

WASHOE COUNTY EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN POLICY

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

In compliance with 29 CFR 1910.38

Washoe County is dedicated to the protection of employees and the public while at our properties and desires that all departments have established emergency procedures. Emergency Action Plans, are written documents providing information on the actions to be followed by employees in case of an emergency.

Emergencies include, but are not limited to, alarm activations, fires in or in close proximity to buildings, natural disasters, civil disturbances, bomb threats, chemical release, violent/terrorist activity, or any other situation requiring immediate action.

Departments are to develop procedures that are appropriate for their areas and train their employees on their Department Emergency Action Plan.

Departments overseeing inmates or other detainees will have employees who must perform critical operations before evacuating. The department will establish specific procedures for those persons regarding emergency actions and evacuation within their facilities. No other County departments require personnel to remain to operate critical operations before evacuation.

The execution of this Policy shall be the joint responsibility of the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners, the County Manager, Department Heads, and Risk Management.

SECTION 1. RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The Board of County Commissioners is responsible to:

- Provide authorization to the responsible parties to perform actions under this policy

The County Manager is responsible for:

- The leadership of Emergency Action Plans
- Initiating and directing actions to be taken in emergency situations

Department Heads (or designees) are responsible to:

- Oversee development of Department Emergency Action Plans that meet the needs of the department
- Ensure employees are trained on the Emergency Action Plans
- Communicate with Responders, the County Managers Office, Crisis Action Team, and employees
- Request structural evaluations as needed
- Initiate the Continuity of Operations Plan as needed

Employees are responsible to:

- Immediately notify co-workers and Department Heads of emergency situations

- Take appropriate action based on the circumstances and as directed

Risk Management is responsible to:

- Develop and maintain the Washoe County Emergency Action Plan Policy, and updating and distributing as necessary
- Assist departments with Department Emergency Action Plans procedures, training, and drills.

SECTION 2. GENERAL INFORMATION

In order for appropriate emergency actions to successfully take place, emergency and life-saving equipment (fire extinguishers, sensors, alarms, earthquake kits, first aid kits, etc.) and communication devices must be kept in good working condition and with free access to the equipment. Facilities must be maintained so that all areas are clean and orderly and all exit paths are clear without any objects protruding into the exit paths. Employees shall correct or report situations that need correction whenever necessary.

Responders as used within this document, refer to professional Emergency Response personnel (Sheriff, Police, Fire, or other Emergency Operations personnel). Due to a delay between reporting of an emergency and Responders arrival and set up on the scene, Responders may not be able to immediately provide information. As soon as possible, information will be provided to employees through Washoe County management.

In an immediate emergency situation, employees must determine their first actions of whether it is safer to stay within the facility or go outside. Department Heads will make the determination of appropriate action whenever possible. However, in life or death situations, each employee will need to take the initiative and determine the safest action to take. As soon as safely possible employees are to then report their location to their Evacuation Representative or Department Head.

The Department Head, County Manager's Office, Risk Management staff, and Facilities Maintenance staff will rely on Responders direction before notifying employees of other actions. Any of the above may give clearance to personnel to re-enter buildings following an evacuation or to cease Shelter in Place. Responders from law enforcement will clear employees from a Lockdown situation.

SECTION 3. NOTIFICATION OF AN EMERGENCY

Communication of an emergency situation may be done by alarms, verbal notice (overhead paging system, phone, voice, etc.), electronic communication (e-mail, text, etc.) or any combination of the above.

The first important action is to summon Responders by calling 911/9-911 or activate alarms with a direct connection to 911 immediately.

Simultaneously, notification is to be given to others within the work area of the emergency situation. Communication will be as determined on the Department Emergency Action Plans.

As soon as possible a message should be sent to the Crisis Action Team using the Emergency contact on Outlook. The message should advise of the location of the emergency, the situation, the number of persons involved, actions that are being taken, and the main contacts phone numbers. Updates should be provided via email to the Emergency contact as situations change.

Inquiries from the media are to be referred to the Communications and Engagement Team in the Manager's Office without further comment by employees or Department Heads.

