



Emergency Planning Guidelines for Nonprofits

Emergency planning is an important part of any organization's risk management efforts. By preparing for emergencies, an organization can reduce the impact of unexpected events and help to ensure less interruption to their services. These guidelines will assist in the development of a plan for your organization. Plans should be site specific, communicated to staff and volunteers, rehearsed through regular drills and evaluated/updated as needed. Your organization might find it helpful to assign the task of emergency planning and drills to your safety committee.

As you develop your plan it is important to consider the different types of emergencies that may affect your program. Some emergencies are geographically specific such as flooding, hurricanes and earthquakes. Others might be more specific to programs or services, such as kidnapping for child care centers or vehicular accidents when transportation is provided. All organizations have to plan for the risk of some emergency; these might include power outages, fires or workplace violence. Samples of responses to various emergencies are listed in the following pages. Additional information on emergency planning is available from the following sources:

[Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#)

[Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)

[National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#)

[US Department of Education](#)

[Centers for Disease Control](#)

[Nonprofit Risk Management Center](#)

In addition to the resources sited above, [Safe-Wise Consulting](#) has resources available on emergency drills, facility lockdowns, lightning safety for pools, crisis management and business continuity planning.

The first step in every emergency response plan is to identify who is in charge and how things are to be communicated. Organizations should review their chain-of-command and ensure that a single individual is assigned to be the "Go to" person in the event of an emergency at any and all times that services or programs are in operation. In addition to this part of the planning, organizations must determine what methods will be available to communicate during various emergencies. These may include alarms, PA systems, phones, cell phones, radios and the internet.

Sample Emergency Response Plan(s):

Assault on Child or Staff

1. Contact the current supervisor on duty
2. Secure the area
3. Render First Aid
4. Contact the police (and EMS, if needed)
5. Staff member will stay with the victim until police, family or others arrive
6. Document incident

Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure

1. If your eyes are splattered with blood or body fluids, flush immediately with water for at least five minutes. It is best to rinse under clean running water.
2. If blood or any body fluids get into your mouth, rinse your mouth with 50/50 mix of hydrogen peroxide and water, and rinse with plain water.
3. For incidents involving both eyes and mouth, report to your health care provider or medical authority immediately for follow-up treatment and care.
4. If you get a needle stick or puncture wound, the wound should be milked to induce bleeding.
5. Wash the area thoroughly with soap and water.
6. For any bite, scratch, or lesion that may have had blood or body fluid exposure, do the following:
 - a. Wash the area thoroughly with soap and water, or pour a small amount of hydrogen peroxide on the wound. (Hydrogen peroxide is known to destroy HIV and other viruses within seconds.)
 - b. Cover the wound with a sterile dressing
7. Ensure spill is removed with proper procedure and universal precautions in place
8. Seek medical attention for future action.
9. Contact supervisor
10. Document incident

Bomb Threats

1. Note as much detail concerning the call as possible including: gender, accent, age, emotion, background noise and details of the threat
2. Immediately notify the supervisor on duty
3. Contact the police; follow their instructions; they are now in charge
4. Ensure that all members, participants and staff are safe
5. Follow evacuation procedures if directed to do so by police
6. Document incident

Building and Site Evacuation

1. Evacuation should be initiated by supervisor on duty or authorities when risks warrant evacuation - refer to posted diagrams for exits
2. Contact EMS and/or police
3. Notify staff to assist with pool, childcare, senior and other priority areas
4. Notify all people to leave the building by PA system
5. Be calm and avoid panic and a surge at the exits - provide any assistance required to elderly people, people with small children, disabled people, etc.
6. Check rest rooms and locker areas to make sure everyone is out
7. Stand by exits to make sure no one re-enters
8. Secure doors and assemble at a specific, safe location outside
9. Follow the instructions and direction of the police
10. Document incident

Disorderly Persons

There are many different situations that may occur which could cause staff and patrons discomfort because of the improper actions of others. These actions may or may not be illegal, but if they are inconsistent with the organization's values or procedures, they should not be tolerated. In the event a staff person encounters an irate or disruptive person, staff should:

1. Remain as calm as possible
2. Remember that their personal safety and that of other staff or patrons is a priority
3. Activate the emergency plan and ask for assistance – contact the police if needed
4. Attempt to diffuse the situation by listening and engaging the person in conversation, using active listening techniques
5. Ask the person to leave if appropriate
6. Document the incident
7. Report the incident to the supervisor on duty

Behavioral expectations for patrons and staff should be communicated through a code of conduct and through posted rules within the facility. Staff should be trained in conflict resolution and workplace violence prevention so they are able to identify potentially bad situations before they explode and deal with people without escalating their distress.

