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1. Introduction

Planning to provide for the safe and timely evacuation of staff in the event of an emergency is essential for all workplaces. The complexity of emergency response plans range considerably, depending on such factors as the location, whether a fire safety plan is required and the type of emergencies anticipated.

In all instances, employees need to know the provisions of their workplace plan and what action they should take if an emergency arises.

This guide will help those involved in implementing the building owner’s fire safety plan (e.g., fire wardens) and those responsible for developing and implementing other provisions of a workplace emergency response plan (e.g., Building Committees, Emergency Management Committees). It does not present a detailed methodology for developing emergency response plans, but outlines best practices for the safety of building occupants while allowing for flexibility to meet legislative requirements in various situations.

The Ontario Fire Code requires ministries to develop emergency evacuation plans in buildings where the Code requires a formally approved Fire Safety Plan. Refer to Ontario Fire Code, Part 2, Section 2.8 which defines which buildings require a prepared, approved and implemented Fire Safety Plan. The Code makes this determination based on two main factors: the occupancy type (the use or intended use of the building) and the occupant load (the number of persons for which the building is designed).

Generally, buildings that are under four stories in height (including below-grade levels) with no residential component do not require an approved Fire Safety Plan. It is important to consult the Ontario Fire Code to make this determination. An emergency coordinator and Building Committee is a good precaution although not required for small leased or owned buildings, where the Fire Code does not require an approved Fire Safety Plan.

As the Building Lead, senior management of the largest occupying ministry is responsible for developing an emergency response plan with the building owner/property manager and the other ministries. The Building Committee is responsible for creating and maintaining an emergency response plan.
2. Emergency Evacuation Plans

Emergency evacuation planning should be customized to meet the needs of each location and should make provisions for various emergency situations which may reasonably be expected to occur. Consider the size of your site, the number of occupants, what resources are available, any potential hazards, the existence of fire safety systems and what situations may warrant assistance from security personnel or local police.

Cooperation and understanding between building owners, senior management of occupant ministries and participating employees is critical to ensure prompt and intelligent action in an emergency.

3. Persons with Disabilities – AODA IASR Requirements

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) required organizations to ensure employees with disabilities are provided with the information they require in case of an emergency as of January 1, 2012. The Occupational Health and Safety Act states that it is management’s responsibility to provide a safe working environment for all staff.

Management must provide individualized emergency response information and assistance as required, once becoming aware of an accommodation need because of an employee’s temporary or permanent disability. Even if the employee has not self-identified the need for accommodation, a manager may be aware that an employee with a temporary disability might need assistance to evacuate safely. The employee may not know that he should approach the employer or manager to proactively develop an emergency response plan to facilitate personal safety during a fire, flood, earthquake, hazardous material incident, power outage, or security incident.

Some examples of how employees with different disabilities may be affected during an emergency situation:

- A person with a visual disability may have difficulty identifying escape routes, instructions, directions, objects or hazards. This will increase their evacuation time.
- A person with a mobility disability may need assistance to exit the worksite, use stairs or open doors.
• Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals may be unable to hear or react to emergency warning systems or verbal instructions.

• A person with a speech disability may be unable to communicate during an emergency because of difficulty with voice strength, articulation, language expression or total loss of speech.

• A person with a mental disability that affects thinking may encounter difficulty understanding or following emergency instructions.

• A person with a respiratory disability may have difficulty with walking long distances or walking down an enclosed stairwell. Smoke, fumes, chemicals and dust could aggravate this condition.

Managers may consider a few options to make employees aware that individualized emergency response information is available:

• at a staff meeting
• via a memo to staff (Appendix A is a sample memo that managers can send to their staff to ask whether anyone needs evacuation assistance)
• during new employee orientation
• after an emergency drill, ask or survey staff whether accommodations are needed.

The individualized workplace emergency response plan (Appendix B) must be developed jointly with the employee who has a disability. If the employee needs assistance during a workplace emergency, the employer may share the individualized emergency response plan with a designated assistant (volunteer) and others responsible for evacuation planning, provided the employee consents. It is important to maintain strict confidentiality of medical information in this plan, as would be done with an employment accommodation plan.

Managers and employees should jointly review and update the individualized workplace emergency response plan when the employee’s job duties, overall health status or work location change.

