



EMERGENCY PLAN

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 details the legal requirements for employers to ensure they have procedures in place to deal with serious and imminent danger and for danger areas.

Every employer shall:

- Establish and where necessary give effect to appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger to persons at work in his undertaking.
- Nominate a sufficient number of competent persons to implement those procedures in so far as they relate to the evacuation from premises of persons at work in his undertaking.
- Ensure that none of his employees has access to any area occupied which it is necessary to restrict access on grounds of health and safety unless the employee concerned has received adequate health and safety instruction.

What are Evacuation Plans

Evacuation plans set out the steps an organisation needs to take to evacuate a building or area due to circumstances which might put people at risk. The purpose of an evacuation is to move people from an area where they might be at risk to a place of lesser risk.

Evacuation plans should be part of a wider security plan.

Under what circumstances might I need an Evacuation Plan

The most common evacuation plan prepared by businesses is one for fire safety. Every business will need to know what steps and procedures need to be taken if the building needs to be evacuated due to a fire.

Other causes for evacuation are:

- Bomb and security threats
- Chemical spillages
- Risk of explosion
- Gas leaks
- Major structural damage and imminent collapse
- Terrorist activity in the area
- Major accidents/dangerous occurrences in the area
- Toxic gas releases, fumes etc. e.g. Buncefield.

Whilst one evacuation plan will probably cover most scenarios, each should be considered in turn and adapted for different circumstances. To establish if you have covered everything please refer to the Evacuation plan I your company risk assessment.

Bomb and Security Threats

There is a very real possibility of a terrorist bombing campaign being planned and executed at any time. It is essential that all employees at the site are aware of this threat and are vigilant at all times.

Assessment and Preventative Measures

In examining possible preventative and deterrent measures an assessment should be carried out of the likelihood that the home could become subject to bomb attack or damage.

In carrying out such an assessment existing factors and information should be taken into account, for example:

- Media and police information on the types of previously targeted premises
- Tenant activity which could result in targeting
- Proximity to likely targets
- Proximity to and location of roadways
- Control of entry to car parking facilities
- Control of entry into office areas
- Arrangements for incoming mail
- The possible concealment opportunities around any external areas, (shrubbery, rubbish etc.)
- Current security measures including CCTV where applicable

While it is usually not possible to stop a determined terrorist, “soft” targets are their preference and any measures which are identified by the assessment as having a deterrent value or reducing opportunity should be implemented where appropriate.

The Warning

A bomb warning is most likely to be received at the site from the Police, who will have been notified of a possible attack from a coded source. The site may also be alerted to a suspect package or incident by a member of staff, a member of the public or a tenant manager.

Whatever the source of the warning, the decision to evacuate the site rests with the Incident Controller (see below), who must consult with the Emergency Services and follow their detailed advice and guidance. In general, the site should not be evacuated unless a package or container is found which could be the device described in the warning and could contain explosive.

In the case of a direct telephone warning, detailed information should be sought from the caller. A copy of the **BOMB WARNING CHECKLIST** (if available) should be readily available and should be completed by the person taking the call. Whenever possible the person taking the call should record the message and also alert another person as the call is taking place. When the caller has finished dial 1471 to retrieve the caller ID (if that facility operates). The person taking the call should leave the telephone line open as this will assist call tracing systems.

All direct bomb threats should be reported immediately to the Incident Controller or appointed deputy, who should authorise a call for Police advice and assistance.

The Metropolitan Police advise that terrorists are unlikely to telephone a bomb warning direct to the site where they have planted a device. They usually telephone a radio station or other public service unconnected with the target. This means that direct telephone bomb warnings will probably be hoax calls. However, they should nevertheless be treated seriously; to make hoax bomb calls is a serious criminal offence.

Identifying Explosive Devices

Explosive devices are normally of simple construction and may be carried onto the site in a briefcase, bag, or parcel or they may be sent through the post as a letter or package. Bombers have been known to transport devices in umbrellas, flasks, cigarette packets and radios. Detonators may be simple timers or may be sophisticated radio-controlled or antihandling devices.

Parcel Bombs

The factors which might indicate a letter or parcel bomb include:

- The postmark, if it is foreign and unfamiliar
- The writing, which may be crudely printed, lacking in literacy or foreign in style
- The name and address of the sender (if shown) may differ from the postmark
- Items addressed to a senior manager by title only which are marked PERSONAL or PRIVATE
- Uneven weight distribution, which may indicate the presence of batteries
- Grease marks on the wrapping, which may indicate sweating explosive
- A characteristic smell of marzipan or almonds
- Abnormal fastening or excessive sealing for the type of package
- Damaged packages which show wires, batteries or fluid filled sachets
- Packages which rattle, feel springy or which tick
- Where a paperback book has been used, one which feels softer in the centre

If a suspicious package is found:

- Do not use a radio for communication
- On no account place the package into anything (including water) or place anything on top of it
- Do not tamper with it or move it
- Warn others to keep away
- Secure the area
- Inform the Police

Incendiary Devices

The retail industry is at high risk from incendiary devices, which are particularly difficult to detect. The devices are generally small enough to fit into a cigarette lighter and are designed to ignite after a predetermined delay period. This allows them to be planted during shopping hours and to ignite during the silent hours.

