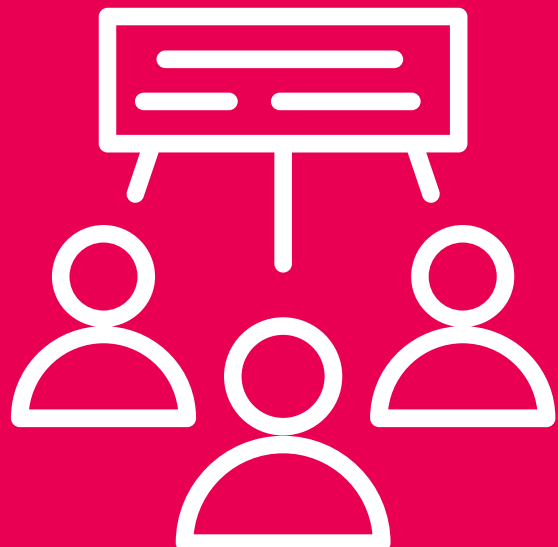
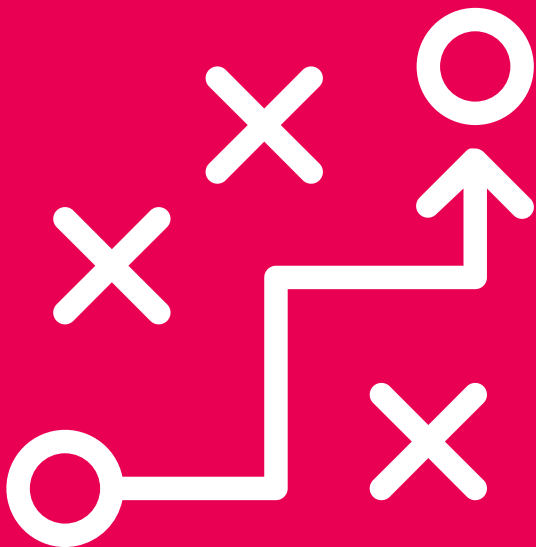
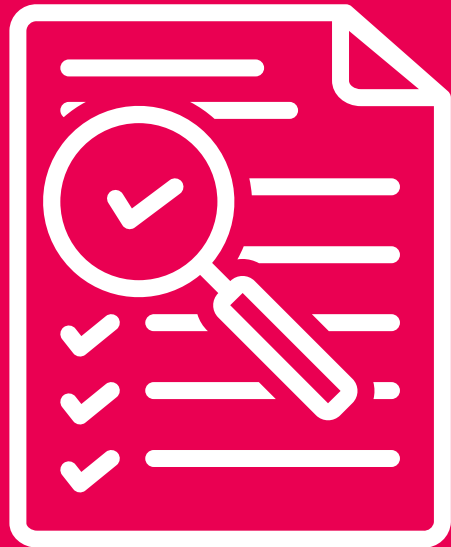


# Emergency Response Planning



# What is emergency response planning

The emergency response plan constitutes a set of written procedures for dealing with emergencies. The goal of emergency response planning is to minimise the impact of an emergency and to facilitate recovery.

To do so, serious work must be done throughout the lifecycle of emergency preparedness. That lifecycle comprises the following steps:

1

**Emergency planning**, an ongoing process aimed at reducing the effect of destruction caused by unexpected situations. Emergency planning usually encompasses:



**a) Planning and prevention.** Focuses on providing protection to limit loss of life and reduce the financial impact of disaster response. Planning, here, includes care, evacuation, and environmental planning, as well as response standards.



**b) Risk assessment** (more below). The identification of high priority and high-vulnerability areas towards which mitigation efforts are directed.



**c) Mitigation.** Comprises actions performed before the disaster, including proactive steps to limit vulnerabilities identified in the risk assessment and address those previously recognised risks to support the disaster response. Mitigation strategies are generally disaster specific.



**d) Preparedness.** Measures taken to prepare for a disaster.



**e) Developing a response team.** Clearly defining leaders, roles, and responsibilities to address key issues in emergency response.



**f) Writing an emergency plan** (more below). Detailing the overall strategy for responding to a disaster once it has occurred. The written emergency response plan is usually directed to specific types of disasters. The plan comprises detailed procedures as well as identifies leaders and lists training schedules for the emergency plan to be successfully implemented when the time comes.

2

**Emergency response**, a time-limited phase focused on executing the contents of the emergency plan as drafted and exercised. Response can encompass facilities as well as a regional and national level planning. The initial concern, however, tends to be fulfilling basic humanitarian needs, such as limiting loss of life. Coordinating efforts across multiple facilities and response actors, particularly when resource demand exceeds capacity, is one of the more difficult aspects of emergency response. Two of the most prolific response tactics are:



**a) Shelter in place**, i.e., establishing a safe location within the confines of a facility or location and remaining in that place; also includes caring for those injured via the resources that are immediately available.



