



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Planning For Emergencies

Disaster can strike a workplace at any time and in any form - a flash flood might submerge a critical server for days, or high winds may affect the power and telephone lines!

Disasters are the acid test for a company's emergency response system. Anticipating disasters and emergencies and planning the response drastically minimizes the impact. An emergency response plan (ERP) should include basic preparedness to manage anticipated disasters. An ERP cannot possibly include every disaster, but it can outline what must be done during emergencies.

A good ERP must have:

- Clearly written policies indicating the protocol to be followed, including employees responsible for making decisions.
- People in charge of assessing the extent of risk to property and life so they can be notified during emergencies.
- Specific directions to shut down production processes and equipment to stop business activities.
- Procedures for facility evacuation, including a predetermined meeting outside the facility and a process tracking all personnel.
- Training and practice schedules for employees in charge of rescue operations, medical duties, fire fighting, etc.
- Preferred procedures for reporting various emergencies.

Because an ERP is expected to address any emergency that might occur in workplaces, a hazard survey should be conducted to identify hazardous facilities. Based on the assessment, the ERP should be outlined for different emergencies. The plan should include workplace maps and floor plans showing emergency exits and safe areas.

All employees must be taught to respond appropriately. The ERP must be reviewed with all employees when first written, when the responsibilities of people mentioned in the plan change or when the plan itself changes.

A copy of the ERP must be given to all employees. It should also be easily accessible in work areas.