



TOP COMPLIANCE (Pty) Ltd

Your Business' Safety Is Our Concern

QSE B-BBEE - Level Four

www.topcompliance.co.za

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Contact details:

Training, Audits and Retail:

Pat: 082 442 8521 (08h00 – 16h30)

p.wessels@topcompliance.co.za

Website: www.topcompliance.co.za

Emergency preparedness in the workplace

An emergency poses an immediate risk of significant harm to health, life, property or the environment. Preparing for emergencies is an important part of your workplace health and safety program and is a legal requirement.

Tragically most workplaces have been caught off guard with emergencies and disasters in the past few years. Did anyone in January 2020 have plans for a disease outbreak in the workplace (epidemic or pandemic)? Does your child's school have an epidemic risk assessment, policy or procedures for the outbreak of meningitis? Is any company prepared for civil unrest or arson in their area as seen last year in some parts of SA? Is any company prepared for severe weather conditions: including floods, sinkholes, heatwaves? The safety committee and the employees need to be involved in a comprehensive risk assessment and then draft an emergency plan with contingency procedures that are annually checked and updated to prepare for any possible eventuality.

Possible disasters and emergencies that may require evacuation:

- Aircraft disaster,
- Bomb explosion,
- Bomb threat,
- Chemical spills,
- Civil disturbances,
- Explosions,
- Fire,
- Floods,
- Poisoning,
- Pollution and gasses,
- Radiological accidents,
- Sink hole,
- Toxic gas releases,
- Weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological and chemical warfare) and
- Workplace violence resulting in bodily harm and trauma.

Possible disasters and emergencies that may require lockdown or duress procedures:

- Armed robbery,
- Disease outbreak and epidemic,
- Extreme weather,
- Hostage drama,
- Irrational behaviour and gun fire,
- Labour unrest,
- Plagues: Bees, locusts etc. and
- Riots.

Why prepare for workplace emergencies?

- It is a legal requirement.
- To ensure that employees and responders are not unnecessarily placed at risk or harmed.
- Better assist with any possible life-threatening situations.
- Reduce the risk of damage to the environment, equipment, machinery, tools, etc.
- Reduce downtime and loss of production.

The elements of a workplace emergency action plan

- **Prevention:** A risk assessment to be completed to determine the possible risks specific to the workplace site. Implement the policies and procedures to minimise the occurrence of emergencies
- **Preparation:** Training of staff regarding first aid, firefighting and prevention, emergency planning. Implement and practice the procedures to make sure your organisation is ready to effectively respond. Obtain the required equipment as is required.
- **Response:** The correct action to be taken when an emergency situation occurs. Practice drills a minimum of annually and correct any identified weaknesses of the emergency action plan.
- **Recovery:** Develop and implement a plan of action to recover from the identified risk your organisation may encounter with the goal to return to normal business operations.

What your workplaces' emergency action plan needs to cover?

- Scope and outline potential emergencies specific to the site.
- Different alarm tones for the different emergencies (lockdown / duress or evacuate) and other methods of initiating a response.
- Site-specific response procedures (lockdown / duress or evacuate).
- Command structure, roles and responsibilities: Who will manage the lockdown / duress or evacuate, first aiders, firefighters, security, colleague assistant, crowd control, triage, media liaison etc.
- How to implement emergency shutting down procedures of power, process lines, pipelines, chemical production etc.
- Evacuation and assembly procedures to account for all employees and guests to the company. The next of kin details need to be available to persons managing the emergency scene.
- Communication systems and protocols.
- Emergency contact numbers to be readily available.
- Resource lists to assist with the recovery plan.

An employer is legally required to inform and train all employees regarding emergency preparedness.

- How to identify two types of emergencies - lockdown / duress or evacuate.
- How to respond if you encounter a potentially dangerous situation. E.g.: Security guard maintaining access control identifies a risk. Receptionist held at gun point.

- How to safely respond when an emergency alarm is activated.

