

What is Your Role in a Response to an Emergency?

Team leaders or supervisors and team members have the responsibility to take the appropriate action in an emergency. Team members have a responsibility to cooperate with the ECO and contribute to the implementation of emergency procedures in accordance with the organisation's requirements and legislative requirements. Everyone has a duty of care.



Know your role and the appropriate actions to take in response to an emergency.

Every team in a workplace should be prepared for workplace emergencies. To make the appropriate initial response a team and its members must:

- cooperate with the ECO
- know the relevant workplace emergency procedures
- be able to identify emergency personnel
- be able to implement safe and effective actions to control workplace emergencies in accordance with their organisation's and legislative requirements
- participate in emergency practice drills and exercises
- confirm emergency equipment is in a serviceable and accessible condition
- be able to follow the standard operating procedures for using emergency equipment
- respond appropriately to directions from emergency personnel, services or response teams.



Evacuation Roles and Responsibilities

The typical roles and responsibilities for evacuating a building when a fire alarm occurs are shown in Figure 32.

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Figure 32 Building Evacuation Roles and Responsibilities

| Roles | Responsibilities |
|-----------------------|--|
| Chief Warden | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Determine nature of emergency and decide appropriate action○ Ensure appropriate emergency service has been notified○ Advise floor and area wardens of the situation○ Initiate evacuation as required○ Control entry procedures○ Brief emergency services upon arrival of the:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- type- scope and- location of the emergency- status of the evacuation○ Act on the emergency service's instructions |
| Floor or Area Wardens | <p>On hearing the alarm or discovering an emergency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ commence the evacuation○ implement the emergency procedures for their floor or area○ communicate with the Chief Warden○ direct Wardens to check the floor area for any exceptional circumstances○ advise the Chief Warden as soon as possible of the circumstances○ co-opt others as required to perform warden duties |
| Wardens | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Act as floor or area warden when necessary○ Call the fire brigade or other appropriate emergency service○ Operate any internal communication systems○ Check to ensure fire doors and smoke doors are closed properly○ Search floor area to account for everyone○ Ensure orderly flow of people into protected areas and stair wells○ Assist any less mobile people○ Lead group to assembly areas○ Operate first response emergency equipment such as portable fire extinguishers, hose reels and fire blankets |

The rescue efforts in an emergency such as an underground mine collapse would include specialists such as electricians, fitters, truck drivers, bogger drivers, raise borers, winder drivers, air leggers, shift bosses, a whole crew of support staff, paramedics and psychologists.

As well as following the initial response plans they would make any essential adjustments for the particular circumstances for that specific emergency.

The aim of the emergency response team and all the support crew is to manage all hazards in a way that:

- minimises injuries to persons
- minimises loss of life or property.

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Actions taken after the emergency recovery are designed to:

- restore normal operations in an orderly and timely manner
- minimise the environmental impact of the emergency.

The people with the roles and responsibilities for evacuating a building, underground mine or any other space should be known to others through publicity.

In an emergency situation they should wear a distinctive helmet, vest, armband or uniform.



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Figure 33 Checklist Responses to Control Workplace Emergencies

| In a Workplace Emergency I: | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Contribute to the assessment of hazards and the precautions to prevent emergencies | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Know the alarm systems and where to find initial response emergency equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Know the actions to take in the initial response to an emergency | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Can work with others to apply the appropriate safeguards to health and safety of others | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Know how to participate in the control of an emergency | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Respond appropriately to any instructions by the emergency control organisation, emergency services or response teams | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Respond confidently and calmly to the emergency | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



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2. [Redacted]

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3. [Redacted]

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What is the Debriefing Process?

Effective debriefings assist those affected by the emergency to use their abilities to overcome the effects of the emergency. Debriefings aim to reduce the likelihood of adverse feelings and trauma from the emergency. They promote group support and allow people to reflect on their experiences.



Contribute to the debriefing process.

The debriefing process assists those who have been affected by the emergency to:

- form a clear idea of the events
- reflect on their thoughts and reactions to the emergency
- identify the expected reactions to the emergency and how to evaluate and manage them.



The debriefing process should:

- discuss the causes of the emergency, what happened during the emergency and what will happen post-emergency
- provide information about normal stress responses to an emergency situation
- help people to use problem solving strategies
- support the personal needs of those affected
- discuss any work-related issues caused by the emergency
- provide follow-up debriefing sessions.



An Effective Debriefing

The Department of Human Services Victoria Australia (2009) provides this definition: *Emergency recovery is the co-ordinated process of supporting emergency affected communities in the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional, economic and physical well-being.*

Debriefings are an essential element in the recovery process.

Effective debriefings support those affected and help defuse emotions caused by the emergency. Effective debriefings:

- commence as soon as possible after the emergency (usually within seven days)
- enable people affected by the emergency to talk about it and its repercussions
- allow people to show solidarity and appreciation of one another and the actions they undertook throughout the emergency
- inform others not affected by the emergency about what happened
- invite specialist emergency services staff to provide information and feedback about the emergency and actions to take in any future potential emergency
- provide information and updates about actions taken in the second response phase
- quash rumours and any scapegoating and scare mongering about the emergency and actions taken.

Debriefings provide the opportunity to recognise the efforts of those involved in the emergency and allow for open discussion and constructive feedback and proposals for improvements. People who may be required for a debriefing include:

- all or part of the Emergency Control Organisation
- people with responsibility for the overall evacuation
- security personnel, recovery personnel and helpers
- emergency services personnel and government authorities
- counselling, other support personnel and those involved and affected by the emergency.

Debriefings gather information to improve future performance and fill the need to talk through a significant incident. The results of any debriefing should be recorded and communicated to relevant managers and other stakeholders.



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ELEMENT SIX: Monitor Emergency Response and Address Deficiencies

Monitoring is the process of checking the responses to emergencies to ensure activities are effective in meeting the objectives for emergency preparedness and response. Monitoring actions need to be purposeful, relevant, efficient and effective.

Why are Responses to Emergencies Monitored?

Responses to emergencies are monitored to check whether they are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Their purpose is to contain, minimise or eliminate emergencies.



Monitor responses to emergencies for efficiency and timeliness in consultation.

Monitor responses to emergencies for efficiency and timeliness in consultation with:

- stakeholders
- specialist advisors
- specialist agencies.



Focus on Key Areas

Monitoring must focus on assessing the effectiveness of responses to emergencies. To provide this focus the monitoring process should consider the following issues:

- Have potential emergencies been eliminated?
- Have potential emergencies been minimised?
- How are the emergency controls impacting on productivity?
- Are stakeholders or users consulted and do they cooperate?