Earthquake

1. Instruct all occupants to “drop, cover and hold and remain that way until the earth stops moving
2. Stay away from windows, bookcases, and filing cabinets.
3. Hold onto the item you are using as a cover, if it moves, move with it.
4. If no items are available for cover, crouch by a load-bearing wall and cover your head with your arms
5. Clear pools
6. Check on health and safety of all occupants after the threat has passed
7. Check utilities for disruption/damage (gas, water, sewer)
8. Contact EMS before any evacuation of the facility if damage has occurred
9. Document incident

Outdoors:

1. “Drop, cover and hold,” keeping away from glass, bricks, and power lines
2. If you are near a building and there is no safer location, take cover in a doorway

Electrical Storm

Indoors:

1. Clear pool area and secure doors
2. Clear all wet areas including showers and changing rooms
3. Turn off computers
4. Avoid use of landline phones
5. Encourage all members, guests and staff to stay indoors away from windows and doors
6. Wait 30 minutes

Outdoors:

1. Immediately seek shelter
2. If shelter is not available, use a vehicle (car, van or bus) for shelter
3. Avoid open areas or lone tall objects
4. Suspend all water activities
5. Wait 30 minutes before beginning activity

Fire Alarm/Emergency

If smoke or fire is seen:

1. Activate fire alarm if not sounding
2. Evacuate everyone in facility, including staff; drop and crawl to avoid smoke and close doors behind you
3. Call 911 from outside the building
4. Staff in charge of youth should take attendance

If no smoke or fire is seen:

5. Follow steps above and:
6. If safe to do so, search the building for anyone missing
7. Supervisor on duty will check area of concern and use fire extinguisher if safe to do so
8. Follow Site Evacuation procedure if appropriate
9. Communicate with EMS
10. Document incident

Intruders at Camp

1. Unfamiliar persons on the camp property may range from someone lost and looking for directions to a person with intent to do harm to persons or property. Some judgment must be made on the part of staff. Be observant as to the make, model, and license number of the car. Persons should be questioned to ascertain who they are and why they are here. Do not antagonize the intruder. Be polite, give assistance if possible, refer the person to the camp office, or ask them to leave. Observe that the person leaves site.
2. If the appearance of the unfamiliar person makes you uncomfortable, approach with another staff member. Someone should stay with the campers away from the situation.
3. If the person seems threatening in any way, do not approach or take any chances. Remove yourselves and the campers from the area, notify the camp office, and observe the whereabouts of the person.
4. If you see or suspect an intruder in camp at night, immediately and quietly notify the other staff members and the camp office. Check all camper sleeping areas with a head count. In order to prevent false alarms and unnecessary fright, all camp personnel will carry flashlights and identify themselves when walking in the camp at night.
5. Teach the campers to come quietly and tell you if they see an unfamiliar person on the property. If a child encounters an unfamiliar person, real or imagined, never tell the child that "it really wasn't anything," "there is no need to be afraid," or "it was just your imagination." Frightened children need to be allowed to experience their fear, to know that it is okay to be afraid, and to talk about their experience.
6. Notify the camp director immediately of any intruders.
7. Complete an incident report and any other reports requested.

Kidnapping

When a child has been kidnapped or removed from a program without authorization, staff should respond by:

1. Activating the emergency plan and notifying other staff
2. Securing the facility
3. Notify the supervisor on duty
4. Taking attendance for all youth and initiating search teams of staff
5. Notify the Police Department and provide the following info: child's name and age, physical and clothing description of the child, including any distinguishing marks such as birthmarks, and time and location child was last seen
6. Notify local Child Care authority if applicable
7. Document incident

Lockdown

When to activate a Lockdown?

1. When notified to do so by local police or government
2. When an armed person (gun/weapon) is identified in the facility or on the grounds
3. The sound of a discharged firearm is heard
4. A child has been indentified as missing

Who activates a Lockdown?

