Emergency Action Plan

INCIDENT

January 20th, 2020

VINELAND, N.J. (AP) – A Philadelphia man was killed in an industrial accident in a New Jersey processing facility, authorities said.

Emergency responders were called to the Safeway Freezer Storage plant in Vineland shortly after 12:30 a..m. Saturday, police said.

Lt. Brian Armstrong said 28-year-old Felipe Rodriguez-Tzon was pronounced dead at the scene in a refrigerated area of the facility. The worker had already been removed from machinery by the time emergency crews arrived, Lt. Michael Feaster said.

NEED TO KNOW

An **Emergency Action Plan** (EAP) is a written document required by particular OSHA standards. The purpose of an EAP is to facilitate and organize employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies. Well-developed emergency plans and proper employee training (such that employees understand their roles and responsibilities within the plan) will result in fewer and less severe employee injuries and less structural damage to the facility during emergencies. A poorly prepared plan, likely will lead to a disorganized evacuation or emergency response, resulting in confusion, injury, and property damage.

Minimum Requirements

Putting together a comprehensive emergency action plan that deals with those issues specific to your worksite is not difficult. It involves taking what was learned from your workplace evaluation and describing how employees will respond to different types of emergencies, taking into account your specific worksite layout, structural features, and emergency systems.

Develop & Implement an EAP

Drafting an emergency action plan (EAP) is not enough to ensure the safety of your employees. When an evacuation is necessary, you will need responsible, trained individuals who can supervise and coordinate activities to ensure a safe and successful evacuation.

Evacuation Elements

A disorganized evacuation can result in confusion, injury, and property damage.

Fight or Flee?

A fire is the most common type of emergency for which small businesses must plan. Evacuation plans that designate or require some or all of the employees to fight fires with portable fire extinguishers increase the level of complexity of the plan and the level of training that must be provided employees.

Shelter-in-Place

Chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants may be released into the environment in such quantity and/or proximity to a place of business that it is safer to remain indoors rather than to evacuate employees.

Fire, Rescue, Medical Services

Although most of us quickly move away from the hazardous environments created during emergency situations, a group of dedicated and well-trained professional emergency responders and medical service personnel are tasked with containing and mitigating these incidents, rescuing individuals at-risk, and providing medical assistance to the injured.

Reporting Emergencies

Employees must know how to report emergencies. Some use internal telephone numbers, intercom, or public address systems to notify other employees. It is important for employees to also notify the proper authorities such as fire, medical, or rescue services, if

your company relies on this type of assistance during an emergency.

Where required by some Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards, firms with more than 10 employees must have a written emergency action plan; smaller companies may communicate their plans orally. Top management support and the commitment and involvement of all employees are essential to an effective emergency action plan.

Employers should review plans with employees when initially put in place and re-evaluate and amend the plan periodically whenever the plan itself, or employee responsibilities, change. Emergency procedures, including the handling of any toxic chemicals, should include:

- Escape procedures and escape route assignments.
- Special procedures for employees who perform or shut down critical plant operations.
- Systems to account for all employees after evacuation and for information about the plan.
- Rescue and medical duties for employees who perform them.
- Means for reporting fires and other emergencies.

Chain of Command

The employer should designate an emergency response coordinator and a backup coordinator. The coordinator may be responsible for plantwide operations, public information and ensuring that outside aid is called. Having a backup coordinator ensures that a trained person is always available. Employees should know who the designated coordinator is. Duties of the coordinator and employer include:

- Determining what emergencies may occur and seeing that emergency procedures are developed to address each situation.
- Directing all emergency activities including evacuation of personnel.
- Ensuring that outside emergency services are notified when

necessary.
- Directing the shutdown of plant operations when necessary.

Emergency Response Teams

Emergency response team members should be thoroughly trained for potential crises and physically capable of carrying out their duties. Team members need to know about toxic hazards in the workplace and be able to judge when to evacuate personnel or when to rely on outside help (e.g., when a fire is too large to handle). One or more teams must be trained in:

- Use of various types of fire extinguishers.
- First aid, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).
- Requirements of the OSHA bloodborne pathogens standard.
- Shutdown procedures.
- Chemical spill control procedures.
- Search and emergency rescue procedures.
- Hazardous materials emergency response.

Response Activities

Effective emergency communication is vital. An alternate area for a communications center other than management offices should be established in the plans, and the emergency response coordinator should operate from this center. Management should provide emergency alarms and ensure that employees know how to report emergencies. An updated list of key personnel and off-duty telephone numbers should be maintained.

Accounting for personnel following evacuation is critical. A person in the control center should notify police or emergency response team members of persons believed missing.

Effective security procedures can prevent unauthorized access and protect vital records and equipment. Duplicate records of essential accounting files, legal documents and lists of employee relatives – to be notified in case of emergency – can be kept at off-site locations.