Employees are encouraged to register for Code Red to receive messages from the emergency response system about events that are at or near one of the County locations.

BUILDING WITH ALARM SYSTEMS

In the event of an alarm sounding:

- Identify the type of alarm by the audible tone (evacuate, shelter in place, or lockdown) or by the verbal commands given
- Take immediate action as directed under the Department Emergency Action Plan to evacuate, shelter in place, or lockdown

BUILDING WITHOUT ALARM SYSTEMS

For County buildings that are not equipped with alarm systems notification of an emergency situation may be verbal and/or electronic devices.

When an employee discovers a situation requiring emergency action that employee will:

- Immediately call 911/9-911 and notify the Department Head and co-workers
- Take immediate action as directed under the Department Emergency Action Plan to evacuate, shelter in place, or lockdown

SECTION 4. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Some emergencies require evacuation or escape procedures, while in some emergencies, it is safer to remain inside of a building. Actions taken by employees should be for the safety of employees and public within County facilities.

Department Emergency Action Plans may specify additional requirements that are to be implemented in addition to the steps designated below.

FIRE OR STRONG SMELL OF SMOKE IN COUNTY BUILDINGS

If an employee notices a fire or strong smell of smoke within, or immediately adjacent to, a County building, they must immediately notify the fire department and their Department Head/co-workers and notify the Crisis Action Team.

- If the building has an alarm system – activate the closest pull station (which will notify 911 dispatch) and evacuate to their closest safe meeting point

- If the building does not have an alarm system - call 911/9-911, verbally notify all persons in the area, and evacuate to their closest safe meeting point

After making these notifications, employees trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers may attempt to extinguish a fire if it is small.

If employees are not trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers, or the fire is large, they are to close the door to the area where the fire is and initiate an evacuation.

BOMB THREAT AND/OR EXPLOSION

Bomb threats or explosions require special precautions to be taken to protect employees and the public.

Employees who receive a bomb threat are to report it to their Department Head immediately.

The Department Head will:

- Initiate an evacuation of the building - DO NOT use the alarm system*
- Call 911/9-911 and request the bomb squad. The Department head and any person with information regarding a bomb threat are to answer all questions asked by dispatch or bomb squad personnel
- Notify the Crisis Action Team

* On occasion bombs have been tied into alarm systems and detonated when the alarm system is activated.

If there has been an explosion, employees are to be aware of any hazards created by the explosion such as exposed electrical wires, fallen objects, etc. Employees are to look for anything unusual that may indicate additional explosive materials or other hazards while on the way to the meeting area and report any findings to the Department Head, evacuation representative, and/or Responders.

EARTHQUAKE

Employees inside a building are to take action and assist others to:

- DUCK under a sturdy desk or table or crouch near an inside wall
- COVER their heads and eyes and turn away from glass or mirrors that may break
- HOLD onto the desk or table to keep it above them

After shaking has stopped, employees are to evaluate the area, looking for injured persons and for new hazards, and then proceed with following department direction, which may include evacuating via the safest route. Should the inside area be hazardous due to exposed electrical wires or other hazards, and if there is no immediate threat from any other danger, employees may shelter in place until the area can be made safe by Responders.

In case of an earthquake when employees are outside of a building, they are to:

- Stay clear of overhead utility lines, buildings, bridges or other structures
- Proceed to the evacuation meeting site and await instruction

If you are off site from your department when an earthquake strikes, contact your Supervisor for direction.

Department Heads will:

- Call 911/9-911 if there is an immediate threat to life or health
- Make an initial evaluation of structural damage
- Notify the Crisis Action Team of the current situation within the department
- Provide employees direction on further actions to take

EVACUATION

“Evacuation” means that all persons must leave the affected building. After an alarm is sounded, or verbal notification is given to evacuate

Employees will:

- Secure financial instruments (cash, checks, etc.)
- Immediately exit the building via the closest exit route, assisting others as needed
- Not attempt to carry out nonessential equipment or personal belongings
- Not use elevators
- Walk, not run
- Stay calm
- Proceed to the designated evacuation meeting site for their department
- Assist supervisors in accounting for missing personnel
- Remain at the meeting site awaiting further instruction

Each department will designate at least one person from every area for every shift to act as an Evacuation Representative.

