Section A.3
University of South Carolina Health and Safety Guide
EMERGENCY ACTION PLANNING

Introduction

Many different types of emergencies could occur in University facilities including fire, explosion, gas leaks, and chemical spills. Planning before an emergency happens allows those involved to respond effectively and in ways that should minimize worker injuries and property damage.

Specific elements must be included in any Emergency Action Plan (EAP). The Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) has developed a model plan to assist departments in the development and implementation of their EAP.

Scope and Application

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires emergency action planning in all workplaces. Each department is responsible for the development and implementation of a written EAP covering the facilities and operations under their control.

Program Description

Emergency planning requires a written emergency action plan, an employee alarm system, and worker training.

Written Emergency Action Plan

Written programs should consist of several elements including, at a minimum:

- emergency escape procedures and route assignments
- shut down of critical operations
- procedures for accounting for building occupants
- assignment of duties (e.g., rescue and medical)
- reporting procedures for fires and other emergencies
- a list of the major workplace fire hazards
- housekeeping

The written program should include the names (or regular job titles) of those who can be contacted for an explanation of duties assigned under the EAP. The plan should be kept in the workplace and made available for review by workers.
Alarm Systems

Methods should be established for alerting workers in the event of an emergency. If an audible alarm is used, it must be distinctive from any other type of alarm used in the building (e.g. computer alarms, gas alarms, security alarms, etc).

Training

A sufficient number of workers should be trained to assist in a safe and orderly evacuation in the event of an emergency. All those covered by the plan should be trained at the following times:

Initially when the plan is developed
Whenever the worker's responsibilities or designated actions under the plan change
Whenever the plan is changed
Initially when first hired or assigned to the Department

Roles and Responsibilities

Department

- Develop a written Emergency Action Plan which incorporates all the required elements.
- Assign responsibility for the plan.
- Train workers in the actions required of them under the plan.

Supervisors

- Ensure workers are trained.
- Follow plan in the event of an emergency.

EHS

- Provide assistance in development and implementation of plan.
- Periodically audit the plan.

Individual

- Attend training.
- Follow plan in the event of an emergency.
For More Information

- Contact Fire Safety at 777-5269.
- A written model program is available through EHS.
- The following references are available through EHS:
  - How to Prepare for Workplace Emergencies, OSHA, 1991