

Emergency Planning & Preparedness

Building Evacuation Plans



Durango Fire and Rescue Authority
Fire Prevention Bureau

www.durangofirerescue.org

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Getting Started

- The unique features of your building(s) and occupants should be taken into consideration when designing your building evacuation plan.
- Survey the building – Know what types of fire and life safety systems you have, and define the layout of your building.
- Survey the occupants – Will the occupants be familiar with your building, or does your building host a changing population? Also, take into consideration special needs such as non-English speaking or physical disabilities.
- Create a basic floor plan - *See page 2, "Develop a plan."

Show the primary and secondary fire exits, as well as the locations of all fire extinguishers and manual alarm pull stations.

Pick your Fire/Life Safety Team

- Fire/Life Safety Marshal & Alternate – This person will implement and maintain your Emergency Operations Plan. They are responsible for operation of building fire protection equipment. Meet the fire department, recruit and ensure training for the rest of the safety team and providing safety identification vest and lights are some other duties of the marshal. Pick a person who has not only the knowledge, but also the authority to implement the procedures outlined in the plan.
- Emergency Response Team – Primary role is to investigate the source of an alarm or emergency, and communicate their findings to the control center for emergencies. It is desirable that team members are CPR certified.
- Assign Floor Wardens – These people are volunteers selected from the employees whose role is to assist in the evacuation of occupants from the building in the event of a fire alarm or emergency.
- Assign Assistant Monitors – Responsible for providing assistance to those individuals on a floor that require assistance to evacuate. These include people with disabilities or who suffer medical problems.
- The Marshal should keep a list of all members on the safety team.
- All employees should know who comprises the safety team, they should have notation at their work station – visible to all employees.

Develop a Plan

- Develop a floor plan – Each floor of the building should have a basic floor plan. Indicate the location of all fire exits (do NOT use elevators), stairs, fire escapes, possible escape routes, circuit breaker boxes, mechanical shut-offs, first aid supplies, fire extinguishers, manual pull stations, and emergency equipment. Post the floor plan throughout the building, and distribute to all employees. Mark "YOU ARE HERE" according to the location of the posted plan. Then mark the **two** closest fire exits. Keep exit signs bright and noticeable.
- Develop written procedures – These should include how to evacuate the building, pull fire alarms, secure area if deemed necessary, and notifying 911. This can be a simple flyer that you distribute to employees during new staff orientation.
- Assign a meeting place – The floor warden is responsible for selecting a safe meeting place where all employees for that floor or section will meet and the warden will take a head count. This outside location should be at a distance from the building, far enough away to keep individuals out of the way of fire fighting activities and away from smoke, fire, falling glass, and debris.
- Implementing the plan – Effective ways of introducing employees to a new Emergency Operations Plan is through staff meeting, new employee orientations, and building newsletters. In an emergency situation, occupants must rely upon their own knowledge and disciplined response practices and procedures to ensure their personal safety. Visitors to the building will in turn rely upon the guidance provided by employees.

Building Fire/Life Safety Features

- Define and describe all primary components of the building's safety systems.
Take the list found below: and describe, in your emergency procedures packet the key components of the building fire and life safety features.
- General description of the building
- Address
- Cross streets
- Safety features
- Parking
- Construction
- Number of stories
- Fire alarm systems
 - Activation/Initiation
 - Smoke detectors
 - Sprinklers
 - Heat detectors
 - Manual pull stations
- Alarm Notification
 - Local only (just sounds in the building) – General or Zoned
 - Remote – Central station
- Communications
 - Voice paging system
 - Telephone
- Emergency power
- Lights
- Other life safety systems
- Elevators
 - Normal mode
 - Emergency mode
- Fire protection equipment
 - Sprinkler systems
 - Standpipes
 - Fire pump
 - Fire department connections
- Fire extinguishers
- Special extinguishment systems (cooking, computer/electronic equipment)
- Smoke control
- Tempered glass windows
- HVAC system
- Shaft/Stairwell pressurization
- Fire doors
- Exit pathways
- Automatic door locks
- Automatic closing doors
- Exit stairwells
- Utilities and shut-off (identify locations)
 - Natural gas
 - Electrical
 - Water

Fire Drills

- Fire drills should be treated as if a real emergency exists.
- A logbook, indicating the date, times and section of the building in which the drill was conducted, should be kept.
- If your building fire alarm is monitored, notify the monitoring company of the drill immediately prior to its occurrence so that they do not send the fire department.
- Fire drills should be pre-announced to all employees.
- Elevators are never to be used during evacuation.
- Critique your drill to see if your building Emergency Response Team responded appropriately to the fire.