The emergency evacuation planning subsection of the Occupational Health and Safety Policy mandates the establishment of procedures for the evacuation of all government workplaces, whether owned or leased. Employees with disabilities are often best able to suggest the most appropriate way to meet their needs while respecting their dignity.

The Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy requires that managers work jointly with employees who disclose a temporary or permanent disability to develop an individualized employment accommodation plan and update it as job requirements and health circumstances change. Extensive guidelines, checklists, template forms, and many
other useful resources can be downloaded from the [OPS Wellness site under Employment Accommodation and Return to Work](#).

**AODA legislation**

### 4. Responsibilities

**Ministry of Infrastructure (MOI) and MOI Realty Agent**

- Works with the building occupants to jointly manage Fire Safety Plan requirements for government buildings through the property management vendor.
- Files for approval and works with the Building Committee to implement and maintain fire safety plans for Ministry of Infrastructure-owned buildings through the property management vendor.
- Ensures that evacuation plans for their building are updated and that fire drill testing occurs as required by the *Ontario Fire Code* through the property management vendor.
- Provides the Building Committee with a copy of the approved fire safety plan.
- Acts as a resource to, and liaises with the Building Committees.
- Provides services for capital and accommodation projects such as reconfiguration and security enhancements at the request of the tenant.
- Ensures that exterior spaces, entrances etc. are signed properly and in compliance with the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*.
- Acts as liaison/contact with building owners at leased facilities to ensure that owner responsibilities for various applicable regulations and legislation are adhered to as they relate to OPS-occupied space and used space.

**Ministry Facilities Management**

- Identifies locations that require approved fire safety plans and alerts Building Leads.
- Identifies the ministry with the most employees in that location and advises appropriate deputy heads of their Building Lead role.
- Ensures that OPS-occupied interior spaces are in compliance with the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* and Regulations, *Ontario Fire Code* and health and safety legislation, together with ministry management.
Building Committee

The Building Committee is a multi-ministry committee which provides an effective forum for addressing issues of physical security and evacuations of OPS buildings, tenants, stakeholders, clients and assets/information. Non-ministry building occupants, building security services, Infrastructure Ontario and property management and bargaining agents may be invited to participate where appropriate.

- Ensures evacuation drills take place, conducts reviews after drills and reports back to managers on performance and make required changes to the building evacuation plan.
- Maintains up-to-date lists of emergency evacuation supervisory staff (Chief Evacuation Warden and Floor Wardens) appointed by occupant ministries.
- Develops, updates, implements and maintains a building fire safety plan in partnership with the Ministry of Infrastructure Realty Agent and building owner.
- Retains a copy of the building’s approved fire safety plan.
- Retains a copy of the hazardous material inventory and material safety data sheets for all hazardous materials used or stored in the building.
- Ensures all occupant ministries are informed of emergency evacuation plans and participates in planning evacuation procedures and communications.
- Liaises with the building owner, Ministry of Infrastructure Realty Agent and Ministry Facilities Management about emergency evacuation issues for resolution.
- Provides orientation in emergency evacuation to onsite supervisory staff (i.e., Chief Evacuation Warden, Floor Wardens).
- Identifies the need for, develops and communicates procedures for emergencies other than fire such as bomb threats, chemical spills, gas leak, power malfunction, hostage-taking incidents, suspicious packages/envelopes, etc.

Building Lead

The Building Lead Ministry is the ministry or Commission public body with the most employees working in the building and with a management presence in the building, unless agreed otherwise by the ministry tenants. The Building Lead Ministry assigns a Building Lead who:

- Advise their deputy heads and liaise with MOI’s Realty Agent/property management vendor to ensure completion of the Fire Safety Plan.
- Chairs the local Building Committee, ensuring regular meetings of fire wardens.
- Ensures that the building/facility has a Chief Evacuation/Fire Warden and Floor Wardens and that they are prepared for an evacuation.
• Conducts periodic workplace checks to ensure Smoke-Free Ontario Act compliance in government-owned properties.

• Maintains and updates the site-specific emergency information, with assistance from the Building Committee (e.g., lists of floor wardens) and advises the Ministry Emergency Management Coordinators of any changes.

• Maintains equipment inventory (i.e., vests, flashlights, etc.).

• Maintains a confidential list of employees requiring evacuation assistance, sharing the list with the back-up lead and providing it to emergency services (i.e., firefighters) during an evacuation.