Devices may be planted in the following locations:

- In the pockets of garments or among clothes in clothes shops
In drawers or slipped down the sides of upholstered furniture
- Behind books on shelves in book shops.

Do not handle a suspected incendiary device. It may kill or maim. Clear the area and inform the Police.

Vehicle Bombs

Any vehicle is capable of carrying a large bomb without showing any easily recognisable tell-tale signs. Any person who becomes suspicious of a vehicle parked on or near the Site should inform the Incident Controller, who should inform the Police.

Evacuation

In all cases where a bomb threat is received, the Incident Controller should immediately inform the Police and advise them of what action is being taken.

The decision whether or not to evacuate must normally be taken by the Incident Controller, but the Police will be ready to advise. The Police may overrule the Incident Controller's decision if circumstances dictate.

Evacuation Plan

The Incident Controller should have up to date drawings of the premises in order to control both the search activities and the use of appropriate escape routes. The objective is to evacuate as quickly and efficiently as possible using all available escape routes with the exception of routes close to any suspect device.

A means of indicating that an evacuation is required should be provided. A public address system is an ideal means of communication because people can be directed away from sensitive or suspect areas. A fire alarm may result in people evacuating to or past the suspect area and should be used with caution.

The Evacuation Plan should show two designated assembly areas, in opposite directions, where people should congregate after evacuation from the premises. These two nominated locations should be at least 400 metres from the building and only one such location should be used at any one time. Car parks should not be designated as assembly areas.

A method must be devised to check that everyone has evacuated from the premises, and that all personnel, staff and visitors are accounted for, (in practice existing fire drill and fire Marshall systems will assist with this requirement). They should be instructed not to re-enter until the premises are declared safe.

The Incident Controller should prepare an Emergency Pack of necessary items and information ready to be uplifted in case of emergency. Typically such an Emergency Pack might contain the following:

- First Aid Kit
- Search Area and Evacuation Route Plans
- Management/Search Team Names and Telephone Numbers
- Fire Marshall's Names and Information
- Emergency Procedures for Gas Leaks, Power Failures, etc.
- Information useful to the Emergency Services, (location of mains gas valves, incoming mains water etc.)
- Emergency Repairs Contact List, (glaziers, shuttering etc.)

Return to the Premises

Nobody should be permitted to return to the premises until the all clear has been given by the Incident Controller, in consultation with the Senior Emergency Services Officer in charge.

Fire Safety Procedures

Each workplace should have an emergency plan which all employees must be made aware of.

The plan should include:

- the action to be taken by staff in the event of a fire
- the evacuation procedure
- Arrangements for calling the fire brigade.

For small workplaces this could take the form of a simple fire action notice posted where staff can readily read it and become familiar with it. For larger workplaces or places with special fire risks (e.g. hotels, hospitals), a more detailed plan will be required which will take account of the risk assessment previously carried out.

The fire risk assessment for the premises concerned should identify potential emergency situations. Once this has taken place, an emergency plan can be drawn up.

Principles and Procedures

The danger which may threaten people if fire breaks out depends on many different factors. Consequently it is not possible to construct a model procedure for action in the event of fire suitable for all premises. However, the following plan of action shows the points that should normally be covered.

This plan can be adapted accordingly to suit different premises or risks. Typically a small office, shop or other premises may require only a very simple plan, while larger premises may require a more in-depth plan.

The Emergency Plan should (where appropriate) include:

- Action on discovering a fire
- Warning if there is a fire
- Notifying the fire brigade
- Evacuation of the premises including those particularly at risk
- Power/process isolation
- Places of assembly and roll call
- Liaison with emergency services
- Identification of key escape routes
- The firefighting equipment provided
- Specific responsibilities in the event of a fire
- Training required

The above stages are covered in more detail below.

Action on discovering a fire

Staff should be made aware of the procedure to be followed on discovering a fire. The procedure is normally straightforward, i.e. on discovering a fire, activate the nearest call point and proceed to the nearest exit and to the assembly point.

Warning if there is a Fire

The alarm may be raised automatically via a fire detector system or manually by operation of a manual call point or by other means. The emergency plan should cover how the alarm is raised and the subsequent actions. It should be ensured that delays in response are minimised. If the alarm is raised manually, it is preferable that the person discovering the fire should give the alarm, although, where deemed necessary, this authority may only be entrusted to certain persons. If this is the case, it must be ensured there will be no delay in the operation of the alarm — this can only be achieved through appropriate training.

Calling the Fire Brigade

The duty of informing the fire service immediately once an alarm is sounded must be allocated to a designated person or persons. Facilities must be made available at all times when people are on the premises. If the alarm system is linked into a remote call centre, this should not be relied upon and a telephone call should still be made to the fire brigade. It is also important to ensure that whoever is calling the fire brigade has the full address of the premises to give to the fire brigade when being called.