Evacuation

Prompt evacuation of employees requires a warning system that can be heard throughout the building. Test your alarm system to determine if it can be heard by all employees. If there is no alarm system, use a public address system, air horns or other means to warn everyone to evacuate. Sound the evacuation signal during planned drills so employees are familiar with the sound.

Make sure that there are sufficient exits available at all times.

- Check to see that there are at least two exits from hazardous areas on every floor of every building.
- Walk around the building and verify that exits are marked with exit signs and there is sufficient lighting so people can safely walk to an exit. If you find anything that blocks an exit, have it removed.
- Enter every stairwell, walk down the stairs, and open the exit door to the outside. Continue walking until you reach the assembly point which is a safe place away from the building.

Appoint an evacuation team leader and assign employees to direct evacuation of the building. Assign at least one person to each floor to act as a “evacuation marshal” to direct employees to the nearest safe exit. Assign a backup in case the evacuation marshal is not available or if the size of the floor is very large. Ask employees if they would need any special assistance evacuating. Assign a “buddy” or a colleague assistant to assist persons with disabilities during an emergency.

Have a list of employees and maintain a visitor log at the front desk, reception area or main office area. Assign someone to take the lists to the assembly area when the building is evacuated. Use the lists to account for everyone and inform the fire department whether everyone has been accounted for. A fire, chemical spill or other hazard may block an exit, so make sure the evacuation team can direct employees to an alternate safe exit.

Lockdown / duress

An act of violence in the workplace could occur without warning. If loud “pops” are heard and gunfire is suspected, every employee should know to hide and remain silent. They should seek refuge in a room, close and lock the door, and barricade the door if it can be done quickly and safely. They should be trained to hide under a desk, in the corner of a room and away from the door or windows. Multiple people should be trained to broadcast a lockdown warning from a safe location.

Developing the emergency action plan

Developing an emergency action plan begins with an understanding of what can happen. Review your risk assessment. Assess what resources are available for incident management. Consider internal and external resources including municipal emergency services and contractors. Municipal emergency services include fire and ambulance departments and the police that may also provide rescue, hazardous materials and emergency medical services. If not provided by your local fire department, these services may be provided by a private contractor.

Document all the available resources. Determine whether external resources have the information they would need to handle an emergency. If not, determine what information is required and document that information in your plan.

Warning, notifications, and communications

Plans should define the most appropriate protective action for each hazard to ensure the safety of employees and others within the building. Determine how you will warn building occupants to take protective action. Develop protocols and procedures to alert first responders including municipal emergency services, trained employees and management. Identify how you will communicate with management and employees during and following an emergency.

Roles and responsibilities for building owners and facility managers

Assign personnel the responsibility of controlling access to the emergency scene and for keeping people away from unsafe areas. Others should be familiar with the locations and functions of controls for building utility, life safety and protection systems. These systems include ventilation, electrical, water and sanitary systems; emergency power supplies; detection, alarm, communication and warning systems; fire suppression systems; pollution control and containment systems; and security and surveillance systems. Personnel should be assigned to operate or supervise these systems if they are on-site.

Site and facility plans and information

Public emergency services have limited knowledge about your facility and its hazards. Therefore, it is important to document information about your facility. That information is vital to ensure emergency responders can safely stabilise an incident that may occur. Documentation of building systems may also prove valuable when a utility system fails—such as when a water pipe breaks, and no one knows how to shut off the water.

Compile a site-plan and plans for each floor of each building. Plans should show the layout of access roads, parking areas, buildings on the property, building entrances, the locations of emergency equipment and the locations of controls for building utility and protection systems. Instructions for operating all systems and equipment should be accessible to emergency responders.

Provide a copy of the plan to the public emergency services that would respond to your facility and others with responsibility for building management and security. Store the plan with other emergency planning information such as chemical Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).

