Building Evacuations Meeting Kit

BUILDING EVACUATIONS

When a building evacuation is necessary, doing so in a timely and orderly fashion is a must—whether it's an actual emergency or a drill. The key to any evacuation is organization. People may panic, not know where to go, run into each other, and even trip over something and suffer an injury.

BUILDING EVACUATIONS PROCEDURES

1. **Safely stop your work.**
   - Shut down equipment that could be unstable.
   - Gather your personal belongings.
1. **Leave the building through the nearest door with an EXIT sign.**
   - Do not use elevators.
   - Go to the nearest safe stairway.
   - Help those who need special assistance, such as disabled persons and small children.
   - Touch closed doors before opening. If the surface is hot, do not open – use another exit route.
   - Close, but do not lock, all doors as you leave.
1. **Report to your designated assembly area.**
   - Stay in your designated outdoor assembly area for a head count.
   - Report any missing individuals and last known locations to emergency responders.
   - Notify emergency responders about sensitive research, operating equipment, animals left in buildings.

1. **Wait for instructions from emergency responders.**

   - Remain outside at your designated assembly area.
   - Do not renter until authorized to do so.

1. **Learn about your emergency exit routes now.**

   - Check the emergency evacuation plan posted in your building.
   - Find the outside assembly area for your workgroup.
   - Read your department's Emergency Action Plan. Ask your Department Safety Coordinator for help.

WHAT SHOULD WORKERS KNOW BEFORE AN EMERGENCY OCCURS?

- Be familiar with the worksite's emergency evacuation plan.
- Know the pathway to at least two exits from every room/area at the workplace.
- Recognize the sound/signaling method of the evacuation or other alarms and their different meanings.
- Understand who to contact in an emergency, and the specific procedures expected to use.
- Know how many desks or cubicles are between their workstations and two of the nearest exits.
- Know where the fire/evacuation alarms are located and how to use them.
- Report damaged or malfunctioning safety systems and back-up systems.
- Report changes in health that may affect their ability to safely evacuate to their supervisor.

WHAT SHOULD WORKERS DO WHEN AN EMERGENCY OCCURS?

- Listen carefully for instructions over the building's internal communication system and follow the instructions.
- When instructed, leave the area quickly, but in an orderly manner.

- Do not use elevators when evacuating a burning building, unless they are properly designed and designated “occupant evacuation elevators.”
- Report to the designated meeting place, and ensure they make contact with the person charged with worker accountability.
- Do not re-enter the building until directed to do so by authorities.

WHAT SHOULD WORKERS DO IF TRAPPED?

- Stay calm and take steps to protect yourself.
- Go to a room with an outside window.
- Use a telephone/cell phone to call for help.
- Wave a light-colored cloth to attract attention.

Specifically, during fire events:

- Go directly to the nearest fire- and smoke-free stairwell, recognizing that in some circumstances the only available exit route may contain smoke or fire.
- Crawl low, under the smoke, to breathe cleaner air. Do not open a hot door. Find another exit route. Keep “fire doors” closed to slow the spread of smoke and fire.
- Stuff wet clothing, towels, or newspapers around the cracks in doors to prevent smoke from entering.
- Do not open or break windows unless absolutely necessary. This could draw heat or smoke towards you.

FINAL WORD

It is critical that every employee is fully versed in the details of the emergency action plan. This includes periodic and regular drills, access to all the related procedures without any limitations, and, an “open-door” policy with department safety coordinator.