1. The Executive Director or their designee may activate a Lockdown when an appropriate (see above) emergency is evident
2. Any immediate life-threatening situation must be reported immediately
3. Anyone observing or suspecting a dangerous situation must immediately notify Executive Director or their designee
4. The Executive Director or their designee will immediately notify the Police upon activation of a Lockdown

Prior to an emergency:

1. Review lockdown and evacuation procedures with staff, patrons, youth and parents. Clearly communicate how parents should respond to the emergency and how their children will be protected.
2. Identify communication strategies for notifying police, fire, health officials, staff, patrons and parents. These may include radio, landlines, cell phones, text messages, email and other means. Secondary means for communications should be identified in the event the primary communication method is not available. Prepare phone and other communication lists.
3. Identify meeting room - select an internal room, preferably one without windows for those in the facility to assemble.

During an emergency:

1. Activate Lockdown
2. Notify all concerned
3. Staff account for all children and occupants
4. Secure facility, post signage
5. Move to meeting place/room
6. Wait for further instructions and/or until Lockdown is cleared

Missing or Fleeing Child

When a child is missing or suspected of fleeing a program, staff should respond by:

1. Activating the emergency plan and notifying other staff
2. Securing the facility
3. Notify the supervisor on duty
4. Taking attendance for all youth and initiating search teams of staff
5. Notify the Police Department (number)
6. Notify the child's parents
7. Notify local Child Care authority if applicable
8. Document incident

Power Outage

1. Emergency lighting will be activated and flashlights are located with First aid kits
2. Call 911 if concerned about a fire or safety hazard
3. Clear pools, gymnasiums and fitness centers
4. Supervisor on duty will contact property manager, if needed
5. Evacuate and secure the facility if power has not returned after 30 minutes
6. Document incident

Shelter in Place (see also Lockdowns):

Plans for reaction to the atmospheric or environmental release of chemical, biological or other hazardous materials should include a Shelter in Place procedure. In these situations it may be necessary to seek shelter at a designated location and seal the premises when notified by authorities.

When to activate Shelter in Place procedures?

1. When notified to do so by local police or government
2. When notified through radio, television or other emergency communication system
3. When a hazardous chemical has been released

During an emergency:

1. Activate Shelter in Place procedures
2. Notify all concerned
3. Staff account for all children and occupants
4. Secure facility, post signage
5. Deactivate air handling system(s)
6. Forward calls to meeting room phone
7. Move to meeting place/room
8. Seal room
9. Wait for further instructions

Local officials are the best source of information; following their instructions during and after emergencies is the safest choice. Shelter in Place instructions are usually provided for durations of a few hours.

Site Evacuation for childcare:

1. If it is determined that staff and children will be moved to the alternate site location distant from the childcare, assign children to a designated teacher
2. Staff should bring the following items to the alternate sites:
 - a. class/staff attendance sheets and visitor sign-in sheets
 - b. children's emergency and medical information/supplies
 - c. cell phone, if available
3. Children will be taken to the alternate site location by walking, vans or the safest means possible
4. Once at the alternate site location, take attendance again. Teachers must remain with their group of children until the children are picked up by parents or emergency contacts
5. Director will continue to communicate with parents and coordinate pick-up of children
6. Director will report incident to licensor
7. Director will complete a written incident report

Suspicious Mail or Package

1. Do not touch, smell, or taste unknown substances
2. Cover substance with paper, trash can, clothes or other material
3. Evacuate and seal off room
4. Wash hands thoroughly
5. Notify supervisor on duty
6. Mark room as "Dangerous"
7. Contact police
8. Make a list of anyone present in the room at the incident to provide to police
9. Document incident

Tornado Planning:

Tornadoes are incredibly violent local storms that extend to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 300 mph. Powerful thunderstorms can generate tornadoes that uproot trees and buildings in a matter of seconds. Tornadoes can occur in any state but occur more frequently in the Midwest, Southeast and Southwest. They usually occur with little or no warning.

When planning emergencies such as tornadoes your organization should consult your state emergency management office, licensing agency and local EMS. Most areas have a tornado warning system in place that monitored with a NOAA Weather Radio. The system will use two alert designations; *Tornado Watch* and *Tornado Warning*.

A *Tornado Watch* means tornadoes are likely and organizations, staff and participants should be ready to take shelter. A *Tornado Warning* means that a tornado has been sighted in the area or is indicated by radar. Staff and participants should take shelter immediately.

Tornado procedures should also include methods to inform personnel when tornado warnings are posted, reviewing facilities to designate tornado shelter areas and other preparations. The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) has a [planning guide](#) that can assist you with planning for weather emergencies.