Training and exercises

Train personnel so they are familiar with detection, alarm, communications, warning and protection systems. Review plans with staff to ensure they are familiar with their role and can carry out assigned responsibilities. Conduct evacuation and lockdown / duress drills so employees will recognise the sound used to warn them and they will know what to do. Facilitate exercises to practice the plan, familiarise personnel with the plan and identify any gaps or deficiencies in the plan.

Most important is to plan ahead and consider the worst-case scenarios.

For more information on the:

- [Drafting of your company's site-specific emergency action plans.](#)
- First aid [US 119567 - Perform basic life support and first aid procedures](#)
- Firefighting [Basic firefighting \(Fire marshal\)](#)
- Firefighting and emergency action planning [Basic firefighting with emergency action planning \(Fire & Evacuation marshal\)](#)
- Health and safety rep training as per legal requirement [OHS Act & SHERQ representative – Legal Liability](#)

<https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/osha3088.pdf>
https://www.ccohs.ca/products/posters/longdesc/emerg_prep.html
<https://www.ready.gov/business/implementation/emergency>

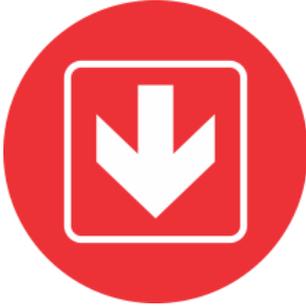
Some of our training courses can be done through our virtual classroom.

Certain types of Risk Assessments and audits will be done by means of virtual site visits using various means of technology to virtually visit the site.

For more information please contact – info@topcompliance.co.za

<https://www.topcompliance.co.za/index.php/products>



			
Medical equipment	SANS Signage	Legal posters	Personal Protective Equipment

Courses offered by Top Compliance (Pty) Ltd

<https://www.topcompliance.co.za/index.php/skills-development-head/training-calendar>

ONSITE TRAINING			
First Aid Courses:			Accreditation
NEW level 1 – US 119567 - Perform basic life support and first aid procedures.	2 days		DEL
NEW level 2 – US 120496 - Provide risk-based primary emergency care/first aid in the workplace.	3 days		DEL
NEW level 3 – US 376480 - Provide first aid as an advanced first responder	3 days		DEL
First aid: Level 1	2 days		No longer recognised
First aid: Level 2	3 days		No longer recognised
First aid: Level 3	3 days		No longer recognised
First aid: Level 1 & 2	3 days		No longer recognised
First aid: Level 2 & 3	3 days		No longer recognised

First aid: Level 1, 2 & 3	5 days	No longer recognised
Child and infant CPR & choking	6 hours	
Adult CPR & choking	6 hours	
Adult CPR & choking and AED	1 day	
Occupational Health and Safety Courses		
OHS Act & SHERQ representative – Legal Liability	1 day	
The Occupational Health and Safety Act & responsibilities of management – Legal Liability	1 day	
Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment	1 day	
Safety representative course specific for COVID-19 in terms of the OHS Act and Regulation for Hazardous Biological Agents	6 hours	
Food facility health & safety course in terms of R364	6 hours	
Fire Fighting and Prevention Courses		
Basic firefighting (Fire marshal)	6 hours	
Basic firefighting with emergency action planning (Fire & Evacuation marshal)	1 day	

ONLINE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM	
Occupational Health and Safety Courses	
Safety representative course specific for COVID-19 in terms of the OHS Act and Regulation for Hazardous Biological Agents	07h45 – 11h00
OHS Act & SHERQ representative – Legal Liability	07h45 – 16h00
The Occupational Health and Safety Act & responsibilities of management – Legal Liability	07h45 – 16h00
Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment	07h45 – 15h00
Food facility health & safety course in terms of R364	07h45 – 14h00
Fire Fighting and Prevention Courses	
Basic firefighting (Fire Marshal)	07h45 – 13h00
Basic firefighting with emergency action planning (Fire and Evacuation marshal)	07h45 – 15h00