



OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING
AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN AND SAMPLE PLAN

Every employing office, both large and small, should be prepared for emergency situations.

The instructions in this document are designed to help an employing office, regardless of size, to prepare an Emergency Action Plan. The instructions are presented in a step-by-step format with discussion of each step included. These instructions can be used to complete the attached sample Emergency Action Plan. It is not necessary to use the format of the attached sample as it is provided only as a guide.

If additional assistance is required or if any questions arise, please contact the Office of Compliance at (202) 724-9292.

STEPS FOR PREPARING AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

STEP 1 - DESIGNATE A RESPONSIBLE PERSON

A person must be designated and held responsible within each employing office for preparing and monitoring the Emergency Action Plan. In larger employing offices with an existing safety staff, such as the Architect of the Capitol, this duty is normally assigned to one of the safety personnel. In smaller employing offices, such as a Member's office, this duty can be assigned as a collateral duty to one of the staff members. This person's responsibilities and duties will include the following:

1. Preparation of the initial written Emergency Action Plan.
2. Coordination of the plan with other employing offices.
3. Periodic review of the plan to ensure that it is current.

4. Periodic review of training requirements of the plan to ensure that they are currently being met.
5. Provide orientation for new employees in the requirements of the plan.
6. Periodic inspection of the area to ensure that exits are not blocked and that escape routes and emergency telephone numbers are posted.

STEP 2 - COORDINATE THE PLAN

As any employing office develops its Emergency Action Plan, it must consider its relationships with other employing offices or organizations which may affect portions of the plan.

Smaller employing offices, such as an individual Senator's or Member's office, usually do not have effective control of or responsibility for items such as the sprinkler system, smoke detectors, designating emergency numbers or designating building escape routes. These items are usually within the control and responsibility of the entities such as the Architect of the Capitol, which has overall superintendent responsibilities for the building. These smaller employing offices must be aware of these items, however, and properly include them in their plan.

Larger employing offices, such as the Architect of the Capitol, acting as the superintendent of the building in which smaller employing offices are located, usually do not have any control or responsibility for items such as designating specific office exits or training new office employees.

It is very important that the Architect of the Capitol (or other entity responsible for the overall emergency plan for the building) and the individual employing offices located in those buildings coordinate their plans to ensure that the plans are in agreement. Further, some duplication of effort may be saved by coordinating items such as training.

The Architect of the Capitol (or other entity responsible for the overall emergency plan for the building) should contact each of the individual employing offices in that building and provide them with a copy of the master Emergency Action Plan and with specific instructions as to such items as the building evacuation routes and appropriate emergency phone numbers.

Individual employing offices should contact the Architect of the Capitol or other entity responsible for superintendence of the building and request information on items such as alarm systems, building evacuation routes and appropriate emergency phone numbers.

STEP 3 - FIRES (FIGHT OR FLEE)

Determining all of the elements which must be included in your Emergency Action Plan for fires

will depend upon a basic decision as to what actions are expected from your employees. There are two options available.

OPTION - 1 TOTAL EVACUATION

Upon the discovery of a fire, an employing office may choose to have all its employees evacuate the scene and allow only professional fire fighting personnel attempt to extinguish the fire. If this option is selected, employees must be trained in methods of reporting the fire, the fire alarm system, the proper evacuation routes and as to the assembly area following evacuation.

OPTION -2 FIGHT THE FIRE

Upon the discovery of a fire, an employing office may choose to have certain, specifically trained personnel attempt to extinguish small incipient stage fires. It is important to note that all other personnel are expected to immediately evacuate, and that the fire fighting in this option is limited to very small, beginning fires. All other fire fighting should be left to professional fire fighting personnel.

For most employing offices, especially smaller employing offices located in office spaces, the General Counsel recommends the option of total evacuation.

STEP 4 - DESIGNATE EXIT ROUTES

All spaces occupied by employees or where employees can reasonably be expected, such as storage areas, should be surveyed to ensure that adequate means of emergency exit are available. In most cases, areas should be served by at least two separate routes of emergency exit. In some, small one room office spaces, a single route of exit may be acceptable. If there is any question as to the acceptability of the routes of exit, contact the General Counsel's Office for further guidance.