Evacuation of the premises including those particularly at risk

Staff need to be fully aware of the evacuation procedures for the premises. Any visitors, guests or temporary staff must also be aware of the procedures to follow. Personnel who do not have specific designated duties should start to leave the building as soon as the alarm

sounds, unless instructions have been given to the contrary (e.g. as may be the case if phased evacuation is employed).

Everyone should leave in a calm, orderly manner, by the most direct route. Their egress should not be delayed by stopping to collect belongings. Depending on the circumstances of the building, fire marshals may have been nominated to ensure each area is evacuated.

Places of assembly and roll call

An assembly point should be pre-determined and everyone made aware of its location. These points should be in a safe place (an enclosed courtyard forming part of the premises is not classed as a safe place) preferably under cover. It may be necessary to assemble in groups according to their working location.

In premises where members of the public may be present, all employees should be trained to accept responsibility for the safety of the public in the event of fire.

It is important to be able to account for all persons that may have been in the premises where this is reasonably practicable. This may be achieved by the use of registers, signing in-out books by persons sweeping the premises or by a combination of both. At the assembly point it is important that person(s) are nominated to collate this information, particularly in large or multi-occupancy premises. The fire service should be informed on arrival if anyone is not accounted for.

Liaison with emergency services:

Person(s) should be nominated to meet the fire brigade and to provide them with all necessary information (e.g. roll call results, location and type of hazardous substances).

Identification of key escape routes

All staff should be fully aware of the escape routes that are closest to their location within the premises. If you have visitors on the premises, it is important that they are made aware of the nearest emergency exits to their location.

Fire-fighting equipment provided

The type and location of fire-fighting equipment should be detailed and made known to all staff. Where possible, members of staff designated for fire-fighting purposes should be trained to use the correct extinguisher. It must be stressed that fire-fighting should only be carried out secondary to personal safety. If there is any doubt about the ability to extinguish the fire safely, it should not be tackled but left for the fire service to deal with.

Specific responsibilities in the event of a fire

In workplaces employing large numbers of employees, it may be appropriate to nominate certain employees to carry out specific tasks in the event of fire. For example, these tasks might include:

- acting as floor marshals, ensuring that the floor is completely evacuated during a fire evacuation and reporting this fact to a previously established control point

- closing down processes
- ensuring that security of the building is maintained
- ensuring that disabled people receive any assistance required.

Whatever task is undertaken, it must be carried out efficiently and cause no danger to the particular person concerned.

Training required

All staff need to be trained in respect of the emergency plan and procedures that are in place. It is also important that guest/visitors are provided with the necessary level of information so as they know what to do in the event of an evacuation.

Information and training

Circumstances will determine the exact procedure for any particular building. For an efficient fire routine it is essential that every person has received adequate instructions and fully understands them. It will then be possible for prompt and effective action to be taken in the case of fire. If people are uncertain what they should do, the resulting delays could allow a fire which is small on discovery to grow to disastrous proportions. Instruction must leave no room for doubt as to the action to be taken. It should be as brief as practicable and expressed clearly in simple language.

Fire drills

Repeated practice evacuations will be necessary in many cases to ensure that the action plan is fully understood and can be carried out efficiently when required. Varying conditions should be assumed for these practices to familiarise the occupants with all alternative routes. Newly recruited staff will need to be trained in and familiarised with evacuation procedures. If shift workers are used, night drills should be held too.

Whilst it is desirable that as few people as possible know of an impending fire drill, great care should be taken to ensure that this can be carried out without danger or damage from sudden interruption of any processes being carried out. The time taken for persons to reach a place of safety will indicate the level of efficiency attained by the occupants in their fire drill.

The frequency of drills will vary according to the degree of risk and any legislative requirements. In any case, a fire drill should be carried out at least once a year.

Records

Records of training and instruction should be kept. The following are examples of details which may need to be included in such a record:

- date of the instruction or exercise
- duration (how long it took to evacuate)
- name of the person giving the instruction
- names of persons receiving the instructions

- nature of the instruction, training or drill

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS)

PEEPS are Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans and should be developed for each person with a disability who visits or works in a building.

People with disabilities will have different needs to able bodies people and may not be able to evacuate a building or area in the same way as others.

PEEPS will record specific information for the individual and will include details on:

- How the alarm will be raised
- How it will be heard
- Where the exit routes are
- Where the safe refuge areas are
- Evacuation methods for traversing/descending staircases
- Details of any 'buddy' system.

An individual trained and experienced in understanding different types of disability should be responsible for developing PEEPS. The individual concerned should be involved in the development of the PEEP as they will need to have confidence in its content and believe that their safety will be paramount in an emergency evacuation.

This Plan is purely for reference and can be copied if required.

Any questions or further information required please call

Safe I.S Ltd 0800 955 3580