

Knowing What to do in an Emergency Meeting Kit

When dealing with workplace safety, most of the focus is given to preventing injuries and incidents. While being proactive in preventing bad things from occurring is critical to an effective safety program, time also needs spent discussing what to do in different emergency situations if one does occur. No one wants to think of something bad happening at work, but when it does occur you need to be prepared for it.

PREPARE FOR EMERGENCY IN THE WORKPLACE

Do you know what to do to stay safe in a natural or other disaster? It is important to make sure you are aware of your company's **Evacuation Plan**. It is very easy to panic during an emergency; being mentally and physically prepared may help to minimize that feeling of panic and enable you to keep cool, calm, collected, and most importantly, safe.

There are many different types of emergencies in the workplace or at home. It's important to know how to react to each individual situation:

- Severe Weather
- Fire
- Chemical release/spills
- Explosions
- Workplace violence

Do:

- Know the company's plan.
- Know the evacuation route.
- Keep calm in an emergency.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE FOR WORKERS

Every type of emergency will have a different response and even the same types of emergencies may have completely different responses depending on the situation. Some things to consider when discussing emergency response in the workplace:

- **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.

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.

TAKE AWAY

Emergencies can create a variety of hazards for workers in the impacted area. Preparing before an emergency incident plays a vital role in ensuring that employers and workers have the necessary equipment, know where to go, and know how to keep themselves safe when an emergency occurs.

FINAL WORD

Knowing what to do in an emergency is just as important as knowing how to prevent them from happening in the first place. All too often bad situations are made worse when individuals are ill prepared for the bad things that can happen- whether that is at work or home. Take company policies and procedures regarding emergency response seriously. Keeping calm and knowing how to respond to an emergency may save your life or those around you one day.