Training

Every employee needs to know details of the emergency action plan, including evacuation plans, alarm systems, reporting procedures for personnel, shutdown procedures, and types of potential emergencies. Any special hazards, such as flammable materials, toxic chemicals, radioactive sources or water-reactive substances, should be discussed with employees. Drills should be held at random intervals, at least annually, and should include outside police and fire authorities.

Training must be conducted at least annually and when employees are hired or when their job changes. Additional training is needed when new equipment, materials or processes are introduced, when the layout or design of the facility changes, when procedures have been updated or revised, or when exercises show that employee performance is inadequate.

Personal Protection

Employees exposed to or near accidental chemical splashes, falling objects, flying particles, unknown atmospheres with inadequate oxygen or toxic gases, fires, live electrical wiring, or similar emergencies need appropriate personal protective equipment.

Medical Assistance

First aid must be available within 3 to 4 minutes of an emergency. Worksites more than 3 to 4 minutes from an infirmary, clinic, or hospital should have at least one person on-site trained in first aid (available all shifts), have medical personnel readily available for advice and consultation, and develop written emergency medical procedures.

It is essential that first aid supplies are available to the trained first aid providers, that emergency phone numbers are placed in conspicuous places near or on telephones, and prearranged ambulance services for any emergency are available. It may help to coordinate an emergency action plan with the outsider responders such as the fire department, hospital emergency room, EMS providers and local HAZMAT teams.

Unexpected emergencies happen every year in this country. Your company needs an Emergency Response Plan to cover all expected and unexpected disasters. All employees must be trained in the roles they will play in an emergency.

Fire, natural disasters, and other emergencies can strike your workplace without warning. While you can't predict them, you can prepare for them and preparedness **save lives, prevent injuries; and limits property damage.**

BUSINESS / REGULATIONS

According to **OSHA**, the purpose of an **Emergency Action Plan** (or EAP for short) is to facilitate and organize employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies.

The goal with any EAP is to prevent employee injuries and structural damage to the facility during emergencies.

OSHA Construction Standard 1926.35(a) The emergency action plan shall be in writing and shall cover those designated actions employers and employees must take to ensure employee safety from fire and other emergencies. **1926.35(e)(3)** For those employers with 10 or fewer employees the plan may be communicated orally to employees and the employer need not maintain a written plan.

In the event of an emergency all personnel must know to do or be aware of:

- basic first aid
- how to report any emergency situation
- the procedure for emergency evacuation, including the type of evacuation and exit route assignments
- what does the alarm system look or sound like to alert workers of emergencies
- designated employees that may be required stay behind to continue critical plant operations
- how to account for all employees after evacuation
- procedures for employees performing rescue or medical duties
- name or job title of employees to contact for plan information

Examples of potential workplace emergencies that all staff must be prepared for include:

- Fires and Explosions
- Tornadoes and Earthquakes
- Heavy Equipment Failures
- Confined Space Rescues
- Hazardous Material Incidents
- Cave-in Rescues
- Fall Arrest Rescues
- Worker Injuries
- Struck-by/Caught-in Incidents
- Medical Emergencies

Site-specific emergency action plans (EAP) must be in place for every jobsite. The EAP should be in easy-to-read type and posted in multiple locations across the jobsite so every worker has the opportunity to review as needed.

The basic EAP that is posted should include:

- Address and description of the site location
- Emergency response numbers for 911, fire department, police, emergency responders
- Name and address of nearest medical facilities
- Map to nearest medical facilities

STATISTICS

Out of 4,779 worker fatalities in private industry in calendar year 2018, 1,008 or 21.1% were in construction – that is, one in five worker deaths last year were in construction. The leading causes of private sector worker deaths (excluding highway collisions) in the construction industry were falls, followed by struck by object, electrocution, and caught-in/between. These "Fatal Four" were responsible for more than half (58.6%) the construction worker deaths in 2018, BLS reports

The American Red Cross released statistics that illustrate their enormous contribution to emergency response and disaster recovery in the United States. Below are statistics that cover the Red

Cross's last six months of relief efforts in response to fires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes.

- From April to September 2011, the Red Cross responded to:
- 25 large multi-family fires
- 14 floods
- 15 hurricanes or tropical storms
- 21 tornadoes
- 6 wildfires
- 7 combined floods and tornadoes
- 4 other storms
- 1 earthquake
- Launched 93 disaster relief operations in 42 states and territories
- Opened 899 shelters
- Had 121,854 shelter overnight stays
- Provided 2,337,542 bulk items
- Provided 106,732 clean up kits
- Provided 107,077 comfort kits
- Served 1,864,065 meals
- Served 4,462,684 snacks
- Provided 59,646 mental health consultations
- Provided 69,235 health services consultations
- Deployed 24,178 Red Cross workers

RECOMMENDATIONS

An Emergency Action Plan is basically a **"How Do We Get Out of Here Safely"** plan. A good plan should anticipate all possible emergencies as well as all natural and manmade disasters that could occur.

Employees should regularly practice and review emergency response. Practice will expose errors in the plan which could result in lost lives.

