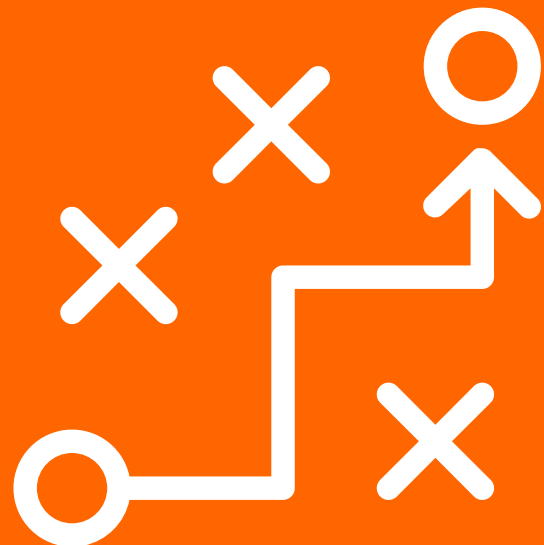


# Guide to Developing an Emergency Evacuation Plan for Your Business



To many, the rapid removal of people from immediate or threatened danger, otherwise known as an evacuation, seems like a remote contingency. To others: a relatively straightforward procedure, requiring little to no planning or practice. The fact is neither group is right.

Whether natural or manmade, emergency situations happen all the time, precipitating evacuations. The record shows that the more disorganized the evacuation the more likely it is to cause unnecessary confusion, property damage, injury, even fatality.

What's more, regulatory bodies, like the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), set out minimum requirements for emergency management, often necessitating some degree of evacuation planning. Organizations who fail to plan then find themselves out of compliance with local, state, and/or national occupational health and safety statutes.

Looking to ensure compliance and keep your customers and staff safe? There's help. We've created a handy how-to-guide to developing an emergency evacuation plan for your business.

# 1 Understand the purpose and scope

Before putting pen to paper on your emergency evacuation plan, first consider a couple of critical factors: the plan's purpose and its scope. In other words, lay out what you are trying to accomplish with the plan and what material will be covered in it.

When it comes to crisis preparedness, evacuation plans shouldn't be treated as standalone plans. Rather, they serve as important supplements (or annexes) to other incident plans and are only activated when the incident in question necessitates an emergency evacuation.

What kind of incidents usually trigger an emergency evacuation? Here're a few examples:

-  Active shooter
-  Fires
-  Explosions
-  Floods
-  Earthquakes
-  Hurricanes








-  Tornadoes
-  Toxic material releases
-  Radiological and biological accidents
-  Civil disturbances
-  Workplace violence

As such, the goals and objectives of your evacuation plan (proper) will vary depending on a number of key factors: building design, available internal resources, available public emergency services, and your own set of unique risk factors, determined by a thorough risk assessment.

As for the actual plan, it will outline protocols to follow in the event of an evacuation, define the roles and responsibilities of team members, and provide clear action plans for teams to execute.

## 2 Compile emergency contact lists




When planning for an evacuation, ensure that your Emergency Evacuation and Strike teams have ready access to contact information for key stakeholders. Those stakeholders include:

-  Emergency services
-  Local hospital
-  Local emergency information
-  Closest FBI field office
-  Local police department
-  Site management and security
-  Local fire department




If your organization uses crisis or incident management technology, make sure that an up-to-date contact list is easily accessible within that system.

## 3 Prepare your communications beforehand

As many crisis-struck companies can attest, when incident response goes awry, flawed communication is often to blame. In other words, it's pretty imperative to plan for crisis communication before crisis actually hits.

-  Pre-approved messages
-  Designated company spokesperson
-  Instructions for regular media trainings for that spokesperson




In the case of an evacuation, the emergency plan should refer directly to the communication strategies laid out in the incident plan that triggered the evacuation. That source plan will most likely cover the following:

-  A strategy for crisis response on your social channels
-  Inventory of possible communications to use (i.e. landline telephone, mobile phones, two-way radio)
-  List of team members trained to deploy special equipment

## 4 Select your team. Set their roles and responsibilities.

Again, the incident plan that triggered the emergency evacuation will have already named the parties responsible for the response, i.e. the Emergency Evacuation and Strike teams.

