

# **PRESENTER'S GUIDE**

## **"EVACUATION PROCEDURES"**

**Part of the General Safety Series**

# **OUTLINE OF MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS**

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The following outline summarizes the major points of information presented in the program. The outline can be used to review the program before conducting a classroom session, as well as in preparing to lead a class discussion about the program.

- **Dealing with an emergency is never easy, and neither is evacuating a facility during one.**
  - Very few of us can think clearly or act logically in a crisis.
  - Our urge to "get out" can easily turn into panic that can create a "stampede" that causes injuries and property damage.
  - But it doesn't have to be that way, because you can help to ensure that an evacuation is calm and orderly.
  
- **Getting everyone out of a building safely in an emergency takes teamwork.**
  - That means everyone needs to know "who does what" during an evacuation.
  
- **It starts with the facility's "Evacuation Wardens".**
  - They are coworkers who have volunteered to take responsibility for getting everyone outside to safety when an evacuation is necessary.
  - They check offices, bathrooms and other spaces to make sure everyone has left.
  - They help people with special needs to evacuate safely as well.
  - The Evacuation Wardens themselves are some of the last people to leave the facility.
  
- **Other key players on the team include people who have been trained to perform special tasks during an emergency.**
  - Some, who know how to use portable fire extinguishers, will remain in the building to fight smaller blazes.
  - But if the fires become too big or get out of control, these people will evacuate too.

- **Other people may stay in the facility to shut down any equipment and processes that could be damaged, or that might create additional hazards if they're left in operation.**
  - Some team members may be designated to shut off gas, electricity and other utilities as well.
  - These "stay behind" personnel will have the knowledge and training to perform their tasks and then get out safely
  - They will also have learned to recognize if it's become too dangerous to stay in place and they need to abandon their tasks and leave the area.
- **What place will you have on the team?**
  - You could choose to participate in one of the roles we've just discussed.
  - If you're interested, talk to your supervisor about how to get involved.
- **But remember you can also play an important role as an evacuee.**
  - Because evacuees are responsible for carrying out evacuation procedures properly. It's what makes the evacuation work.
- **Let's examine how you can prepare to be a good evacuee.**
  - It's important not to leave doing your evacuation "homework" until the last minute.
  - Emergencies are serious business, and you need to know how your facility's evacuation procedures are set up well in advance.
- **Start by equipping yourself with specific knowledge about what the people in your work area should do during an emergency.**
  - Focus particularly on how to get yourself out of the building under different conditions. That information isn't hard to find.

- **Your facility's Emergency Action Plan contains everything you need to know.**
  - It's available to everyone.
  - It will tell you the conditions that would require your facility to be evacuated.
  - It covers all evacuation procedures.
  - It includes important names and contact numbers, and more.
  
- **Do you know where the emergency alarms are located in your facility, and how to use them?**
  - You can learn by consulting the floor plan diagrams that are posted in the various areas of your building.
  - They also show the evacuation routes that should be used from each work area.
  
- **Having alarm systems in good working order and exit routes clear is key to maintaining emergency readiness.**
  - A broken alarm or a blocked exit can delay an evacuation, and put lives at risk.
  - So keep your eyes open and report any damage or other problems you notice.
  
- **But even if the route is clear, just knowing the "best" way out of your work area isn't always enough.**
  - Emergencies can occur in unanticipated places, so you should know at least two evacuation routes from every location you work in.
  - That alternate "way out" could be crucial to your leaving an area safely.
  
- **What if you had to evacuate in the dark, or in thick smoke?**
  - The conditions that may exist in an emergency can often make it difficult to see.