Recommendations to prepare for workplace emergencies are:

- Know where your emergency telephone numbers are located and which agency to contact first.

- Know where the two nearest escape routes are located.
- Learn to use a fire extinguisher. You should use it on a small fire only. If the fire gets out of hand, leave the area. Unnecessary heroics have killed many employees.
- Learn how and when to operate internal alarm systems.
- Know how to find and operate eye wash units and safety showers. These should be clearly marked and easily accessed. Before helping a victim of an incident or before assisting in an emergency, always ensure it is safe for you to do so. Sometimes the best plan is just to get to safety. An event such as a failed confined space rescue resulting in multiple fatalities is an example of making a bad situation worse by trying to help.
- Do not overreact. Rushing or making poor choices when dealing with an emergency can result in more victims or create a worse situation in general.
- Understand your company's policies and procedures regarding specific weather emergencies such as a tornado or flood.
- Know where emergency meeting points are at your worksite. Also be familiar with the address of where you're at on a jobsite or for your workplace. If you have to call 911, one of the first questions they ask is- "Where are you located?".
- Know where emergency response equipment is located onsite and how to use it. Also be familiar with emergency shutoff switches on equipment or machinery.
- Know the signs and symptoms of common medical emergencies or medical emergencies that can occur in your workplace. Knowing what to look for can make the difference in whether someone gets the medical attention they need or not.

PREVENTION

Conduct Hazard Assessment

The primary hazards in an emergency such as a fire, chemical release, serious machine malfunction, workplace violence, or natural disaster are often only the beginning of the damage and destruction. A hazard assessment will shed light on all these

possible hazards.

Identification of Emergency Control Procedures and Written EAP

The next step is to use the findings of your hazard assessment to develop **A Written Emergency Action Plan** (EAP). The plan must include:

1. All possible emergencies, consequences, required actions, written procedures, and available resources.
2. A detailed list of personnel to contact in an emergency and their role in an emergency.
3. A list of external organizations to contact such as fire, rescue, and ambulance services; hospitals, police department and any government agencies; utility companies; and any industries in nearby that should be informed because of a potential safety risk to their workers and their operations.
4. Floor plans and large-scale maps showing excavation routes, emergency equipment, hazardous areas (i.e. chemical storage), as well as gas and water lines and other information as required by applicable safety regulations.

An EAP should include the following:

1. **Personnel Assignments: The EAP should establish a clear chain of command in which all personnel have clearly assigned roles in the event of an evacuation. The EAP should designate:**
   - A leader with authority to order an evacuation or shutdown.
   - An appropriate number of evacuation wardens to help with the evacuation and ensure that everybody is accounted for before evacuating themselves.
   - Individuals to remain behind to carry out or close-down vital plant operations before evacuating themselves.
   - Individuals authorized to perform rescue or medical duties in the event of an evacuation.
2. **At a minimum, the EAP must incorporate the following procedures:**

- Procedures for reporting fires and other emergencies.
- Emergency evacuation procedures, including evacuation type and identification of exit routes.
- Procedures to help disabled employees that require assistance to evacuate.
- Procedures for the employees who remain behind to operate critical plant operations before evacuating themselves.
- Procedures to account for all employees after evacuation.
- Procedures for the employees performing rescue or medical duties.

3. **Alarm & Notification Systems including:**

- An alarm system that uses a distinctive signal that all employees recognize to communicate orders to evacuate or perform other actions under the EAP.
- A public address or other emergency communications system that's available to use to notify employees of the emergency and contact local fire, police and other emergency respondents.
- An auxiliary power supply in case electricity is shut off.

4. **PPE & Protective Clothing: Workers counted on to extinguish fires or who are otherwise exposed to risk of fire and explosion must be equipped with and use appropriate PPE and protective clothing.**

- Foot and leg protection;
- Protective footwear;
- Body protection;
- Gloves or glove systems;
- Head, eye and face protection; and
- Respiratory protective equipment.

Training and Education

Workers must receive training and education needed to carry out their roles under the EAP.

Other items to educate workers on include:

- Threats, hazards and protective actions.

- Notification, communication and warning procedures.
- Means of locating family members in an emergency.
- Emergency response procedures.
- Evacuation, shelter and accountability procedures.
- Location and use of emergency equipment.
- Procedures for emergency shutdown.

Ensure workers understand and can apply their training on the job by:

- Quizzing workers on the lesson after you deliver it.
- Making workers demonstrate the procedures covered during the training.
- Making workers demonstrate proper use of the PPE covered during the training.
- Staging evacuation drills to verify that workers can carry out the EAP and evacuate safely in the event of a fire or other emergency.

Inspect, Monitor, Reinforce, and Improve

You must review the EAP with each worker the plan covers when:

- The EAP is first developed or the worker is first assigned to carry out a responsibility under the plan;
- The worker’s responsibilities under the EAP change; and
- Changes are made to the EAP itself.

Monitoring must be carried out on an ongoing and continuous basis. The monitoring process never ends.