Normally, the Architect of the Capitol will be responsible for the placement and maintenance of proper exit signs, and for designating building exit routes. However, employing offices should periodically check their assigned routes of exit to ensure that they are properly signed and lead to a free and unobstructed exit from the building. A simple way to check for proper signage is to exit the office space and proceed to the nearest exit sign, and then continue to follow the marked exits until the building is exited. If the exit signs do not lead to an obvious, unobstructed and continuous path to building exit, they need to be corrected. This condition should immediately be reported to the Architect of the Capitol or other entity responsible for superintendence of the building. Any and all doors along the route of exit which could be mistaken for exit doors, should be clearly marked with a sign "NOT AN EXIT."

Outside of normal business hours, some emergency exits may be locked for security purposes. When the normal exits are secured, alternate routes of exit must be designated. The Architect of the Capitol or other entity responsible for building superintendence is primarily responsible for ensuring that alternate means of exit are available, information concerning these alternate exits is communicated to the employing offices in the building, and that proper signage is in place to lead personnel to the available exits. Employing offices in those buildings are primarily responsible for ensuring that their employees are trained and informed about any such alternate exits.

STEP 5 - DESIGNATE THE ASSEMBLY AREA

The Architect of the Capitol or other entity responsible for building superintendence and employing offices in the building should coordinate the selection of assembly areas to be used in case of an emergency.

These areas should be located outside of buildings and far enough from the building so that employees will not be exposed to any further dangers, and so that they do not interfere with the activities of emergency personnel, such as law enforcement or the fire department.

All employees must be informed of the assembly area.

STEP 6 - DESIGNATE ADDITIONAL DUTIES

In addition to designating the person that will be responsible for the overall plan, specific persons must be designated for the following duties:

REPORTING EMERGENCIES - Although all employees can and should immediately report emergencies, persons should be designated to ensure that emergency personnel (such as law enforcement officials and the fire department) have been contacted. These persons will further be responsible for directing emergency personnel to the area of the emergency.

ACCOUNTING FOR EMPLOYEES - Persons should be designated as responsible for accounting for all employees at the assembly area following evacuation of the work area. These persons should further be responsible for alerting emergency personnel to the last known location of any missing employees.

If applicable, specific persons should also be designated for the following duties:

FIRST AID - Although there is no requirement that each employing office have first aid trained personnel available, the General Counsel highly recommends it. For those

employing offices with first aid trained personnel available, such personnel should be identified to the other employees.

CRITICAL OPERATIONS - The work area should be surveyed for critical operations which should be discontinued, if possible, before the area is evacuated. Such critical operations would include industrial operations which could help propagate a fire or areas containing restricted materials. If such areas are identified, a person should be designated to attempt to discontinue the operation or secure the areas with restricted materials.

Under no circumstances should these persons endanger any person (or themselves) by entering a dangerous area.

STEP 7 - TRAINING

Training should be provided for all employees to adequately ensure the effectiveness of the program.

GENERAL TRAINING - Upon employment and at least annually thereafter, all employees should be trained in the general requirements of the plan to include location of the master plan, evacuation policy of the employing office, methods of emergency notification, escape procedures and exit routes, methods of reporting emergencies, and designated assembly areas following evacuation.

SPECIFIC TRAINING - Those employees assigned additional duties in the plan should be trained at least annually in the requirements of these additional duties. This training should include the following:

REPORTING EMERGENCIES - Those individuals designated in the plan as responsible for ensuring that outside emergency personnel have been contacted should be familiarized with all of the current emergency reporting numbers. They should also be instructed as to their duties to coordinate with these outside emergency personnel at the scene.

ACCOUNTING FOR EMPLOYEES - Those individuals designated in the plan as responsible for ensuring an orderly evacuation, conducting a roll call of employees, and reporting any missing employees should be instructed as to their duties.

RESCUE AND FIRST AID - The first aid skills of any person assigned to provide such care should be updated and certified at least annually.

FIRE FIGHTING DUTIES - If an employing office has decided to have certain

persons operate fire extinguishers, those persons must be trained in the proper use of the extinguishers and that training must be updated at least annually.

CRITICAL OPERATIONS - If an employing office has identified critical operations which are to be discontinued, if possible, during an emergency, those persons responsible for deactivating the operations should be trained in those specific operations and those conditions when it will not be possible to deactivate the operations.

