CONN-OSHA QUARTERLY

Connecticut Department of Labor - Division of Occupational Safety and Health

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Top Stories

Other Info

Developing an Effective Emergency Action Plan

By Robert Hunt, Occupational Safety Training Specialist

Tragedy can strike at any moment leaving very little time to react. Do you know what to do if a fire were to break out in your place of employment? Are you prepared if severe weather like a hurricane or tornado were to strike? Now an age-old adage, James Baker, the former US Secretary of State once said, “proper preparation prevents poor performance.” Also known as the law of the 5 P's, this infamous saying reminds us of the importance of taking a proactive approach to safety and health. Especially in times of an emergency, having not only a plan in place, but an effective one is essential to protecting workers.

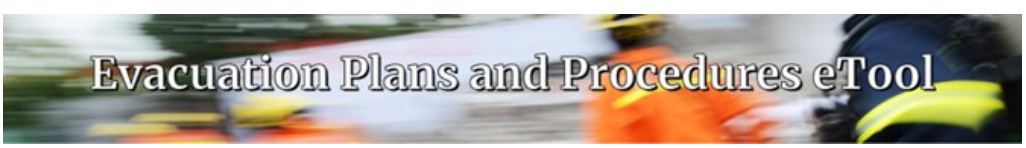
First, if your workplace is required to have an emergency action plan (EAP), it is important to ensure that it contains at a minimum the elements required by OSHA. The OSHA standards 1910.38 (general industry) and 1926.35 (construction) lay out 6 basic points that every plan must contain:

1. Procedures for reporting a fire or other emergency;
2. Procedures for emergency evacuation, including type of evacuation and exit route assignments;
3. Procedures to be followed by employees who remain to operate critical plant operations before they evacuate;
4. Procedures to account for all employees after evacuation;
5. Procedures to be followed by employees performing rescue or medical duties; and
6. The name or job title of every employee who may be contacted by employees who need more information about the plan or an explanation of their duties under the plan.

While these are the basic and necessary requirements of an EAP, one must put considerable thought into creating an *effective* plan. Consider and anticipate the unexpected. It’s easy to think that tragedy won’t strike, or in the rare circumstance that if does, everyone will know what to do. This is far from the truth.

Continued on Page 2

Consider using OSHA’s eTool for developing your workplace EAP by clicking the image below.



Consider these points when implementing your workplace's effective emergency action plan:

1. Evaluate the Risks

Identify potential hazards and vulnerabilities specific to your location, such as natural disasters, fires, chemical spills, or medical emergencies.

2. Have Clear Communication Protocols

Establish clear lines of communication to disseminate emergency information promptly. Define roles and responsibilities for key personnel, including emergency coordinators, responders, and communication liaisons. Implement multiple communication channels, such as phone trees, intercom systems, or mass notification systems, to reach individuals across different locations or shifts.

Note: The emergency action plan must be in writing, kept in the workplace, and available to employees for review. However, an employer with 10 or fewer employees may communicate the plan orally to employees.

3. Create Evacuation Procedures

Develop evacuation routes and assembly points that are easily accessible and well-marked. Assign responsibilities for guiding and assisting individuals with disabilities or special needs during evacuation.

4. Train and Educate

Conduct regular drills or training to familiarize occupants with site-specific evacuation procedures. If you have employees who don't use English as their primary language, be sure the training and signage is in a language they can comprehend.

Note: Clearly communicate to employees that they should evacuate the building unless they are expected to use fire extinguishers or are part of a designated emergency response or hazmat team. Additional training will be required for these employees. These training requirements are beyond the scope of this article.

5. Frequently Check Emergency Equipment and Resources

Ensure the availability and functionality of emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, first aid kits, defibrillators, and emergency lighting. Check emergency routes frequently to ensure that obstructions haven't appeared. Ensure workers know not to leave equipment in places that may block a safe exit.

6. Coordinate with External Resources

Establish partnerships with local emergency services, such as fire departments, police, and medical personnel, to facilitate coordinated response efforts. Exchange contact information and collaborate on emergency planning, response procedures, and mutual aid agreements.

7. Review and Update Plan Regularly

Conduct periodic reviews and updates of the EAP to reflect changes in facility layout, occupancy, personnel, or regulatory requirements. Solicit feedback from stakeholders, including employees, management, emergency responders, and regulatory agencies, to identify areas for improvement. Remember, the plan must be reviewed with each employee covered by the plan when the plan is developed, when an employee is assigned initially to a job, when an employee's responsibilities under the plan change, and when the plan is changed.

8. Document, document, document

Maintain accurate records of emergency drills, incidents, and corrective actions taken to address identified deficiencies. Document training activities, certifications, and qualifications of personnel involved in emergency response roles.

By considering these elements, your organization can enhance its readiness to respond effectively to emergencies, protect lives, and minimize the impact of adverse events on its operations and communities.

For a review of your EAP, contact us to work with our On-site Consultation team today!

