

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANNING

(For assistance, please contact EHS at (402) 472-4925, or visit our web site at <http://ehs.unl.edu/>)

Pre-planning will minimize adverse effects of emergencies that require building evacuation, particularly fires and explosions. This SOP provides guidance related to pre-planning, training, and evacuation drills. The information contained in this SOP was developed with assistance and guidance provided by the Nebraska State Fire Marshal's Office and is based on the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101, Life Safety Code (applicable to all UNL buildings) and Standard 45, Fire Protection for Laboratories Using Chemicals.

PRE-PLANNING

General Considerations

- A workplace must have at least two permanent exit routes to permit prompt evacuation of occupants during an emergency, and egress routes must be maintained during building construction, repairs, or alterations.
- Exit routes must be located as far away as practical from each other in case one is blocked by fire or smoke.
- Exit doors must permit unimpeded passage from the inside.
- Exit routes must be free of explosives, flammable/combustible furnishings, and decorations.
- Exit routes should not require employees to travel toward or through high-hazard areas.
- Exit routes must not be obstructed by materials, equipment, locked doors, or dead-end corridors.
- Exit signs must never be obscured by decorations or signs.
- Doors or passages along an egress route that could be mistaken for an exit should be marked or labeled, such as "Storage" or "Closet."
- Doors to hazardous locations (i.e., science laboratories, shops, etc.) must be posted with emergency and hazard information. See EHS SOP **Door Posting for Potentially Hazardous Locations**.

Gathering Locations

- Following evacuation, building occupants should convene at the predetermined gathering location. An alternate location should also be predetermined in the event that the primary location is not safe (i.e., smoke, vapors, etc. are blowing toward the gathering location). Designated gathering locations should be at least 100 feet from the building, but may need to be extended further based on the severity of the hazard.

- To the extent possible, account for all building occupants following evacuation and notify on-site emergency responders of persons that are not accounted for. Generally, employees should gather and stay with their supervisors; and supervisors should conduct a head count and report missing persons.

Returning to the Building

- Occupants are not to return to the building until given permission to do so by the Incident Commander (generally the Lincoln Fire Department) or other on-site emergency response authority (i.e., UNL Police).

Written Emergency Plans

In addition to the requirements discussed above, certain areas on campus pose increased hazard because of the presence/use of flammable/combustible chemicals or open flames/hot processes. Science laboratories and shops generally fall into this category. These types of hazardous locations are required to maintain a written building specific emergency response plan, and update as necessary to remain current. The plan should contain the following information:

- General emergency procedures applicable to UNL. These procedures are printed in the orange pages of the Centrex. UNL's emergency planning and preparedness web site (<http://emergency.unl.edu/>) provides a wealth of information.
- Description of the type of emergency equipment available, its location, and a brief description of applicable testing or maintenance programs.
- Description, location, and approximate quantities of chemicals and other hazards (i.e., biological agents, lasers, radioactive materials, etc.) within the building (or the location where this information is readily available- i.e., copies of door postings for all hazardous rooms located in building lockbox or available from UNLPD, etc.).
- Designated evacuation route maps and gathering locations, which should also be posted at strategic locations within the building. These maps should also include designated safe havens for mobility-impaired persons.
- Description of the building alarm system, method of activation, and conditions under which the alarm should be activated to initiate evacuation.
- Description of actions to be taken by personnel in addition to evacuation (e.g., turn off flames and other ignition sources).
- Instructions on procedures to follow in case of clothing fire (e.g., if immediately available, extinguish flame with safety shower, otherwise, immediately drop to the floor and roll). In case of ignition of another person's clothing, knock that person to the floor and roll that person around to smother the flames.

Training

Life Safety and Fire Protection Codes require that employees receive instruction in emergency evacuation plans and procedures. Instruction can be achieved by participation in the EHS Emergency Response and Fire Safety training (classroom or web based), with supplemental building-specific instruction related to evacuation routes,

signals, designated gathering locations, etc. provided by the employee's supervisor. This instruction should occur immediately upon hire and reviewed on a periodic basis. EHS recommends annually or more frequently if changes to evacuation procedures are made. If the employee is assigned to a building with hazardous locations, training should include review of the written building-specific emergency response plan. EHS also recommends that employees in hazardous locations receive fire extinguisher training.

Drills

Life Safety and Fire Protection Codes require that employees participate in periodic drills. Drills should be held at least annually, which is the same frequency that the alarm systems are tested by UNL Facilities Management and Planning-Maintenance Division.

For ease, EHS suggests that departments coordinate drills to coincide with annual fire alarm testing conducted by Facilities Management and Planning (FMP), which is scheduled in advance. This is a perfect opportunity to practice evacuation plans and procedures. If a department elects to schedule drills at another time, advance coordination with FMP to activate alarms will be required. Call the FMP Service Desk to schedule drills.