

Is Your Company Prepared for an Emergency?

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina many businesses are wondering if they are prepared for emergencies and disasters that can strike anyone, anytime and anywhere. Now is a good time to review the necessary steps to make sure your company can deal effectively with such emergencies.

When developing an emergency action plan, it is a good idea to look at a wide variety of potential emergencies that could occur in your workplace. It should be tailored to your worksite and include information about all potential sources of emergencies. At a minimum, your emergency action plan must include the following:

- A preferred method for reporting emergencies;
- An evacuation policy and procedure;
- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments;
- Names, titles, departments, and telephone numbers of individuals both within and outside your company to contact for additional information or explanation of duties and responsibilities;
- Procedures for employees that remain to shut down critical equipment, operate fire extinguishers, or other essential services before evacuating;
- Rescue and medical duties for any workers designated to perform them.

How do you alert employees to an emergency?

- Make sure alarms are distinctive and recognized by all employees as a signal to evacuate the work area or perform actions identified in your plan;
- Make available an emergency communication system to notify employees and to contact local emergency services;

- Stipulate that alarms must be able to be heard, seen or otherwise perceived by everyone in the workplace.

How do you develop an evacuation policy and procedures?

- Determine conditions under which evacuation would be necessary;
- List the chain of command and designation of persons in your business authorized to order an evacuation or shutdown. You may want to designate an “evacuation warden” to assist others in an evacuation and to account for personnel;
- Outline specific evacuation procedures, including routes and exits. Post these procedures where they are easily accessible to all employees;
- Develop procedures for assisting people with disabilities or who do not speak English;
- Setup a system for accounting for personnel following an evacuation. Consider employees’ transportation needs for community-wide evacuations.

What is the role of evacuation wardens in an emergency?

- Designate assembly areas where employees should gather after evacuating;
- Take a head count after the evacuation. Identify the names and last known locations of anyone not accounted for and pass them on to the official in charge;
- Establish a method of accounting for non-employees such as suppliers and customers;
- Develop a procedure for further evacuation in case the incident expands.

For more information about Emergency Action Plans go to www.osha.gov. (Source: www.osha.gov.)

How to Stay Healthy During Flu Season

Illnesses like flu and colds are caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. The most common way flu and colds are spread from person to person is when the infected person coughs or sneezes.

Employee should be reminded of the following tips that help prevent the spread of germs:

- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough with a tissue and then throw it away. If you don't have a tissue use your hands and then wash them.
- Clean your hands often. When available wash your hands with soap and warm water, rubbing hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces for 15 to 20 seconds. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing that helps dislodge and remove germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth. Germs can live up to 2 hours or more on surfaces like doorknobs, desks, tables and telephones.
- When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest, and check with a health care provider as needed. Keeping your distance from others may protect them from getting sick.
- Practice good health habits by getting plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food. Following these practices will help you stay healthy during flu season and all year long. (Source: CDC-Department of Health and Human Services)

Tips on Preventing Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

The risk of developing carpal tunnel syndrome is not confined to people in a single industry or job, but is especially common in those performing assembly line work - manufacturing, sewing, finishing, cleaning, and meat, poultry, or fish packing. The following tips may help reduce the risk of carpal tunnel:

- Workers can do on the job conditioning, perform stretching exercises, take frequent rest breaks, wear splints to keep wrists straight, and use correct posture and wrist position.
- Wear fingerless gloves to help keep hands warm and flexible.
- Redesign workstations, tasks, tools and tool handles to enable the worker's wrist to maintain a natural position during work.
- Rotate jobs among workers. (Source: National Institute of Neurological Disorder & Stroke)



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