

# Emergency Planning for Construction

As creatures of habit, people sometimes do things 'routinely' without thinking about them. Remember your routine this morning? Did you go through the motions without much thought? At work, do you take the same path 'automatically?' This is not necessarily wrong, because your routines often save time and energy. But when it comes to emergency situations involving escape and evacuation, people tend to use the most familiar route too. Sometimes that route may not be the best way to escape.

To ensure your safety and well being, it is important to prepare carefully for emergencies. In the ever changing construction environment, this is particularly important. Construction sites are continuously faced with changes in the physical layout, changes in emergency devices available and in harmful exposures. Careful pre-planning of emergency procedures, prior to the start of a project and during changes in different construction phases, must be done and all crew members must be aware of these procedures.

The following steps are important components of an emergency action plan:

1. Get to know your entire layout--site, building or structure as best you can. Review a floor plan that identifies emergency exits, emergency equipment (i.e., fire extinguishers, hoses, standpipes, pull stations, etc.). This plan should be posted in conspicuous areas and show evacuation routes as well as meeting points.
2. Analyze potential emergency situations at your work site. Will the hazards change regularly, gradually or stay the same over a period of time?
3. Know where emergency phone numbers are posted at your work location. These include medical emergency personnel, police, fire, EPA, Coast Guard, health department, OSHA, utilities, insurance carriers, etc. Numbers should be conspicuously posted near telephones.
4. Know who has responsibility during emergencies. Who is assigned to contact emergency personnel, first aid responders, fire brigades and a cleanup team? Who is assigned to talk to the media if they show up? Responses will be more efficient if everyone knows whose job it is to serve as incident commander, or to take specific steps.
5. When emergency devices such as personnel protective equipment, fire extinguishers, etc. must be used, do all co-workers know how to use this equipment correctly?
6. Practice the emergency procedures to ensure their effectiveness.
7. Remember that emergency procedures must be updated whenever there is a change in the operation, hazardous exposures, and physical layout or

if new employees are working in the location. Weekly safety meetings are a good time for review.

The last thing you want to think about during an emergency is how to evacuate or escape--especially if your most familiar route is not accessible. Knowing the emergency plan and being aware of surrounding conditions can mean the difference between quick action and the wrong action. Your safety and the survival of all crew members depends on taking the right action!

## **GENERAL SAFETY REVIEW**

This is a time to review all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during and after the safety meeting.

Are you aware of any safety hazards from any other crews? Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.

Do we have any other safety business? Discuss any past issues or problems. Report any progress of investigations and action taken.

Have there been any accidents, near misses or complaints? Discuss any accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.

Please remember, we want to hear from you about any health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.

## **ENDING THE MEETING**

Circulate Sign-Off Form.

Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.

Refer action items for follow-up.

Do you have any Safety Recommendations?

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Do you have any Job Specific Topics you would like us to discuss?

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Have you reviewed the M.S.D.S Sheet for this safety topic? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_  
N/A\_\_\_\_

Comments:

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