The evacuation plan, on the other hand, clarifies the responsibilities of a few additional evacuation-related roles, namely Chief Warden and Warden. The Warden, for example, is tasked with the following (and more):

-  Assisting people with the evacuation procedures
-  Moving people to the designated assembly points when instructed by signals, warnings, written notifications, or intercom orders
-  Taking attendance of people once relocated to a safe area to a designated assembly point or evacuated to another location

## 5 Prepare your response and action plans

The final step you'll take is preparing your response and action plans, some of which will already be determined by the threat you're responding to, e.g. tornado, chemical spill, fire.

Firstly, the response plan designates concrete emergency notification and evacuation procedures to take. An orderly evacuation, for instance, looks like the following:

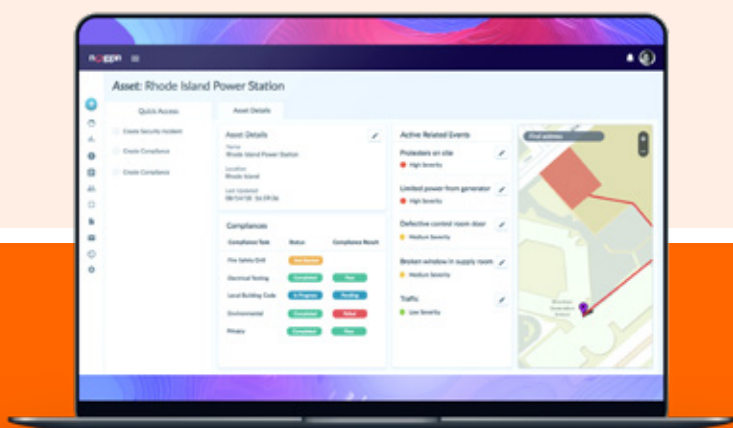
1. Evacuate even if others refuse to follow
2. Exit, leaving the building through any unobstructed exit door or wherever else it is safe to do so
3. Leave all your belongings behind
4. Proceed briskly and calmly to the designated assembly point. Do not run.
5. Assist other people if it is possible and safe to do so
6. Clearly identify yourself to the Warden when requested to do so
7. Notify the Warden of any injured or missing persons
8. Follow all instructions given by the Warden or other designated people

Finally, either the site manager or any member of your staff should be empowered to initiate the emergency evacuation plan (for areas of the site where it is safe to do so), as part of the immediate response to the (source) incident. After doing so, the site manager or staff member will do the following:

1. Call emergency services from a telephone and provide all known information about the incident
2. Announce over a public address system (if available) that an evacuation is in progress, providing as many details as possible
3. Repeat the evacuation announcement several times to ensure all people are aware of the instruction
4. Take attendance of the people in their care
5. Report any injured or missing people to the Chief Warden or other designated people
6. Inform the Chief Warden or other designated parties of the people in your care
7. Notify any staff not on site to remain off site

Emergency preparedness requires planning for every possible contingency, including evacuating staff, customers, and others on your property from immediate or threatened danger. But to get emergency evacuation right, you need to involve as many relevant stakeholders (third-party site managers, fire and police departments, etc.) in your planning efforts as well.

Additionally, simple planning won't be enough. Detailed and routine trainings will be necessary for employees to get comfortable performing emergency evacuation procedures. Finally, just remember: your efforts are critical to keeping staff and customers safe and ensuring compliance with any occupational health and safety statutes.



## noggIn for Crisis

Meet the next-generation tool for corporate crisis and business continuity management teams to collaborate, plan, track their response, and share information. Built on the Noggin Core platform, Noggin Crisis gives response teams and decision makers the tools to know what's happening, collaborate quickly and effectively, make better decisions, and enact the right plans to take action when it counts the most.

The Noggin Crisis solution pack is backed by the Noggin Library with hundreds of plans and best-practice workflows, out of the box, and installed in minutes.

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