Requesting a Consultation

To learn more or request your free consultation from CONN-OSHA:

Call us at 860-263-6900, or visit our webpage

Fire Extinguishers, 1910.157
By Scott Adams, Safety Compliance Officer

With the proper training and education fire extinguishers can save lives and property. Let's take a brief look at fire extinguishers in the workplace. I shall cover the most common types of extinguishers, uses, maintenance, inspections and training. A lot of the information provided below can also be used in the home environment.

There are five primary types of extinguishers that cover specific classes of fires:

Class A

For use on materials like wood, paper and cloth. Remember anything that leaves an ash.

Class B

For use on flammable liquids such as grease, oil, gas. Remember anything that goes boom.

Class C

For use on charged electrical equipment. Remember C for Charged.

Class D

For use on flammable metals such as magnesium. Normally found in factories.

Class K

For use on kitchen fires involving items such as fats and oils. Normally found in commercial kitchens.

Another common type of portable fire extinguisher found is called a multipurpose. It covers classes A, B and C.

When do you use a fire extinguisher? Portable fire extinguishers are designed to be used only on fires in the incipient (beginning) stage. Examples, wastebaskets, power strips, etc. Before you use a portable fire extinguisher, you need to ask yourself a few questions:

- Have I alerted others in the area of the fire?
- Is someone designated to call 911?
- Have I been trained in the proper use of portable fire extinguishers?
- Can I physically operate an extinguisher?
- Can I stay out of the toxic smoke?
- Do I have a safe means of exit from the fire area?

If you answer no to any of the questions or are uncertain, EVACUATE THE BUILDING!!

So how do you use a portable fire extinguisher? Remember the word **PASS**.

Pull the pin
Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire
Squeeze the lever slowly
Sweep the nozzle from side to side

If you are unable to extinguish the fire with one fire extinguisher, EVACUATE the building.

Selection and distribution, 1910.157(d)(1) thru (d)(6). These standards discuss OSHA requirements for selection and distribution. The Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) is tasked with providing distribution requirements based on the laws in your area. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has a fire extinguisher location and placement fact sheet that is available for download at www.nfpa.org.

Testing and maintenance, 1910.157(e)(1) thru (f)(16). Portable fire extinguishers within the workplace are required to be inspected monthly. These inspections are normally done by designated on-site employees. The inspection consists of making sure the extinguisher is in place, identified, charged, hose and nozzle are unobstructed, and the pin is in place. Portable Fire extinguishers are also required to be subjected to an annual maintenance check. This inspection can be more in depth and is normally completed by vendors that are trained in extinguisher testing and maintenance. Depending on the type of portable fire extinguishers at you location, some may require hydrostatic testing every twelve years.

Training, 1910.157(g)(1) thru (g)(4). Where the employer has provided portable fire extinguishers for employee use in the workplace, the employer shall also provide an educational program to familiarize employees with the general principles of fire extinguisher use and the hazards involved with incipient stage firefighting. Training shall be provided by the employer to the employee upon employment and annually thereafter.

Remember if you're unsure about your safety then EVACUATE the building! In addition, some employers have chosen in their written Emergency Action Plan that employees are not to utilize portable fire extinguishers and they are to immediately evacuate the building. Please ensure you understand your employer's expectations.

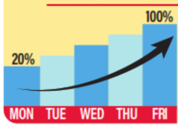

osha.gov

Prevent Heat Illness at Work

Outdoor and **indoor** heat exposure can be dangerous.

Ways to Protect Yourself and Others

Ease into Work. Nearly 3 out of 4 fatalities from heat illness happen during the first week of work.



- **New** and **returning** workers need to build tolerance to heat (acclimatize) and take frequent breaks.
- **Follow the 20% Rule.** On the first day, work no more than 20% of the shift's duration at full intensity in the heat. Increase the duration of time at full intensity by no more than 20% a day until workers are used to working in the heat.

Drink Cool Water
Drink cool water even if you are not thirsty — at least 1 cup every 20 minutes.

Take Rest Breaks
Take enough time to recover from heat given the temperature, humidity, and conditions.

Find Shade or a Cool Area
Take breaks in a designated shady or cool location.

Dress for the Heat
Wear a hat and light-colored, loose-fitting, and breathable clothing if possible.

Watch Out for Each Other
Monitor yourself and others for signs of heat illness.

If Wearing a Face Covering
Change your face covering if it gets wet or soiled. Verbally check on others frequently.

First Aid for Heat Illness

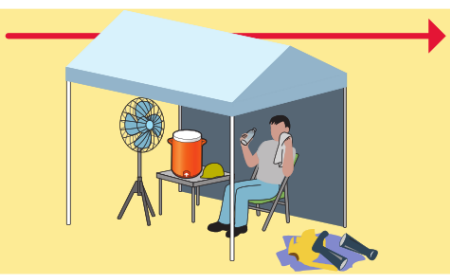
The following are signs of a medical emergency!

