



Whitepaper

# YOUR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN CAN SAVE YOUR BUSINESS—AND LIVES

Your company is responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace for all employees, customers, and visitors to your facility. This includes safety from human-caused emergencies, such as crime and violence, as well as hazards caused by natural disasters, outbreaks of disease, and accidents. In order to address these safety threats and mitigate risk, employers should have emergency preparedness plans in place.



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## Your emergency preparedness plan can save your business—and lives










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Every member of the management team is responsible for knowing the emergency plan and what to do in an emergency situation. Designate management team members to be directly responsible and involve them in your emergency planning, which should include the following steps:

- Identify your organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats** as they relate to the types of threats or hazards your organization might face.
- Identify the key personnel** to develop and implement the plan based on the threats that might occur.
- Identify emergency coordinators** and train them completely so that they can carry out their roles immediately at the time of the emergency.
- Pack emergency safety “to-go” kits** that the emergency coordinators take with them to the assembly points in the event of an evacuation.
- Employees should also be trained** about the components of your plan, including knowing emergency and media contacts, how to work with law enforcement and what to do in different types of emergency/evacuation situations.
- Prepare an evacuation plan.** A key element of the plan should include preparing to get anyone in the building safely out of harm’s way as quickly as possible. Make sure the emergency evacuation plan outlines escape routes, shows the location of safe rooms if evacuation is not feasible, and includes the meeting places outside of the building where employees should congregate until the danger has passed. These evacuation maps should be clearly marked and posted throughout your building. The evacuation plans should include provisions for assisting individuals with special needs, such as vision, hearing, or mobility impairments, to be alerted to the situation and assisted to safety.
- Conduct drills** on a regular basis.
- Amend your plan as necessary** and ensure that the plan changes are communicated.

## Know your role in the emergency

Understanding the role you need to play to protect your business, employees, customers, and visitors is crucial in the event of an emergency or potentially violent workplace situation, such as an active shooter.

Your Job is <u>NOT</u> to:	Your Job <u>IS</u> to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Be a hero.</li> <li> Perform medical care.</li> <li> Triage victims.</li> <li> Perform search and rescue.</li> <li> Be a security guard.</li> <li> Expose yourself to unnecessary risk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Assist in emergency evacuations and drills.</li> <li> Make informed decisions in times of crisis.</li> <li> Be familiar with escape routes, dead ends, hidden rooms, and potentially hazardous materials.</li> </ul>

**Do not put yourself at risk.** Your job is to assist in the safe and complete evacuation of the building, while preventing all individuals except for emergency personnel from entering the building while the evacuation is underway. You know your building and can provide invaluable assistance to emergency responders by supplying information about the evacuation status of your employees, guests, and visitors; location of trapped or injured individuals; and information about any missing personnel.

## Assessing the situation

Emergency coordinators are responsible for providing an accurate and quick assessment of the situation. This information may be collected from employees, customers, or visitors. Emergency contact information should be handy and used to communicate with other emergency personnel or employees via every communication method available, including phones, mobile telephones, email, text messages, voice mail, direct observation, or any of the other emergency notification systems.

Based on the situation and the information available, emergency coordinators may need to make the decision to evacuate or shelter in place.



## Handling the evacuation

When a situation erupts or an alarm has been activated, quickly sweep the area to determine if an evacuation is necessary. If so, immediately notify the appropriate emergency personnel, call 911, and instruct everyone to evacuate and secure doors.

Make sure that emergency team members take their “to-go” kits to the designated evaluation assembly points.

- Remind everyone to be calm, leave belongings behind, and move quickly to the nearest safe exit.
- Clear rooms as you go, making sure everyone is evacuating.
- Help people with special needs (i.e., vision, hearing, or mobility impairments) to get out of the building safely.
- Once everyone else is evacuated, exit the building and report to the designated primary evacuation gathering site.
- Make sure that you have a second predetermined alternate site identified in case the primary meeting point is unsafe.
- Conduct a head count to determine if anyone is missing or hurt to report to the emergency and medical responders on the scene.
- Notify the emergency first responders that the area has been evacuated and provide them with pertinent information about the situation, including individuals not accounted for.
- Keep employees, customers, and visitors at the assembly point until you receive further instructions from law enforcement.
- If necessary and as assigned, notify families of anyone affected by the incident.
- Assess the emotional or physical needs of people at the scene, and refer them to emergency health care personnel as necessary.

## Managing the aftermath—post-incident planning and communications

To facilitate effective planning for future emergencies, your emergency management team should get together to analyze the situation as soon as possible. This review will serve as documentation for future response activities and allow you to update your plan. If key personnel were injured or killed, or your facility or systems were damaged in the attack, you may need to identify and fill personnel, facilities, and operational gaps as a result.

Consider the impact of the event on your employees. Talk with each member of your team to determine what they might need in terms of company support, including counseling services, time off, or working from home or from another company location. Consider your own feelings and needs and share them with your manager or human resources, too.

Work with your human resources department to manage these requests and any types of expressions of condolence to families who lost loved ones in the incident. Everyone handles grief and stress differently, so you need to allow for those different reactions. Depending upon the extent of the incident and its resulting loss of life or damage to the facility, reassure your employees and customers by implementing your backup operational plans and communicating as much as you can about the actions the company is taking to get back to full operational strength and to support employees and customers.

### Summary

If the unthinkable happens, be ready. Always have an emergency plan that includes comprehensive evacuation routes and post-incident communications. The event is generally unpredictable and may evolve quickly. Your actions can make a difference for everyone's safety and survival.

### About Jeff Zisner and AEGIS Security & Investigations

Jeff Zisner is CEO of AEGIS Security & Investigations. He is ASIS board certified as a Certified Protection Professional, Bureau of Security & Investigative Services Security Instructor, and the FBI's Infragard Commercial Facilities Sector Coordinator. He regularly conducts active shooter training workshops with businesses, the general public, and law enforcement professionals. His company, AEGIS Security & Investigations, specializes in high-end security, investigation, training, and consulting solutions. The company uses a simple methodology of working with clients to prevent security and safety risks with customized programs that include active shooter/workplace violence training and risk management solutions.

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