

# On-site emergency response planning

Preparation for what to do in an on-site emergency can be the difference between life and death.

Service providers and business' must consider, and plan for, their ability to respond to an emergency impacting their business and their clients. This factsheet will help you devise a thorough on-site emergency management plan to complement your industry-specific guidelines.

## What is an Emergency Management Plan (EMP)?

An EMP contains instructions for employees in emergency situations. An emergency is anything that could pose a threat to life, health or property, including (but not limited to):

- fire or explosion
- dangerous chemical release
- medical emergency
- bomb threats
- violence or robbery
- bushfire, storm, flood.

An EMP should be simple and flexible, based on a practical assessment of hazards and threats both inside and outside of the workplace. It should address the consequences of these hazards and threats and outline actions to keep workers and visitors safe from harm.

Remember that developing and maintaining an updated EMP may be a legislative requirement for your organisation.

Writing the EMP is not enough—be sure to regularly test and review the plan and make it available to all employees. Training workers on the plan should also be considered.

## What should be included in an EMP?

The most important part of any EMP is that it directs employees in what to do if there is an emergency so it is vital that they are part of the planning process. You may also like to consider enlisting the help of an expert in health and safety if you don't already have one on staff.

EMPs should be relevant to the size of your business and the type of industry in which you work. The following points can be used to develop a simple EMP in a small workplace.

- Engage your local Council's emergency management coordinator or the Fire Service in the planning process.
- Responsibilities—ensure specific actions are designated to a person with appropriate skills, ability and knowledge to perform them, and that everyone is aware of their own responsibilities.
- Emergency contact details—record and distribute appropriate contact details to all staff in the case of an emergency.

- Work environment—appoint and maintain a mechanism to alert staff of an emergency such as a siren or bell. Make all emergency equipment and exits easily available and visible for all staff.
- Training—ensure all employees know what to do in an emergency through practice and training.
- Fire protection equipment—regularly test and assess your equipment and train people how to use them properly.
- Chemical safety—keep all chemicals, medicines and liquids properly labeled and stored safely. Train staff in responding to a chemical spill or incident.
- First aid—appoint and train first aiders and equip them with the proper facilities.
- Post incident follow-up—outline who needs to be notified in the case of an emergency or incident; for example, WorkSafe Victoria, unions, or ongoing medical or psychological support.
- Review—practice and review the EMP with employees and ensure this remains a priority even through extended periods of no incidents.

## Emergency management at the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Health (DH)

The DH is responsible for pre-hospital mass casualty management, hospital emergency response, and public health emergency response. DH is the Control Agency for human disease, biological, radiological and food/drinking water contamination. DHS is responsible for community support and recovery services and has principal responsibility for State Recovery Coordination. Broadly, we aim to:

- prevent, mitigate or reduce risk through preparation
- respond to incidents through
  - pre-hospital mass casualty management at incident sites by medical and ambulance services including the deployment of hospital teams
  - hospital emergency response to a surge in demand for services
  - public health emergency response, including incident control functions for biological and radiological incidents, and food and water contamination
- recover communities by coordinating areas of social, health and community, economy, and natural and built environments
- coordinate the provision of community recovery services including emergency and temporary accommodation, personal hardship grants, case management service, psychosocial support, and recovery centres.

It is vital that all DHS and DH facilities are prepared in the case of an emergency in order to not disrupt other government emergency plans or endanger human lives.

### Useful contacts

The DHS and DH recommend the following online resources to assist you with your emergency management planning:

- WorkSafe Victoria – [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)
- CFA Emergency Plans – [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/business/plans/index.htm](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/business/plans/index.htm)
- Standards Australia - [www.standards.org.au/default.asp](http://www.standards.org.au/default.asp)

To obtain more information on state, regional and local government emergency planning visit:

- Department of Human Services - [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency)
- Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner - [www.oesc.vic.gov.au/emergencymanual](http://www.oesc.vic.gov.au/emergencymanual)
- Municipal Association Victoria - [www.mav.asn.au](http://www.mav.asn.au)

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