• Assists in development of emergency response training courses and maintains training records.

• Liaises with the Ministry Emergency Management Coordinators re: alterations or changes to the life safety systems.

• Stands by to assist the Ministry Emergency Management Committee Chair (if separate committee from the Building Committee), in an emergency situation.

• Reports any emergency situations to the Ministry Emergency Management Coordinators and to Infrastructure Ontario Property Service Line as soon as possible.

• Communicates with external emergency officials, property/building management, property/building owner, on-site security and reps from other ministries to obtain information relevant to the emergency situation.

• Conducts an immediate debrief of the incident with the Chief Evacuation Warden, Floor Wardens and local Joint Health and Safety Committee Co-Chairs and MOI Realty Agent, if the building is evacuated.

**Chief Evacuation/Fire Warden**

• Performs evacuation duties as outlined in the ministry/building emergency procedures manual and building’s fire safety plan.

• Participates as a member of the Building Committee.

• Participates in evacuation/fire drills within their building as outlined in the building safety plan and in accordance with the Ontario Fire Code, in consultation with Facilities Management, property management, security, and Building Lead.

• Provides an evacuation status update to the Building Lead during an evacuation.

• Communicates the all-clear message to advise occupants when to return to the building or engage continuity of operations plans if unable to return to the building.

• Completes an evacuation report after each emergency evacuation and provides copies to all relevant parties including, but not limited to, senior management of all occupant ministries, joint health and safety committees and members of the Building Committee.
Floor Warden

- Notifies Chief Evacuation Warden/Building Lead of his/her absence.
- Acquaints all persons working in the designated zone with exit routes and evacuation procedures.
- Maintains personal warden equipment.
- Always has available the telephone numbers of the Chief Evacuation Warden/Building Lead, Security, and respective managers.
- Maintains a list of floor occupants who may require assistance to evacuate the building.
- Interprets the evacuation signals.
- Collects data on evacuation status, stands by for information updates and organizes required activities (i.e., relocation to safe haven) during an evacuation.
- Reports to the Chief Evacuation Warden/Building Lead the:
  - status of the evacuation,
  - attendance, and
  - location of any employees requiring assistance.
- Liaises with Chief Evacuation Warden and Building Lead re: improvements and/or problems involving the warden system, facilities and training.

Note: Ministries, in addition to selecting persons who are suitable and willing to fulfill the responsibilities, should consider the demands of normal job activities. The Chief Evacuation Warden and Floor Wardens need to be readily available in an emergency. Persons who are frequently absent from the workplace would, therefore, not be suitable.

Employee

- Reports to their supervisor any hazards which may result in an emergency.
- Follow directions from those who are responsible for ensuring a safe and orderly evacuation, in the event of an emergency.

Manager/Supervisor

- Advises employees of the emergency evacuation plan for their workplace and what actions must be taken in an emergency situation as part of orientation to the workplace.
- Escorts and safety evacuates visitors who are not aware of emergency procedures.
5. Additional Resources

Policies

The following policies are posted on the OPS Directives and Policies website.

**Occupational Health and Safety Policy**

**OPS Physical Security Operating Policy**

**Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy**

Guidelines

The First Aid Guidelines is posted on the OPS Wellness site: [First Aid Provision Guideline](#)

Evacuation for Employees with Disabilities

- [Accessibility Standard for Employment – Providing Emergency Response Information for Employees with Disabilities](#)
- [Appendix A: Sample Memo Asking Employees Whether They Need Evacuation Assistance](#)
- [Appendix B: Emergency Evacuation Plan for Employees Who Need Assistance](#)
- [Planning for the Evacuation of Individuals with Disabilities or Health Issues Guidelines for Managers, July 2006](#)
- [Draft Emergency Evacuation Planning Checklist](#), OPS Diversity Office
- [Helping Employees with Disabilities Stay Safe](#), MCSS

Emergency Evacuation Planning Advice

Consult your ministry Facilities Management Branch, Ministry of Infrastructure Realty Agent, or Ministry Security Services if you have questions about evacuation planning.
6. Definitions

**Building Code Act (BCA)** S.O. 1992, c.23: The Act which sets the minimum provisions respecting the safety of buildings with reference to public health, fire protection and structural sufficiency.

