

# The Dell Group, Inc.

*Creative* Solutions for your compliance burdens

## Employee Emergency Action

### OSHA 29 CFR 1910.38

<b>Compliance Training Program</b>	<b>Normal Length</b>	<b>Cost per Session</b>	<b>Cost per Trainee</b>
Emergency Action Awareness for All Employees	1 Hour	\$250.00	\$5.00
Emergency Actions for Coordinators	1 Hour	\$250.00	\$5.00

**Basic Emergency Action Plan** required by OSHA for employee notification, evacuation, and special duties of key employees in the event of a defined emergency or natural disaster . . . . . \$300.00

## PREPARING YOUR BUSINESS FOR EMERGENCIES

Research indicates that less than 50 percent of U.S. companies hit by a disaster recover fully. Of this total, only 20 percent have complete disaster response and recovery plans. OSHA estimates even fewer employers are in compliance with their emergency preparedness requirements under 29CFR 1910.38.

All types of industries must focus on the primary purpose of emergency preparedness, or disaster planning: to continuously improve an organization's ability to protect human and property resources to increase the potential of sustaining business operations after a disaster. Work put into emergency preparedness planning and the goals established during that planning will decrease losses when a disaster occurs.

Two categories involved in overall plan development and implementation can be called "administrative" and "equipment and facility" investments. Both categories need strong

management support to be optimally effective, especially in terms of financial commitments. Ongoing assessment will ensure program readiness, adaptability, prompt response and recovery.

Those attempting to develop an effective plan must recognize the need for ongoing training; and facility improvements, which may include specialized fire protection systems; secondary communication systems; and ongoing procurement of emergency supplies. The following are elements that should be considered a necessary part of any written plan:

- \* fire prevention and protection;
- \* chemical spills or releases;
- \* bomb threats, riots and sabotage;
- \* earthquake, tornado, hurricane, flood or other natural disaster preparedness;
- \* recovery aspects;
- \* other contingencies specific to a geographical location or risk inherent in a specific industry.

At both individual and multiple-facility operations, it is extremely important to assign emergency management authority at a senior level to ensure visibility, decision-making ability and sound protocol. Develop a "team" to help formulate and execute tactical activities.

The main role of a facility's team is to ensure that occupants are protected from injury and that property and program resources are protected from damage. Their most basic duty will likely be to facilitate safe, smooth and orderly evacuations when necessary. Peripheral duties may include first-aid and medical support; serving as information runners; logistical supply duties; and aiding in recovery activities.

This "core team" may include emergency coordinators, specially trained Emergency Response Team (ERT) members, communications experts, plant protection personnel, chemical spill coordinators and other critical support personnel. This team must be considered the key to implementing effective "initial responses" so emergency events can be assessed, controlled and stabilized. These members must receive training that will include: individual and team responsibilities; introduction to the incident command system (ICS); protocol and communication for handling contingencies such as fire, natural disasters, bomb threat, chemical release and power failure.

## **EXERCISING THE PLAN**

Exercises should include evacuation drills, mock disasters, tabletop activities or walk-through of certain components/ phases of the plan. Facility teams should coordinate specific duties and training at the department level so each member has a strong understanding of what is necessary to control a disaster. A hands-on approach will better prepare individuals and groups to respond effectively when the real event occurs.

## **EQUIPMENT AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS**

Serious emergency planning requires that the planners evaluate elements other than the written plans. Facility assessments and equipment upgrades will help control the potential losses from various disasters. The following investments and upgrades may be required:

*Chemical Controls.* A continuous effort to find less hazardous substitutes for the chemicals present at a facility is the optimum solution to lessening the harmful effects of a hazardous material release. However, to control those substances for which there are no substitutes, the following steps can be taken.

- \* Equipment that provides continuous monitoring and detection for highly toxic chemicals will warn against a release or spill.
- \* Provide secondary containment for all hazardous chemicals whenever practicable. Secondary containment should be a minimum of 110 percent of the volume of the largest container in any given area.
- \* Minimize your chemical inventory by requesting low volume supplies only when needed, so vendors serve as your warehouse. This may increase unit costs, but will reduce overall risk.

*Emergency Warning Systems.* Many of these types of systems are valuable in providing information to occupants, but can be particularly effective in emergency situations.

- \* Install or upgrade audible warning systems that will facilitate a desired response. This may come in the form of warning or public address systems that can be used for evacuation or other informational purposes.

*Emergency Lighting.* Code requirements typically issue mandates on emergency lighting, and it should be viewed as an important element of emergency preparedness programming.

- \* Power failures can stem from various events and threaten the safety of building occupants. If natural lighting is limited in your facilities, additional emergency lighting will become a valuable component in the movement of personnel out of a building. Maintenance and testing of these systems is a must.

*Communications.* More and more companies are discovering that ordinary communication systems are, at best, minimally effective during disaster.

\* Along with normal telephone systems, a radio base station and mobile units or cellular phones can be used to increase modes of communication.

\* Dedicated phone lines can be provided so you will have additional telephone support - outside of normal phone services.

Procurement planning should include emergency supplies such as extended-shelf-life food and water, emergency medical items, blankets and other issuances needed to care for a majority of your employee population. Other components that should receive sufficient attention include: portable and fixed-power-supply equipment or uninterruptible-power-supply systems; aggressive scheduled maintenance; upgrading or installation of specialized fire protection systems; a secondary command post; and other building design improvements. Some of the elements listed here may be required by federal, state or local authorities having jurisdiction.

## **IMPLEMENTING THE PLANS**

The written plan must specify response and recovery actions, the post-disaster phase in which they must be performed and the individuals responsible for performing these actions. In an actual disaster, this is where you will realize that facility equipment, administrative improvements and exercises have paid off.

Although the terms "emergency" and "disaster" can have individual meaning, planning for both must consider training, facility improvements and related supplies. Objective improvements are seldom realized in terms of direct and definite savings, but we cannot afford *not* to make improvements where we know we can and must have an impact.

## **CREATIVE SOLUTIONS**

Ease compliance with OSHA regulations dealing with fire prevention and emergency preparedness, by utilizing our expert services. Training specific to your site, written programs and drills/critiques are some of the ways we can help. Call 1.800.259.8930 for a free initial consultation.