**b) Evacuation**, i.e., leaving a facility or region affected by a disaster. In this scenario, resources may be left in place or transferred as soon as possible.

3

**Salvage and recovery**, this final stage occurs after a determination of the initial response is made, the threat to human life is under control, and efforts are made to begin to return the facility or area to normal operational function. However, in certain scenarios, such as wars and pandemics, salvage and response efforts can last for years.

## Emergency response teams

Who executes emergency response planning throughout the above stages? In many outfits, emergency response planning falls under the purview of the larger emergency management hierarchy whose goal it is to make timely, comprehensive, and effective decisions during emergency events.

In most emergency management structures, including the Incident Command System and Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System, the Incident Commander will sit at the top of this hierarchy. The Incident Commander is the role given final decision-making authority over command and control. The purview of the role also extends to setting up the incident response organisation, as well as activating, escalating, and terminating processes.

Other roles should figure in the command-and-control structure, as well. To be effective, the structure ought to be set up so that that Incident Commander can efficiently delegate authority as dictated by the pace and scale of the incident. Those subordinating roles and responsibilities are likely to cover the following functions (See a diagram below):



Personnel, administration, and finance



Situation awareness and planning



Decision making and implementation  
(i.e., operations)



Logistics



Media and press



Communications and transmission



Liaising



Public information



Safety

The planning section deserves special comment. The head of this section, the Planning Section Chief, collects situation and resources status information, evaluates it, and processes the information for use in developing plans. Other major responsibilities include:

- Collect and manage all incident-relevant operational data
- Supervise preparation of the IAP (Incident Action Plan)
- Provide input to the IC and Operations in preparing the IAP
- Incorporate Traffic, Medical, and Communications Plans and other supporting materials into the IAP
- Conduct and facilitate planning meetings
- Reassign personnel within the ICS organisation
- Compile and display incident status information
- Establish information requirements and reporting schedules for units (e.g., Resources and Situation Units)
- Determine need for specialised resources
- Assemble and disassemble Task Forces and Strike Teams (or law enforcement Resource Teams) not assigned to Operations
- Establish specialised data collection systems as necessary (e.g., weather)
- Assemble information on alternative strategies
- Provide periodic predictions on incident potential
- Report significant changes in incident status
- Oversee preparation of the Demobilisation Plan

## Emergency response tools

What emergency response tools are available to the Planning Section Chief? Well, at the Chief's disposal are Resources, Situation, Documentation, and Demobilisation Units. Each carries out a specific function during the emergency response:

- The Resources Unit maintains statuses of all resources available to Incident Command. They might also provide technical specialists.
- The Situation Unit analyses the situation itself. These analyses not only go up to the Incident Commander but across to the Public Information Officer who broadcasts them out to the public.
- The Documentation Unit handles all log entries recorded during the incident. These logs come in handy during post-incident debriefs; they might even come into play during congressional/parliamentary inquiries.
- The Demobilisation Unit takes care of the last step of the emergency response, i.e., demobilisation and recovery. This unit helps to figure out what will be needed for recovery in the emergency zone.

## Emergency response checklist

Indeed, the work the Planning Section does constitutes a continuous process. That process requires integrating planning and response efforts often at large scale, i.e., encompassing local and national programmes.

For that reason, emergency response checklists serve to complement incident action plans; certain emergency management software platforms come equipped with emergency response checklists out of the box. An example of such a checklist is below:

Emergency Management Checklist: Example					
Element	Documented		Functional Ability Proven		Comments
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Statement of policy on emergency response					
Plan given appropriate authority by highest management level					
Plan is distributed to all that need to know					
Plan establishes the emergency response team					
The authority to declare a full evacuation is designated					
The authority to declare the emergency is "over" is designated					
All response personnel are medically fit to perform their duties					
The following functions have been clearly defined and assigned to individuals:					
- Plan administration					
- Operational control					
- Coordination of support					
- Plan maintenance					
- Regular risk assessment					
- Training					
- Drills and exercises					
- Maintenance of equipment					
- Specific response functions					
- Coordination of off site plans					
Alternates for all key positions exist					
Plan is based on current risk assessment					
Plan provides for annual drills and exercises					
Plan establishes various levels of emergencies with levels of response					

