

# Xchanging Safety Sheet

Number 101

## Emergency Procedures

An emergency is a sudden event that occurs within an organisation or the wider community. This can have a severely disruptive affect, and therefore requires an immediate and appropriate response.



When an emergency occurs, there is usually little or no time to determine what assistance is available, and to arrange suitable responses to prevent or reduce any losses. Consequently if pre-event emergency plans and preparations are inadequate, and if the response is not quick and effective, the level of disruption and any consequent losses may be very severe.

### What is an emergency plan?

An emergency plan determines possible hazards and specifies procedures for handling sudden unexpected events that may arise. The objective is to reduce the possible consequences of the emergency by:

- Preventing fatalities and injuries to people
- Preventing or reducing damage to buildings, stock, and equipment
- Accelerating the resumption of normal operations.

### Therefore you need to know:

- What specific events could lead to an emergency event
- What the impact of the event is likely to be, including sequential events after a fire, damage to plant infrastructure, casualties, loss of vital documents and disruption to work
- What pre-event preparation is needed to provide a quick, effective response
- The types of detection and alarm raising systems needed
- The emergency services who need to be involved
- Who is going to be in charge during the emergency
- Communication processes needed before, during and after an emergency
- Where you are going to evacuate to, if evacuation is necessary
- How long it takes to evacuate and how long to reach a safe place
- What practical processes and procedures would be needed to minimise all losses.

### Building Code of Australia

The Building Code of Australia requires:

- An unobstructed pathway to exit the building of 1metre wide and 2 metres high
- Exit doors and landings must be unobstructed at all times
- Usually all exit doors must swing in the direction of egress (exiting)
- Exit doors must be readily operable without a key from the side facing the person seeking egress, by a single device which is located between 900mm – 1020mm from the floor
- Emergency exit lighting system is required in large areas of a building and a long the path of travel
- All new exit signs are to have the 'running man' international symbol on them
- In larger areas, you should be able to see an illuminated exit sign from wherever you stand.

## Risk Management

- Identify** The types of possible emergencies and how they could affect your workplace
- Assess** How serious and potentially disruptive the situations may be
- Control** The risk by preparing, developing and testing an emergency response plan
- Review** The effectiveness of the emergency response plan and make any amendments necessary.

### Investigating emergency preparation using a short checklist

Here are some emergency procedure issues that could affect your organisation and employees. If you (or they) answer 'no' to any of these, then further action may be needed.

| Question   | Yes | No – needs attention |
|--|-----|----------------------|
| Various possible emergencies and potential losses have been considered   |     |                      |
| There is a written document plan about emergency procedures  |     |                      |
| Key employees (eg fire wardens) have been identified and trained to take responsibility in the event of an emergency |     |                      |
| All employees have been briefed about their required response during an emergency                                    |     |                      |
| Adequate emergency facilities and equipment (such as fire extinguishers, mobile telephones, etc) have been provided  |     |                      |
| All preparations have been made in conjunction with local fire brigade and other emergency services personnel        |     |                      |
| Appropriate communication processes and annual drills have been determined and rehearsed                             |     |                      |

### How to design an emergency plan

1. Identify all possible emergency conditions
2. Consider appointing an Emergency Coordinator to take control in an emergency
3. Establish what action needs to be taken in specific cases (e.g. chemical spill)
4. Establish alarm signals where appropriate
5. Survey the need for emergency equipment (eg fire extinguishers, ropes etc)
6. Identify communication needs and processes for use during the emergency
7. Identify if a search and rescue plan will be needed
8. Determine the following services, processes that are required:
  - Emergency services that need notifying: how and by whom
  - Where to provide emergency procedure information
  - Back-up systems, such as emergency lighting and power
  - Alarm systems eg; smoke detectors, alarms to fire brigade and hazardous substance warning
  - Procedures required to account for all personnel on site (including visitors)
  - Shut-down procedures for processes, machinery, chemical plant, etc
  - Training, drills etc required by employees and contractors
9. Establish first aid training requirements
10. Consider ways of protecting vital records, e.g. payroll, computer software, etc
11. Consider the need for release of information to groups (eg public and media)
12. Clarify an all-clear and re-entry procedure
13. Consider and develop a plan to enable a speedy return to normal operations
14. Ensure that all details of the plan are documented and that employees are suitably trained
15. Display emergency evacuation diagrams in suitable places throughout the workplace.

### Service Available

Xchanging can provide clients with advice concerning appropriate controls aimed at achieving injury prevention at your workplace. Please contact the OHS Risk Consultants at [risk.management@au.xchanging.com](mailto:risk.management@au.xchanging.com) for further information.



Disclaimer: The information contained here is not intended to be relied upon as a substitute for legal or other professional advice. Meeting the requirements outlined does not guarantee you are compliant with the laws relating to health and safety in the workplace. It is your individual responsibility to meet all statutory and legal obligations, and further professional advice or directives may still be required. Updated: December 2009