Train the Trainer: Emergency Preparedness



We are all vulnerable to disasters—whether they're the work of Mother Nature in the form of
earthquake, tsunami, hurricane, tornado or flood or deliberate acts of mankind in the form of arson,
bombing or other act of terrorism. Surviving such disasters often hinges on being prepared.

This is why emergency preparedness and contingency plans are mandatory. Training is an integral part of preparation. Here's a plan.

Workplace Disasters
Every workplace is at risk for a life safety emergency. Life safety emergency is any unplanned event
that could cause death or significant injury to employees, clients or visitors; or that can shut down
business, disrupt operations or cause physical and environmental damage. Some examples of life
safety emergencies include:

Fire	**Lightning**	**Terrorism**
Gas Leaks	**Structural damage**	**Bio-terrorism**
Flood	**Bomb threat**	**Civil disturbance**
Explosion	**Earthquake**	**Power outage**
Hurricane	**Snowstorm**	**Tornado**

Hazmat incident	Infectious disease outbreak	Tsunami

Disaster Plan Objectives
The key objectives and components of a successful disaster plan include:
• Continuation of a healthy and safe work environment
• Minimal interruption to business and service operations
• Resumption of critical operations within a specified time frame
• Minimal financial loss
• Assurance to all stakeholders that the company is functional and operational

Phase 1: Pre-Planning
There are three main areas of concern when developing a disaster plan: response, recovery and
restoration. But before you even begin drafting the plan, there are two things you need to do first

1. Form a Team
Your first step is to form an Emergency Planning Team (EPT) to develop disaster planning policies and
procedures. Include the following personnel or their designated representatives in your EPT:
• Senior officer of the company
• Senior officer of the facility management unit
• Senior officer of the human resources unit
• Local community government official
• Communications officer
• Specialty consultants(e.g., hazardous waste disposal)
This team should meet periodically to review processes, participate in the health & safety committee
and conduct periodic table top exercises to ensure everyone understands their role in a disaster
situation.

2. Look at Your Mission Statement
As you know, employers are obligated to provide safety and prevent harm to its employees in the
workplace from recognized hazards. Natural disasters and terrorism are arguably recognized hazards.
Ideally, a company should have a mission statement that outlines the company’s role and intent to
provide safety to its employees and facility occupants from all recognized hazards. This mission
statement will serve as your focus while preparing the disaster plan.

Phase 2: Response Planning
This part of your plan outlines immediate actions in responding to an emergency. It is important to
remember that when preparing the plan, you should assume a total communications failure. Your
plan must address how communication will be achieved in that event.

Health and life safety, of course, should be your most important concern and you

need to consider:
Removal from the affected area may be critical and should be implemented quickly and safely. Ensure
that building occupants are familiarized themselves with posted evacuation floor plans and know how
to safely exit the premises and proceed to the established assembly/shelter area.

Throughout your facility, post signage for designated Shelter Areas. This signage should indicate where
workers and visitors are to go for shelter in the event of severe weather or other emergency, as
determined by your chief or senior emergency coordinator.

Caring for victims. Serious injuries or fatalities are another aspect you must address. Your plan should
outline how to set up a makeshift triage area and how to triage victims according to the severity of
their injuries. (Triage means to sort by priority.) For example: First aid must be applied to those who
have broken bones, avulsions or missing extremities. Efforts should be made to sustain life until
appropriate medical personnel arrive. Victims who die because of their injuries must be covered until
medical personnel arrive.

The response part of your plan should include a list of all employees who are certified in CPR and first
aid. This list should be posted in employee populated areas, such as break rooms, and include the
telephone extensions of the certified employees.

Access to supplies. Place disaster kits at various locations within your facility (at least one per floor)in
an area that does not require key access. It’s important to include the location of the kits on your
evacuation floor plan.

The response part of your plan must be written and practiced. Train employees to be responsive in
emergency situations. Frequent drills for fire, tornadoes, earthquakes and bomb threats will help in still
the process. Next week, we’ll look at the second key area of concern in emergency planning:
recovery.

Phase 3: Recovery
The next phase of emergency response is recovery. After the impact of the disaster or emergency
has subsided, the EPT should convene to plan for recovery and minimize downtime.

The EPT should consider the anticipated recovery timelines and assign these to areas needing
recovery and restoration. For example, Plan A= immediate recovery – no down time; Plan B= up to

four (4) hours to recover, and so on.

When developing your plan, also include a company policy for using an off-site storage area and make
sure that all department heads conform. This will ensure that your company can remain in
operation in the event of fire or another catastrophe. Having an off-site location to store pertinent
media will facilitate recovery.

Debrief Workers
Once you've determined that there's no longer a risk to health and safety, schedule a debriefing
with staff members of the affected location. The goal of this meeting is to relieve panic, emotional
disequilibrium and stress, as well as institute further recovery and restoration measures.

Expect workers to display or express sadness, anger, anxiety and depression at the meeting. These
are normal reactions to a disaster. When talking with affected workers, it's important to: • Maintain patience and listen to what they have to say;
• Keep in mind that other people may have different priorities from yours;
• Realize that it generally takes time to restore things, physically and emotionally; and
• Ensure workers that you will learn from the disaster and institute measures to prevent
recurrences.
Results of the debriefing should be shared by the EPT with company executives and the company's
Health and Safety Committee.

Phase 4: Resumption
It is also important for the EPT to evaluate the response and recovery efforts made and begin to
generate processes for prevention and/or better preparedness for future emergency situations. Once
you've reacted to the disaster, the goal becomes to restore and resume business activity as soon as
possible. To help accomplish this, your plan should address these four questions:

•In the case of partial or total loss of the facility, where can you set up temporary space? Is there an alternate company site that can be utilized?
• How will you restore telephone service?
• How will you replace or repair furniture and equipment? Copyright 2018 | SafetyNow | www.SafetyNow.com
• How will you continue mail services?

Restoration Guidelines
The plan should include guidelines to help the Emergency Planning Team ensure that:
• Back-up systems are put in place in a timely fashion when needed;
• Systems are inspected, damage is assessed, and determinations are made

regarding what is required to put those systems back into service;
• Appropriate agencies are notified (e.g., insurance, OSHA and other regulators, etc.);
• Steps to prevent further loss due to vandalism, theft and exposure to dangerous elements and accidents are taken; and
• Hazardous materials are removed from grounds in accordance with procedures.

Resource Management Annex
One of the most important pieces of your Contingency/Disaster Preparedness Plan is the Resource
Management Annex, a link to many services you may need to aid in your restorative efforts. The
Resource Management Annex should consist of vendors for various services, including:

personnel agencies	**communication**	**vehicles**
general materials	**equipment**	**electrical**
carpenters	**plumbing**	**heavy equipment**
first aid supplies	**pumps**	**generators**
realtors	**food**	**furniture**
office equipment	**computers**	**flooring**
security services	**janitorial**	**HVAC**
snow removal	**locksmith**	

The Annex should list vendor contact information and your account numbers. It’s also a good idea to
let vendors know that they’re listed in your Resource Management Annex to help expedite your
service call when needed.

Conclusion
The objectives of a Contingency/Disaster Preparedness Plan are to protect the health and safety of
personnel, protect property and equipment, and minimize risk and liability. With proper planning and
documentation and with thorough training of employees, you will be better

equipped to achieve
these objectives.