- **Take time beforehand to learn the "landmarks" between your workstation and each of your exit points.**
  - Count the number of desks or cubicles you will pass on the way.
  - Or determine what floor markings you'll need to follow to get to an exit.
  - That way you'll be able to evacuate using your hands to "feel the way", or even crawling on the floor if necessary.
- **You also need to know where you should go once you get out of the building.**
  - Your Evacuation Plan specifies a safe location, called the "Assembly Point" or "Marshalling Area", where employees from your work area should gather.
  - Make sure you know where it is and how to get to it.
- **If an alarm went off right now would you recognize what it means?**
  - Acting immediately when you hear that sound will save precious time when you need it most.
  - You need to become familiar with all of the alarms in your facility, and what type of emergency they indicate.
- **Now that we've identified what you need to know before an evacuation, let's get to what you should do during the evacuation itself.**
- **When you hear an evacuation alarm, you know it's time to move.**
  - An emergency is in progress, and the decision has been made to evacuate your workplace.
  - Now is the time to put your facility's emergency planning, and your own preparation, to good use.
- **Listen carefully for instructions over the building's public address system.**
  - Evacuation Wardens or emergency personnel may have specific instructions for you as well.

- **Remember your Evacuation Plan.**
  - If it says you should turn off any equipment you're using and close any open windows, do that first.
  - Leave the area quickly and in an orderly manner.
  - Don't delay to grab things to take with you.
- **Never use an elevator in an emergency.**
  - Always take the stairs.
- **You can set a good example for your coworkers by staying calm.**
  - Walk, don't run.
  - If you see coworkers who seem upset or unsure of what to do, encourage them to come along and follow you out of the building.
  - Assist anyone who is in immediate danger, but not if it puts you at risk (that's the job of emergency response personnel).
- **Pay attention to what's going on around you as you leave.**
  - If someone is not accounted for, you may be asked where you last saw them.
  - This information can be critical for emergency responders who are initiating "search and rescue" operations.
- **Once you get outside, move away from the building.**
  - Go immediately to your Assembly Point.
  - As soon as you arrive, report yourself "present".
- **Some emergencies may require further evacuation to an off-site location.**
  - In these cases, transportation will be provided by your company or civil authorities.
- **Do not re-enter the building until you've been told that it's safe to go back inside.**
  - If the situation is serious enough, you may simply be advised to go home.
- **Now let's look at evacuation procedures that are used in some special situations.**

- **Evacuating from a high-rise building is "different" because moving all the occupants to ground level and outside may not be safe, practical or even necessary.**
  - Completely clearing a high-rise could mean thousands of people walking down endless flights of stairs.
  - That alone puts a massive physical strain on evacuees, and the process can take hours.
- **Safety engineers came up with a better alternative that focuses on the areas that are immediately surrounding the emergency.**
  - Say a fire is discovered in a storage room on a building's 15<sup>th</sup> floor, and the fire alarm is activated.
  - Instead of evacuating the entire building, safety and emergency personnel focus their response on the floor where the emergency is located, plus the floors immediately above and below it (in this case, that means floors 14 and 16 as well).
- **Instructions are given directly to the occupants of the affected floors through the building's public address system.**
- **People are directed to proceed down the exit stairs to an assembly point several floors below.**
  - For these building occupants the "evacuation" should proceed very much like any other.
  - Evacuation Wardens help them leave the affected floors.
  - Some employees may remain to perform special duties.
- **Depending on the type of emergency and how it progresses, safety personnel and emergency responders will decide what the next steps should be.**
  - "Evacuated" personnel may then be asked to remain where they are, return to their own floors, or evacuate to street level.
- **People on other floors are alerted, but not involved in the evacuation directly.**

- **If your facility is located in a multi-story building, your Crisis Management Team will develop a coordinated Emergency Action Plan based on this model.**
  - They will work with the building's management, other tenants and the fire department in its creation.
  - Your job is to prepare for the unexpected now, by familiarizing yourself with this plan.
- **Next, we'll deal with a type of emergency that's a real "hot" topic.**
- **Every year, nearly a hundred thousand workplace fires occur, in all types of facilities.**
  - Evacuating safely from a burning building requires some special procedures, to protect you from the fire, and to prevent the fire from spreading.
- **For example, when you're leaving a building during a fire emergency, you need to feel all doors before opening them.**
  - If a door feels hot, it's very likely that there's fire on the other side, and you should not open it!
  - Use an alternate exit route instead.
  - Remember to close doors behind you to delay the spread of smoke and fire as well.
- **If you have to go through smoke or flame, stay low.**
  - Since heat rises, this will keep you where the air is cleaner and cooler.
  - "Walk" on your hands and knees, if necessary.
- **Do not use elevators. Go directly to the nearest stairwell.**
  - If possible, use one that's not involved in the blaze.
  - If you find that the only available exit route contains fire or smoke, remember to stay low.