STEP 8 - PREPARE THE WRITTEN PLAN

Now that all the basic decisions concerning the plan have been made and all persons have been trained, a written plan should be prepared. The attached sample plan may be used or any other form which contains all of the appropriate information. A copy of the written plan should be provided to each employee.

STEP 9 - POST ALL INFORMATION

All appropriate information should be prominently posted in the work areas. This information should include emergency numbers posted near each telephone, exits properly marked with signs, and diagrams of exit routes posted throughout the work areas.

STEP 10 - PERIODIC REVIEW

At least annually, the entire plan should be reviewed to ensure that all information contained in it is current and accurate. The work areas should also be surveyed at this time to ensure that routes of exit are not blocked and that all required information is posted and current. This annual review of the plan is also an excellent time to ensure that all training is current.

A Sample Emergency Plan follows.

SAMPLE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

[**Note:** This sample Emergency Action Plan is intended as a guide to assist employing offices in preparing a plan appropriate to their size and situation. It is not necessary that employing offices use the format of this sample, so long as the plan contains the elements described above]

Employing Office or organization name

Location

City

State

Zip Code

Prepared by:

Name of preparer

Title

Address/Location

Phone number

Signature

Date

PURPOSE

This plan is for the safety and well-being of the employees of [Name of Employing Office or organization]. It identifies necessary management and employee actions during fires and other emergencies. Education and training are provided so that all employees know and understand the Emergency Action Plan.

LOCATION OF PLAN

Each employee of this office has been provided with a copy of this plan. A copy will also be maintained at [Location of master copy].

Any questions concerning this plan should be directed to [Name and telephone number of person responsible for the plan].

EMERGENCY POLICY

It is the policy of this office that all employees should evacuate the premises in case of fire or other emergency.

ALARM SYSTEMS AND NOTIFICATION OF EMERGENCIES

In an emergency, employees will be notified by [method of notification]. This system should provide warning for necessary emergency action and sufficient time for safe escape of employees from the workplace.

ESCAPE PROCEDURES AND EXIT ROUTES

All exits will remain unlocked and unobstructed during working hours. All employees must exit the facility in a quiet and orderly manner.

The following employees must leave through EXIT 1:

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

The following employees must leave through EXIT 2:

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

The following employees must leave through EXIT 3: [If applicable]

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Diagrams of the various exit routes will be posted prominently in the work areas and are attached to this plan.

REPORTING EMERGENCIES

Any employee, upon discovering an emergency situation, shall immediately notify other employees in the area of the situation and sound an appropriate alarm. As soon as safety possible, the situation shall be reported to the appropriate outside emergency personnel as follows:

<u>Type of emergency</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Phone number</u>
Fire		
Bomb threat		
Medical emergency		
Electrical		
Other safety or health hazards		

These emergency numbers shall be prominently posted near each telephone.

Within this office, the following personnel have the duty to insure that outside emergency personnel have been contacted. They are also responsible for coordinating with outside emergency personnel on the scene and provide directions to the site of the emergency. These personnel are listed in descending order of availability:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. _____
Name and title | _____
Phone number |
| 2. _____
Name and title | _____
Phone number |
| 3. _____
Name and title | _____
Phone number |

ACCOUNTING FOR EMPLOYEES

After exiting the facility, all employees are to assemble for roll call at [Location of assembly area].

The following employees are responsible for ensuring that employees comply with this requirement, conducting the roll call and reporting to outside emergency personnel the last known location of any missing employees. These responsible employees are listed in descending order of availability:

1. _____
Name and title

2. _____
Name and title

3. _____
Name and title

RESCUE AND MEDICAL DUTIES

The following personnel are trained and certified in both CPR and general first aid. In case of medical emergency, they are available to assist until the outside emergency personnel reach the scene.

Name and title

Phone number

Name and title

Phone number

Name and title

Phone number

CRITICAL OPERATIONS

In order to minimize the danger or damage from a fire or other emergency, this office has determined that certain critical operations should be shut down immediately. The following personnel are responsible for shutting down the listed critical operations:

Names of Personnel	Critical Operation(s)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

FURTHER INFORMATION

Any questions, comments or suggestions for improvement in this plan should be directed to the following personnel:

1. _____
 Name and title Phone number

2. _____
 Name and title Phone number

3. _____
 Name and title Phone number