**Building Committee:** A multi-ministry committee which provides an effective forum for addressing issues of physical security and evacuations of OPS buildings, tenants, stakeholders, clients and assets/information. Non-ministry building occupants, building security services, Infrastructure Ontario and property management and bargaining agents may be invited to participate where appropriate.

**Building Lead:** The ministry or Commission public body with the most employees headquartered in and with a management presence in the building, unless agreed otherwise by the ministry tenants. The building lead is responsible for coordinating across ministries occupying a single building evacuation planning, building, security planning, and threat risk assessments.

**Emergency Management Coordinator (see Ministry Emergency Management Coordinator)**

**Fire Protection and Prevention Act (FPPA)** S.O. 1997, c.4 regulates fire protection services, inspections, enforcement and employment and labour relations conditions for firefighters.

**Fire Safety Plan:** A fire safety plan that complies with sec. 2.8.2.1. (1) of the Fire Code.

**Ministry Emergency Management Coordinator (MEMC):** An individual officially designated by a ministry who is responsible and accountable for the development and ongoing maintenance of the ministry emergency management and continuity of operations planning program (EMCOOP).

**Ministry Emergency Management Committee:** A ministry committee which assesses emergency situations, which might reasonably be expected to occur; determines the need for additional plans and procedures for the safe evacuation of staff; develops additional plans and protocols to ensure safe egress from the building to an off-site location and to provide for a communications link to the Ministries’ individual Sub-committees; and addresses business continuity strategies. On a long-term basis, the Committee has the continued responsibility for security issues and updating emergency procedures.

**Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)** R.S.O. 1990 c.0.1 and its regulations (i.e., including Industrial Establishments, Health Care and Residential Facilities, Construction Projects, Designated Substances, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) state legislative obligations to protect workers, set out roles and responsibilities for all parties, and outline enforcement and penalties for unsafe working conditions and practices.
**Occupier:** A person who is in physical possession of premises, or a person who has responsibility for, and control over, the condition of premises, the activities conducted on the premises or the persons allowed to enter the premises.

**Occupier’s Liability Act** R.S.O. 1990, c. O.2: legislation specifying that an occupier of premises owes a duty to take such care as in all the circumstances of the case is reasonable to see that persons entering on the premises, and the property brought on the premises by those persons are reasonably safe while on the premises.


**Owner:** has the same meaning as defined in s. 1 of OHSA and “includes a trustee, receiver, mortgagee in possession, tenant, lessee, or occupier of any lands or premises used or to be used as a workplace, and a person who acts for or on behalf of an owner as an agent or delegate.”

**Physical Security Operating Policy:** OPS policy to help protect employees, contractors, clients, visitors, government appointees and Members of the Provincial Parliament in OPS occupied buildings other than the Legislative precinct and ensure government information, services and assets are managed, controlled and protected in a responsible and effective manner.

**Smoke-Free Ontario Act** S.O. 1994, c.10: legislation which prohibits tobacco smoking and the holding of lighted tobacco in enclosed workplaces and enclosed public places.
Appendix A: Sample Memo Asking All Employees Whether They Need Evacuation Assistance

Subject: Need for Emergency Evacuation Assistance

The ministry is committed to ensuring that employees can evacuate safely in the event of an emergency. Please let me know if you believe that you may need assistance of any kind to evacuate the building in an emergency, so that we can develop an evacuation plan that will help you remain safe in a fire or other emergency.

A variety of situations may lead you to require help in an evacuation situation. Some examples, and possible impacts, are listed below.

- Limited mobility, which may make it difficult or impossible to evacuate by stairs. This can be temporary (e.g., injury or surgery) or permanent.
- Hearing impairment, which may require you to be notified when an alarm is sounding.
- Visual impairment, which may require assistance evacuating safely by stairs, or instructions in an alternate format.
- Respiratory condition such as asthma, which may be worsened by smoke or exertion.
- Learning disability, which may require instructions in an alternate format.
- Developmental disability, which may require additional instructions, practice or a “buddy”.
- A heart condition, which may be aggravated by stress, or may make it difficult or impossible to evacuate by stairs.
- Fatigue (including post-chemotherapy or late-stage pregnancy, in some cases) which makes it difficult or risky to climb up or down several floors.
- Susceptibility to anxiety, panic attacks, or other psychological impacts which may be made worse in an emergency.

