plan.

Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 7, Section 117(2)

Workers who are assigned other roles in emergency response plans must be trained in accordance with Section 3(2) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.



Every employer shall ensure that workers engaged in the work of that employer are adequately trained in all matters necessary to perform their work in a healthy and safe manner.

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Part 1, Section 3(2)

The National Fire Code (Alberta Edition) also requires supervisory staff to be properly trained in fire and emergency plans. (In the fire code, **supervisory staff means those occupants of a building who have some delegated responsibility for the fire safety of other occupants** under the fire safety plan.) For specific requirements, see *Additional resources* (Fire safety) on page 43.

8 Train the emergency response team

Figure out who needs what training

Keep training relevant to the individual roles assigned. For example, the worker who will be responsible for shutting off the gas needs to know where the shut-off valve is located and how to use it. That worker probably doesn't need to be specially trained in crowd management or public relations.

Decide who will provide the training

You may want to use in-house expertise if it's available. Alternately, you can consider options such as online training or an external consultant.



in-house training



external consultant



online training



Designated workplace first aiders must be trained by a training agency approved by Occupational Health and Safety. For a list of approved first aid training agencies, visit alberta.ca/first-aid-training.aspx.

Consider asking local emergency response organizations to share their expertise. They might be able to provide insight or feedback as you work to ensure an effective training program.

Training must be up to date

Very few work sites stay the same over time. Workers, the work environment and emergency response roles will change.



new staff



new neighbour



expanded operations

Even if everything remains unchanged in the workplace, worker training needs to remain current. Certifications can lapse and safety standards evolve.

8 Train the emergency response team

Keep track of training

Recording who receives what kind of training will make it easier to ensure workers will be effective in an emergency situation. Make sure you include refresher training in your training records.

Good training records can:



help identify if there are any gaps



signal when workers are due for refresher training



confirm expectations of worker competency

Emergency response training summary record (template)

Employer			Completed date				
			Reviewed date				
Address							
Worker's name	Required first aid training		Training completion date				
	Level of training	Completion date	Rescue and evacuation	Emergency warden	Fire extinguisher	Emergency response plan	Other

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STEP 9: Communicate the plan and procedures to all workers

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11



Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, employers must keep health and safety information including work practices and procedures readily available and provide them to workers, as well as to the health and safety committee or representative, if there is one, and the prime contractor, if there is one.



In addition to providing access to the written emergency response plan, **employers must ensure workers are adequately trained in all matters necessary to protect their health and safety.** This includes emergency response training. Employers can also consider including information about the emergency response plan and procedures during orientations, job-specific training and regular staff meetings. Always keep a record of training that workers have received.

Workers must know about the emergency response plan.



Among other things, **everyone needs to know** who has been assigned responsibilities in case of an emergency and what those responsibilities are.



STEP 10: Practice drills

In an actual emergency, there won't be time to read through your emergency response plan. Everyone needs to know what the plan is ahead of time and practice the plan with drills.

Drills are important. They:

- Reinforce emergency response training.
- Prevent panic by improving preparedness.
- Help identify gaps in the emergency response plan.
- Create an opportunity for workers to demonstrate competency.
- Promote ongoing worker engagement.

Although fire drills may come to mind first, holding drills for other types of emergencies is equally important. **Drills are an integral part of your ongoing emergency response training.**

Drill frequency

The Occupational Health and Safety Code links drill frequency requirements to ensuring worker competency. Where no other laws apply, this allows employers the flexibility to set drill schedules that will be effective for their organization, work site and the identified emergencies.



The training exercises ... must be repeated at the intervals required to ensure that the designated rescue and evacuation workers are competent to carry out their duties.

Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 7, Section 117(4)

Section 2.8 of the National Fire Code (Alberta Edition) sets emergency planning requirements related to fire for a number of building types, as well as certain designated areas. As applicable, this section includes the requirements for fire drills, including fire drill frequency.



In general, the National Fire Code (Alberta Edition) requires annual fire drills. However there are exceptions for specific types of buildings and operations – for example, schools, day cares and laboratories all require more frequent drills. For specific requirements and exceptions, see *Additional resources* (Fire safety) on page 43.

Type of drill

A full-scale evacuation or operational shutdown isn't always practical. There are drill options for every size and structure of an organization.

Providing other applicable laws are met, the occupational health and safety laws require employers to choose drills that suit their work site and emergency response plan.



The training ... must include exercises appropriate to the work site that simulate the potential emergencies identified in the emergency response plan.

Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 7, Section 117(3)

Figure out what type of drills will be the most practical and effective for your operations.



Full-scale drills: Involve many workers, active testing of the emergency response plan, complete shut down of operations and testing of alarms. May engage off-site expertise (for example, fire, emergency medical services, police). Focus is on worker response.



Role play drills/mock emergency exercises: Staging a realistic emergency situation and enacting each step of the emergency response plan. Can be a surprise drill or planned and performed with worker knowledge that it is a drill. (Avoid sparking panic by making it seem too real.) Focus is on worker response.



Table top drills: A boardroom style exercise involving as many workers as possible in a step-by-step evaluation of emergency response procedures. Does not set off any alarms or require an actual evacuation. Could be specific to one department. Can be effective for a department meeting. Focus is on problem solving rather than worker response.



Learning engagement exercises: Meant as a quick review during stand up meetings with workers. Can include discussion about possible emergency situations (what workers would do if...). Spend time to discuss the situation and answer any questions. Focus is on raising awareness and problem solving.