Reporting Emergencies

- Post all phones with the local Fire Department's emergency number and the building's address. In Durango and La Plata County, call 9-1-1 for fire, police, or medical aid.
- If the building manager wants to be notified, the appropriate number should also be listed on or near the phone.
- Follow proper procedure to notify the Emergency Response Team. They will assist in first aid if qualified in a medical emergency.
- Send someone to the front entrance of the building to direct emergency crews to the patient if it is a medical emergency.
- Building occupants will need to know the following information when calling 911:
 - Where is your emergency?
 - What is the phone number you are calling from?
 - What is the problem, tell me exactly what happened?
 - The caller should never hang up on 9-1-1 unless told to do so by the 9-1-1 operator.
- If you are trapped, put as much distance between you and the fire as possible. Also, close the doors between you and the fire. Dial 9-1-1 and let them know your exact location. Go to a window and become noticeable.

Fire Alarm Response Procedures

1. Treat every alarm as an emergency.
2. Your Fire Safety Marshal proceeds to the fire alarm panel. Immediately upon alarm, initial evacuation begins.
3. Notify the fire department using 9-1-1 even if you have an alarm system that is monitored.
4. If available, your building Emergency Response Team may investigate to determine the location of the fire, and make steps to extinguish it, if possible SAFELY.
5. When the fire department arrives, the officer in charge takes command of the scene.
6. Prior to the arrival of the fire department, if the building Emergency Response Team determines the alarm is false, call 9-1-1 and relay that information to the 9-1-1 operator.
7. Re-assembly and accountability - A predetermined point outside of the building should be your safe meeting place for all occupants in case of a building evacuation in an emergency situation. If someone is missing, notify the fire department upon arrival. The re-assembly point should be a safe distance from the building; and you should have a sheltered location in case of inclement weather.

Medical Emergencies

1. Call 9-1-1 and then notify the Emergency Response Team to let them know of the emergency.
2. Safety team members will assist in first aid if qualified.
3. Make sure the front desk, or someone at the front entrance, knows of the emergency and can direct the fire department to the patient.
4. Follow the 9-1-1 operator's directions.

Bomb Threat

1. Call 9-1-1.

2. Call security or building management.

3. The person receiving the call should:

- Keep a calm voice
- Never transfer the call
- Treat the call like any normal order of business
- Take notes:
 - Time of call
 - Male or female
 - Exact words or statements
 - Tone of voice
 - Is the voice familiar
 - Any distinct background noise
 - Time call was terminated

4. Fire/Life Safety Marshal will take charge

- Make decision to evacuate a safe distance away from the building
- Check common areas and evacuation routes
- Look for something that doesn't belong
- If a suspicious object is found – do NOT touch it
- Leave all doors open when evacuating

Winter Storm Procedures

- Your business should have a "report to work phone number" that the employees can call on inclement weather day.
- Take some time to stock your "72-Hour Kit". *See page 12, " Major Disaster Preparedness."
- Discuss what to do if you have a power outage at your business.
- Stay inside if instructed to do so by your Fire and Life Safety Team or the local Fire Department.
- Eat and drink. The body needs to be replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration.
- If using alternative heat appliances, use fire safeguards and properly ventilate.
- If the business loses its heat source, close off unneeded rooms.
- Keep the walkways and parking lots free from snow and ice.
- Accumulations of snow can knock down trees and power lines. Travel home only if it is safe to do so.

