

HR Compliance Library, ¶71,400, Sample emergency preparedness guidelines

The following sample emergency guidance is designed to help employers prepare their workforce and workplace(s) for the safety/emergency concerns that surfaced after the events of September 11, 2001. It is written for employers with more than one site/facility, but can be edited and customized to meet the needs of your business.

(Name of company) Emergency Preparedness Guidelines

(Name of company) is dedicated to maintaining the safety of employees in cases of emergency. Following are steps employees should take to prepare for and respond to an emergency situation in order to protect themselves and our continuing business operations. Each individual site will provide to employees at that location specific details on local emergency preparedness procedures.

For general information relating to emergency preparedness, the Department of Homeland Security offers helpful information at <http://www.ready.gov>. Information also is available from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (<http://www.fema.gov>) and the American Red Cross (<http://www.redcross.org>).

Protecting Employees

Generally speaking, the instructions of the civil authorities should prevail in the event of an emergency.

If you are at home and there is an incident in your area, stay at home and follow the instructions the civil authorities provide.

If you are on your way to or from the office and an emergency arises, make your way to your home or another designated safe place as quickly as possible. Do not attempt to come to the office unless it is the closest safe place you can reach.

If you are in the office when an emergency occurs, follow the instructions of building and civil authorities. Whether it is safer to evacuate or to remain in place will depend on the nature and location of the emergency, and these authorities will be in the best position to ensure your safety. Site management is in the process of gathering and communicating this additional information at the site level.

Managers in most (name of your company) offices maintain emergency contact lists with telephone and e-mail information for all employees. Please be certain they have current telephone, mobile, and e-mail contact information for you.

(Name of your company) has established a toll-free Emergency Contact Line – (give number) – where employees can obtain both recorded information about business operations in the event of an emergency and leave their own recorded contact information in the event they will be unreachable at their normal contact location(s). The number provides information on office closures, re-openings and remote work arrangements, so follow the prompts to get information for your location. As mentioned, the number is (give number) – why not write it down at home, or add it to your PDA or cell phone directory now, while you're thinking of it? In the event of an emergency in your area, please phone in to let us know you're okay.

Also, think about what other steps you can take now to prepare for an emergency. For example, you should be aware of the location of the hospital closest to your (name of company) office.

Protecting Assets

While everyone's primary concern is personal safety, there are a number of steps we can take to attempt to ensure the security of company property in the event of an emergency. In addition, many of the steps that you can take to protect company assets should be done before an emergency situation arises.

If you do not routinely save your computer work when you leave your workstation for a break, a meeting, etc., get in the habit of doing so. As always, be sure you have secured all business and personal valuables – including laptops – whenever you leave your work area. These are the sort of common-sense precautions we all should undertake regardless of the external circumstances.

Be alert for suspicious or unauthorized individuals in the office. Do not hesitate to ask people who they are and why they are in the office, or to report suspicious activity to a manager.

Protecting Business Operations

In the event that you are required to evacuate the building in an emergency, be mindful of the possibility that you may not be able to return for an extended period. If there is an extended site closure, your manager will contact you (using your emergency contact information) to explain the circumstances under which you will be able to resume work from a remote location.

We continue to investigate ways to improve our emergency and disaster recovery preparedness, and we will update this information from time to time as circumstances dictate.

We of course hope that none of this information becomes needed, but we all should be prepared and know what we should do in the event of an emergency to protect ourselves and the company.

If you have any questions, please contact your manager, site leader or site emergency contact. A list of site contacts is provided on the following page.