If you feel there is any permanent or temporary condition which might cause you to need help of any kind, please let me know. I do not need to know the details of your medical condition or disability but I do need to know what kind of help you might require. I will keep your information confidential and only people who are part of the emergency evacuation team will be informed with your consent. Feel free to ask me if you would like further details about who will require this information to protect your safety during an emergency situation.

If you have already identified a need for evacuation assistance but do not have a documented evacuation plan, or if you need to adjust your plan, please let me know.

Thank you.

<Manager’s Name>
Appendix B: Emergency Evacuation Plan for Employees Who Need Assistance

You and your employer/manager should jointly develop an individualized emergency response plan if a need has been identified to provide assistance to you in the event of an emergency. All information in this plan is confidential and will be shared only with people who you have identified below, with your consent. This usually includes the floor or building Fire Warden, Emergency Management Coordinator, and/or Building/Facilities manager or owner. You do not need to provide details of a medical condition or disability, only details of the type of help you may need in an emergency.

Employee Information
Employee name: ________________________________
Department: ________________________________
Telephone: ____________________ Email: ____________________
Cellular number: ____________________

Emergency Contact
Name: ____________________ Relationship: ____________________
Telephone: ____________________ Email: ____________________

Primary Work Location
Building name: ________________________________
Street address: ________________________________
Floor, room number, location on floor: ________________________________
If you need to wait at an elevator for evacuation assistance, and there is more than one elevator or bank of elevators, specify where you wait:

Awareness of Emergency Situation
Employee will be informed of an emergency evacuation by:
Existing alarm system: □
Pager device: □
Visual alarm system: □
Other (specify): ____________________

Assistance Methods:
Indicate types and methods of assistance that will be provided such as transfer procedures, guidance method, assistive devices etc.)

__________________________________________________________________________
Equipment Provided (including means of communication)

Safe Evacuation Routes (identify primary and secondary routes)

Person(s) Designated to Provide Assistance (also specify building/floor Fire Warden, Emergency Management Coordinator, Facilities Manager/Building Owner)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location/Contact Information</th>
<th>Type of Assistance</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Consent to share your emergency response information/plan

I, [employee name] give consent to [name of organization] to share this emergency response information/plan with the people listed above who have been designated to provide assistance to me in the event of a workplace emergency.

Signature: _________________________________  Date: ______________________

Periodic Review and Update of Plan

[Name of organization] and [Employee name] will jointly review this individualized workplace information/plan:
- If I change workplace location within this ministry
- When my overall employment accommodation plan is reviewed (due to changes in job duties or health status)
- When the ministry reviews its general emergency response policies and procedures.

Form completed by manager who developed and will maintain this emergency response plan:

___________________________________________  Date: _____________________
[Manager name]

Form reviewed by: ____________________________  Date: _____________________
[Employee name]
Appendix C: Ontario Fire Code– Measures in a fire safety plan

Emergency response requirements in the event of a fire are specified in the Ontario Fire Code, O.Reg. 213/07 including what should be included in a fire safety plan.

Measures in a fire safety plan

2.8.2.1. (1) A fire safety plan shall include

(a) the emergency procedures to be used in case of fire, including
   (i) sounding the fire alarm,
   (ii) notifying the fire department,
   (iii) instructing occupants on procedures to be followed when the fire alarm sounds,
   (iv) evacuating occupants, including special provisions for persons requiring assistance,
   (v) the procedures for use of elevators, and
   (vi) confining, controlling and extinguishing the fire,

(b) the appointment and organization of designated supervisory staff to carry out fire safety duties,

(c) the training of supervisory staff and instruction of other occupants in their responsibilities for fire safety,

(d) documents, including diagrams, showing the type, location and operation of the building fire emergency systems.

(e) the holding of fire drills,

(f) the control of fire hazards in the building,

(g) the maintenance of building facilities provided for the safety of occupants, and

(h) the provision of alternative measures for the safety of occupants during any shutdown of fire protection equipment and systems or part thereof.

(2) The fire safety plan shall be prepared, approved and implemented in buildings regulated by Article 2.8.1.1.

(3) The fire safety plan shall be kept in the building in an approved location.

(4) The fire safety plan shall be reviewed as often as necessary, but at intervals not greater than 12 months, to ensure that it takes account of changes in the use and other characteristics of the building.