Employee Responsibilities

- All employees should know two ways out of their work area, be able to recognize the sound of the fire alarms, location of the nearest fire extinguisher and the manual fire alarm, and proper response in case of fire.
- Know when, and when NOT, to use a portable fire extinguisher:
- Never fight a fire larger than a wastepaper basket
- Never allow the fire to be between you and your exit path
- Always pull the fire alarm and call 9-1-1 PRIOR to fighting any fire
- The key to proper use of a fire extinguisher is the acronym P-A-S-S:
 - Pull the pin
 - Aim at the BASE of the fire
 - Squeeze the handle
 - Sweep back and forth
- Know how to locate the exit doors – even when the building is dark – you should practice by counting the doors to the exit before there is an emergency. Your business should have exit illumination and exit signs posted according to fire code.

Employer/Management Responsibilities

- Each employee should be trained in identification and proper correction of fire hazards common to this type occupancy.
- Every employee should be familiar with the building's Emergency Operations Plan.
- All employees should have a working knowledge of all the building's safety systems and equipment. This should include an annual class on how and when to use the portable fire extinguisher.
- Insure all fire safety systems and equipment is in proper working status through normal testing and maintenance.
- Maintain a list of all handicapped occupants and where they are located.
- Conduct pre-scheduled and pre-announced fire drills not less than twice a year.
- Insure that the emergency drills cover most types of emergencies.
- The time and location of each subsequent drill should be altered to insure that employees on different working schedules get the opportunity to experience an emergency drill.

Incident Report Management

- Every business should keep a record of emergencies and incidents that take place at their facility.
- An incident report should include the below information:
 - date and time of the incident
 - location
 - name of injured or sick; age, and sex
 - type of incident: fire, medical , hazardous materials, or other
 - situation found upon arrival
 - list who responded from the Emergency Response Team
 - was the fire department called (was 911 activated)
 - if the situation was a medical emergency, was the patient transported
 - report filled out by whom
 - time cleared from incident
- All incident reports should be kept on file.

Prevention Education

When a fire strikes these are key to remember:

- Pull the fire alarm.
- Ensure the fire department has been (or will be) notified.
- Leave the area quickly, closing doors as you leave. This will help contain the fire, heat, and smoke.
- Crawl low under smoke – heat and smoke rise, leaving cleaner air between 12 to 24 inches above the floor.
- Test closed doors with the back of your hand before you open them.
- Common safety hazards – most fires can be prevented by eliminating a few safety hazards found in the workplace:
- Smoking – the number one cause of fires in the workplace
 - Smoke only in approved areas.
 - Use large, non-tip ashtrays.
 - Never empty ashtrays into wastepaper baskets.
- Electrical hazards
- Replace any electrical cords that are cracked or broken.
- Never run extension cords across doorways or in areas where they may be walked on.
- Avoid plugging more than one extension into an electrical outlet.
- Do not pinch electrical cords under or behind furniture.
- Avoid the use of adapters that allow the use of grounded equipment (3 wire) to be plugged into a non-grounded (2 wire) outlet.
- Appliances and equipment
 - Leave space for air to circulate around heaters and other heat-producing equipment. Designate 2 employees to ensure that all appliances are unplugged or turned off.
- Housekeeping
- Keep exits, hallways, storage areas, and stairways free from waste paper, empty boxes, dirty rags, and other fire hazards.

Major Disaster Preparedness

- Emergency Management covers four basic phases---mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Call the Office of Emergency Management at (970) 382-6274 for more information on disaster mitigation and preparedness.
- If an earthquake, hurricane, winter storm or other disaster ever strikes your community, you might not have access to food, water and electricity for days, or even weeks. By taking a little time now to store the following supplies in your "72-Hour Kit", you can provide for your business:
 - At least a three-day supply of food and water, and store it in a handy place. Choose foods that are easy to carry, nutritious and ready-to-eat.
 - Medical supplies and first-aid manual
 - Hygiene supplies
 - Portable radio, flashlights and extra batteries
 - Shovel and other useful tools
 - Money and matches in a waterproof container
 - Fire extinguisher
 - Blanket and extra clothing
 - Small children and elderly person's needs (if applicable)
- Every business needs to plan for what might happen. Not only should your building's Fire/Life Safety Team sit down and talk about the following, but also your family:
 - What types of disasters might happen – tornado, flood, wildfire, etc.
 - What you should do to prepare for a disaster.
 - What to do if you are asked to evacuate.
 - Where to meet outside your business, home or neighborhood if you must evacuate.
 - Develop an emergency communication plan. This is in case family members are separated from one another. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.