Evacuation Representatives will

- Check conference rooms, public rooms or other enclosed spaces to ensure that all persons within their area have evacuated
- Direct and assist a safe and orderly evacuation
- Assist, or arrange for, extra assistance to persons with special needs
- Proceed to the evacuation meeting site and determine if all personnel are accounted for
- Notify the department head of the status of employees (present or missing)

Department Heads will:

- Notify the on-scene Responders if employees are unaccounted for and provide information on where they may possibly be within the building
- Notify the Crisis Action Team

- Provide employees direction on further actions to take

No employees are to return to the building(s) until advised by Facilities, County Manager, Risk Management, Responders, Department Heads or their designees after the determination has been made that re-entry is safe.

SHELTER IN PLACE

"Shelter-in-place" means taking refuge within the facility as danger MAY be in the vicinity of or on County property. In some situations such as a natural disaster, chemical release from a truck, railcar, or other outside source, or a civil disturbance, etc., it is safer to remain within the facility than to be outside and potentially exposed to the hazard.

Employees will:

- Stay inside the building
- Close doors, windows, blinds, shades and curtains
- Proceed to the department designated Shelter in Place location
- If there is potential of a dangerous person entering the building, lock public entry doors
- Be vigilant and report any change in circumstances to the Evacuation Representative or Department Head
- Remain in place awaiting further instruction

Evacuation Representatives will:

- Gather emergency supplies
- Determine if all personnel are accounted for and notify the Department Head of the status of employees (present or missing)
- If there is potential of contamination, secure the area per the department procedures

Department Heads will:

- Call 911/9-911 if there is an immediate threat to life or health
- Notify the Crisis Action Team
- Provide employees direction on further actions to take

LOCKDOWN

"Lockdown" means taking refuge within the facility when there is IMMEDIATE DANGER in the vicinity of or on County property. In situations such as a violent person, it is safer to stay in a locked indoor space than to be outside and exposed to the hazard.

Guidance on emergency actions to take in case of a violent person (Run, Hide, Fight) may be found on the Washoe County Sheriff's Office webpage.

When given direction to lockdown, or upon witnessing an immediate threat, employees are to immediately:

- Call 911/9-911 when safe to do so
- Lock public entry doors (if the threat is outside and not inside the building)

- Go to the closest protected area and lock the internal door(s)
- Lock windows, close blinds, shades, curtains, and move away from the windows
- Barricade the door if possible
- Sit down on the floor
- Remain silent *
- Do not allow anyone into or out of the area
- Remain in the area and await further instruction from law enforcement ONLY

*It is imperative that employees locations are not discovered during lockdown so personal phones should be silenced and voice calls are not allowed. Phone calls to Responders or County Management are to be made by the Department Head only, on a limited basis, and only when safe to do so.

SECTION 5: TRAINING

Utilizing the New Employee Safety Checklist, new employees receive training on their area, exit routes, fire extinguisher and alarm pull station locations, designated evacuation meeting sites, and any department specific communication and emergency procedures. Additionally, employees are to receive this training:

- Initially when the plan is approved,
- When the employee is assigned to a new job or worksite location,
- Whenever an employee's responsibilities or designated actions under the plan change,
- Whenever new equipment, materials, or processes are introduced into the workplace,
- Whenever the layout or design of the facility changes,
- As frequent reminders during safety meetings, and
- Whenever the plan is changed.

The Department Emergency Action Plan material given to employees may contain personal phone numbers of County personnel. Personal phone numbers are to be kept in a safe place, not to be distributed to anyone who does not have a business need to know, and are to be used in the event of an emergency only.

SECTION 6: DRILLS

Drills for Evacuation, Shelter-In-Place and Lockdown will take place as coordinated by the departments and Risk Management, on behalf of the County Manager.

Drills of emergency actions should take place annually at each physical location in which County employees report to work.

Following drills, the effectiveness of the Department Emergency Action Plan will be evaluated. Input from employees regarding the effectiveness of the Department Emergency Action Plan is encouraged so the plans may be updated and improved.