Let the public know about any drills that may affect them.

- Place notices in high visibility locations.
- Announce the drill is happening before it starts. Make sure the announcement reaches everyone on site.

Practice with purpose

Holding the same type of drill over and over again can be ineffective. Emergency response drills should create competence and confidence, not complacency. **Run different types of drills to train for different types of emergencies.**

Document your drills

Keep records of your drills, and what you learned from each.

- How long did it take to get everyone to the muster point?
- What went well?
- What needs improvement?

There are many ways to keep drill records. The template on the next page – part of the customizable template package online at ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp040tmp – is one example.



Emergency response drill record (template)

Leader conducting drill		
Department	Drill date	
Type of drill (e.g. evacuation, table top, role play)		
Participants		
Evacuation time		
Items done well		
Items requiring improvement		
Corrective actions	Assigned to	Target date
Scheduled date of next drill		
Comments		
Reviewed by		Date

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STEP 11: Update your plan and repeat

Make your drills count



Communicate the results of each drill with all affected workers.



Use what you learned to **update your plan**.



Once updates to your emergency response plan are made, and any newly identified training requirements are met, you're ready to **start planning your next drill**.



Your emergency response plan must be kept up to date. To be effective, it needs to reflect your current environment and business operations. Changes to your service offerings, renovations to your building, changes in your neighbourhood (e.g. new business neighbours, road construction/traffic patterns), or to Alberta's occupational health and safety legislation could make it necessary to adjust your plan.



An employer must ensure that an emergency response plan is current.

Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 7, Section 115(3)

When you get to this continuous improvement stage of planning, a checklist is one way to help you keep track of your preparedness. The self-check template on the next page is one example. (This is part of the customizable template package online at ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp040tmp.)

Emergency response planning checklist (template)

You can use a checklist to help you determine if your organization is prepared for emergencies. Customize the questions to suit your organization.

Checklist	YES	NO
Is there a written emergency response plan for each work site that aligns with the hazards at the site?		
Does this plan include:		
A list of all potential emergencies?		
Procedures for dealing with the identified emergencies?		
A list of workers who will provide emergency response?		
Procedures for rescue and evacuation?		
A list of designated rescue and evacuation workers?		
Emergency response training requirements?		
Alarm and emergency communication requirements?		
Fire protection requirements?		
Identification, location and instructions for use of emergency equipment and facilities?		
Emergency contact information?		
Do your first aid supplies, kits, equipment and facilities meet legislated requirements?		
Do you have the required number of trained first aiders?		
Do workers understand their responsibilities under the plan?		
Have workers been trained in their individual responsibilities?		
Are emergency response drills conducted regularly?		
Are all records of emergency response activities (including drills) reviewed to identify gaps?		
Is the plan current?		

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Additional resources

Emergency planning

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) – Emergency planning
ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/planning.html

Fire safety

Government of Alberta – Fire codes and standards
alberta.ca/fire-codes-and-standards.aspx

First aid

Government of Alberta – First aid in the workplace
ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/fa020

Government of Alberta – First aid training
alberta.ca/first-aid-training.aspx

Harassment and violence

Government of Alberta – Harassment and violence in the workplace
ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li045

Government of Alberta – Workplace violence prevention plan: employer guide for retail fuel and convenience stores
ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp031

Hazard assessment and control

Government of Alberta – Hazard assessment and control: a handbook for Alberta employers and workers
ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp018

Health and safety committees and representatives

Government of Alberta – Health and safety committees and representatives
ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li060

Injuries, illnesses and incidents

Government of Alberta – Incident reporting and investigation

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li016

Occupational health and safety (general)

Government of Alberta – Guideline for Developing a Code of Practice for Confined Space Entry

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/cs001

Government of Alberta – Occupational health and safety fall protection plan

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/gs010

Government of Alberta – Occupational health and safety starter kit

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp035

Government of Alberta – Prime contractor role and duties

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li018

Vehicles

Government of Alberta – Driving safety

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp039

Government of Alberta – Vehicles as work sites

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li066

WHMIS

Government of Alberta – WHMIS 2015 – Information for employers

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/ch008

Government of Alberta – WHMIS 2015 – Information for workers

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/ch007

Canada’s National WHMIS Portal

whmis.org

Working alone

Government of Alberta – OHS working alone requirements

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/wa002

Notes

Notes

Occupational health and safety legislation

This tool kit is current to March 2024.

It references:

Occupational Health and Safety Act (current as of November 16, 2022)

Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (current as of March 31, 2023)

Occupational Health and Safety Code (current as of March 31, 2023)

Find the current occupational health and safety legislation online at:



alberta.ca/ohs-act-regulation-code.aspx

Purchase official printed versions of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, Regulation and Code Handbook from Alberta Queen's Printer:



alberta.ca/alberta-kings-printer.aspx



kings-printer@gov.ab.ca



780-427-4952



Suite 700, Park Plaza Building
10611 – 98 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5K 2P7



780-452-0668

Contact us

OHS Contact Centre



Edmonton and surrounding area: 780-415-8690
Toll-free in Alberta: 1-866-415-8690

For the deaf or hard of hearing (TTY)



In Edmonton: 780-427-9999
Toll-free in Alberta: 1-800-232-7215

Or connect with us online



Website

alberta.ca/ohs



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March 2024