- Abnormal thinking or behavior
- Slurred speech
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness

1. CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY
2. COOL THE WORKER RIGHT AWAY WITH WATER OR ICE
3. STAY WITH THE WORKER UNTIL HELP ARRIVES

Watch for any other signs of heat illness and act quickly. When in doubt, call 911.

If a worker experiences:
- Headache or nausea
- Weakness or dizziness
- Heavy sweating or hot, dry skin
- Elevated body temperature
- Thirst
- Decreased urine output



Take these actions:
- Give water to drink
- Remove unnecessary clothing
- Move to a cooler area
- Cool with water, ice, or a fan
- Do not leave alone
- Seek medical care if needed

Register Today

SAVE THE DATE

SAFE + SOUND WEEK 2024

AUGUST 12-18, 2024

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Save the DATE

Virtual Training Schedule

OSHA Reporting and Recording Requirements *8/6/24*	The purpose of this workshop is to introduce the requirements and procedures related to OSHA Injury & Illness Recordkeeping, including the electronic reporting of injuries and illnesses requirements. The class will help develop skills to accurately report occupational injuries and illnesses. Resources and reference materials will be provided. If you are responsible for completing the documents required by this rule (OSHA 300, OSHA 300A and OSHA 301), or if you supervise the person that completes the forms, or if you are a safety committee member, this class is a must.
Intro to OSHA *9/17/24*	What is OSHA? Why are they here? What will they ask for? What gives them the right to…? These are questions that are often asked and during this session these questions will be answered. We will also address the topic of “Hazard Recognition” and what that should mean to you and the people that are close to your hearts which is the real reason to “work safe”. The 10 most frequent citations issued last year and what they cost will also be covered.
Fire Protection and Life Safety *10/7/24*	An introduction to the requirements of 29 CFR 1910, Subpart L Fire Protection and Subpart E means of Egress will be covered. Topics include Emergency Action Plans, Fire Prevention Plans, and NFPA 101 Life Safety Codes. Details of the chemistry of fire, means of egress, detection and alarm systems, fire brigades, and emergency action and fire prevention plans will be discussed.
Hazard Communication *11/19/24*	The Hazard Communication Standard, 29 CFR 1910.1200, provides workers exposed to hazardous chemicals with the right-to-know the identities and hazards of those materials. as well as appropriate protective measures. This session will provide an overview of the standard and help attendees develop an effective Hazard Communication Program.
New England Roundtable *Every Wednesday of the Month*	Bringing business together to network and share ideas in the occupational safety and health community. The roundtable meetings are held from 9:00 am to 10:15 am every Wednesday. For more information on the New England Roundtable visit: oshaedne.com/roundtables

Visit this link for more info and to sign up.

Hazard Corner

Two Workers Died in a Fire at a Construction Site. The Emergency Action Plan was Inadequate

Employee #1 and Employee #2 were in a structure under construction. A diesel motor for a generator within an enclosed trailer caught on fire. The trailer also contained process equipment and materials for spray-applied polyurethane foam insulation. After unsuccessful attempts to extinguish the fire with portable fire extinguishers, the fire spread outside the trailer involving the recently applied foam insulation on the two-story parking garage ceiling. The fire spread to a five-story wood frame structure above. Attempts by the fire department and a tower crane operator to rescue both employees were unsuccessful due to the growing intensity of fire and smoke.

After inspecting the incident, OSHA concluded that the emergency action plan was inadequate, an audible alarm was not used to evacuate workers, and there was only one vertical means of egress throughout the seven-story structure. Employee #1 and Employee #2 were killed in the fires and their remains were located and recovered the next day.

How to Subscribe

Contact robert.hunt@ct.gov and in the subject line type "Subscribe" and then provide your e-mail address in the body of the message.

Fatality & Casualty Reporting

State & Town:

- **Report to CONN-OSHA**
- **(860) 263-6946**

Private Employers:

- **Report to Federal OSHA**
- **(800) 321-OSHA (6742)**

Locked or Obstructed Exits and the Lack of an Emergency Action Plan Led to 25 Worker Deaths During a Fire at a Poultry Plant

An industrial fire caused by a failed improvised repair to a hydraulic line destroyed the Imperial Food Products chicken processing plant in Hamlet, North Carolina. The fire killed 25 people and injured 54, many of whom were unable to escape due to locked or obstructed exits.

Of the plant's nine exterior doors, seven were locked or obstructed from the outside, including a padlocked one marked "Fire Exit Do Not Block". Only a handful of Imperial employees, mostly maintenance workers, were aware that the doors were locked. One maintenance worker stated that their request for a key to the locks was turned down. The plant did not have a fire evacuation plan, workers had never undergone a fire drill, and there was only one fire extinguisher near the fryer. There was also no fire alarm. The plant's lack of an emergency plan, lack of a fire alarm, and the locking and obstruction of doors all violated OSHA rules.

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