- **Sometimes fires are caused by explosions, and sometimes they cause explosions.**
  - The important thing to remember is that explosions can damage buildings and make them dangerously unstable.
  - That means you should avoid windows or other things that could shatter or fall on you as you evacuate.
  - If debris does start to come down around you, take shelter under a sturdy table or desk.
  
- **Don't attempt to rescue other people who may be trapped.**
  - Leave that to emergency responders with the right training and equipment.
  - Immediately give the responders information about anyone you know is still in the building.
  - If you can, make your way out of the building and go to your assigned assembly point.
  
- **There's the risk of an explosion in our next type of emergency, too.**
  
- **If your facility handles hazardous materials, in addition to all of the normal problems that can occur during an emergency the building could become contaminated.**
  - In that case, your Emergency Action Plan will include procedures for dealing with the hazardous substances that are on-site.
  - But it's important to find out more about these materials for yourself ahead of time.
  - You can learn about their potential hazards, the precautions they require, and what personal protective equipment you should use if you are exposed to them by consulting their Safety Data Sheets.
  
- **Even if your own facility has nothing to do with HAZMATs, external sources of contamination, such as an accident at a nearby chemical plant, or an overturned tanker truck on the highway, can still put you at risk.**
  - Your Emergency Action Plan will take these situations into account as well.

- **If an evacuation is called because of a HAZMAT incident you should immediately put on any PPE that is specified in your Evacuation Plan.**
  - If you are part of an Emergency Response Team, or have special duties such as shutting down processes or utilities, proceed according to your instructions.
  - Otherwise, leave the area immediately.
  
- **Go to the Assembly Point that has been specified for the situation you're dealing with.**
  - It should be upstream, upwind or cross-wind from the contamination source.
  - Stay away from any unfamiliar liquid or solid substances.
  - Avoid breathing in any smoke, fumes, gases or vapors, and stay out of low places like basements and ditches, where they collect.
  
- **Assist anyone who appears confused or incapacitated (they may be feeling the effects of contamination themselves).**
  
- **When you get to the Assembly Point, report for roll call.**
  - Let them know if you think you've been exposed to any contaminants, even if you don't feel anything wrong.
  - Physical symptoms don't always appear immediately, and prompt treatment is crucial.
  
- **Some substances... or even just their fumes... could also explode if they're ignited by a flame or spark.**
  - Such materials include crude oil, gasoline and natural gas.
  
- **If you have to evacuate because of a spill or leak of these types of materials, be extremely careful not to use the switches on any electrical equipment.**
  - Just flipping them "ON" or "OFF" can produce a spark.
  - Even after you reach your Assembly Point a spark or flame could be catastrophic.
  - So don't light up a cigarette or use your cell phone until you get official word that it's safe.

**\* \* \* SUMMARY \* \* \***

- **Clearing a facility under emergency conditions is a serious challenge. But planning ahead and knowing what to do during an evacuation will help get you and your coworkers out safely.**
- **Know "who is supposed to do what" in an evacuation, and where you fit into the plan.**
- **Take time in advance to learn at least two evacuation routes you can use from your work area.**
- **When an evacuation alarm rings, stay calm. Leave the area and report to your Assembly Point.**
- **In a fire, stay low to avoid heat and smoke. Never open a hot door.**
- **If hazardous materials are involved, stay upwind and upstream from the source of contamination.**
- **Emergencies are always unpredictable. But if we prepare for them ahead of time, understand the role we play in an evacuation, and carry it out, we can still go home safe at the end of the day!**