Emergency Management Checklist: Example

Element	Documented		Functional Ability Proven		Comments
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Plan includes basic elements:					
- Evacuation procedures					
- Shutdown procedures					
- Employee roll call procedures					
- Rescue and medical duties					
- Reporting procedures					
- Fire prevention plan					
All types of risks are considered:					
- Natural					
- Man-made					
- Civil disorders					
All hazardous products are listed					
Assessment includes adverse impact to locations that may be off-site					
Comprehensive incident investigation procedures exist					
Good housekeeping procedures exist					
Procedures exist for inspection or testing of critical equipment					
Procedures call for the review for compliance with:					
- Occupational Health and Safety Act for your jurisdiction					
- National Fire Code					
- National Electrical Code					
- Environmental Protection Act					
- Other applicable legal requirements					
Fire protection equipment is inspected per Fire Code					
Contractors are briefed about emergency response plans					
The plan establishes a command post and ensures:					
- Command post locations provide protection from hazards					
- The command post is adequately equipped					
- Provisions have been made for emergency power, light, utilities, etc.					
Plan provides for emergency response training and covers the following:					
- Emergency response training is based on specific hazards and response duties					
- Testing of knowledge and skills is conducted					
- Plan specifies type and frequency of training for each response function					
- Adequate training records are kept					
- Minimum training levels are defined					
- Training of first aid responders complies with legislation, at minimum					

Emergency Management Checklist: Example

Element	Documented		Functional Ability Proven		Comments
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
A current inventory list of all equipment and supplies exists:					
- Maintenance and decontamination procedures are included					
- Equipment is tested as specified by the manufacturer					
- Equipment and supply needs are reviewed when changes occur					
- Contact lists for suppliers of emergency equipment and supplies maintained, updated and readily available					
- Respiratory equipment selection, use and maintenance comply with current standard					
Mutual aid agreements are in place:					
- Call lists and letters of agreement are up-to-date					
- Drills involving mutual aid have been held					
- Capabilities of community organizations have been reviewed and considered					
Communication procedures include:					
- Telephone/cell phones					
- Two-way radios					
- Intercom					
- Runners					
- Emergency numbers are posted at telephones/programmed in phones					
Effective detection systems are installed, such as:					
- Smoke detectors					
- Heat detectors					
- Remote substance monitors					
- Leak detectors					
- Process control alarms					
Detection devices undergo regular testing, inspection, maintenance and calibration					
Regular tests of the alarm systems are conducted					
Evacuation details involve:					
- At least two evacuation routes exist from each area					
- All emergency exits are properly marked					
- All employees are instructed in evacuation procedures					
- Maps and procedures are posted					
- Assembly areas are located at safe distances					
- All employees and visitors can be accounted for					
- Procedures address needs of person(s) with disabilities or those with issues that may impact their reacting to the emergency signal or evacuation (e.g. hard of hearing, broken leg, etc.)					
- Temporary shelter or transportation is considered					
- The security function is defined					

Emergency Management Checklist: Example					
Element	Documented		Functional Ability Proven		Comments
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
- Facility access is controlled during an emergency					
- Traffic control has been considered					
- Pilferage and theft have been considered					
- High security risk areas have been identified					
- There are physical security devices					
The plan includes media relations before, during and after the emergency:					
- Public information documents exist					
- Those dealing with the media/public are trained					
- Contacts with the media are established and maintained					
- Media information is reviewed annually and updated					
- Procedures are in place to best inform or control the release of information to the public during an emergency					
- Names and information regarding the injured are restricted until appropriate to release to the public					
- Regular media releases are made during an emergency					
Other:					
- Emergency shutdown procedures exist and are followed					
- Responsibility for shutdown is assigned					
- Procedures and checklists have been developed and communicated					
- Diagrams and maps indicating critical components are immediately available					
- All critical components are clearly identified					
- Persons with special technological knowledge are available to help emergency personnel					
- An alternative location for continuing operations management is available					
- Resource list has been developed for sources of equipment, supplies, services or contractors					
- Agreements have been made with other facilities to continue production of products, where possible					
- Procedures are adequate to document all compensable losses					
- Procedures provide for preserving the incident scene for investigations					
- A safety plan is in place before re-entry into affected areas					

Courtesy: Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

## How do you write an emergency response plan?

The focus of an entity's operational planning, the emergency response plan is a plan for responding to hazards; it defines the scope of necessary emergency preparedness and (broader) emergency management activities for both business-as-usual and complex operations. What goes in the document? It includes:

- An assignment of responsibilities for the carrying out of specific actions that exceed routine responsibility at projected times and places during an emergency
- A delineation of lines of authority and organisational relationships. Shows how all actions will be coordinated
- A description of how people and property will be protected
- An identification of the personnel, equipment, facilities, supplies, and other resources available to the entity, either within its purview or by agreement with other entities
- (If applicable) A reconciliation of requirements with other entities

What's more, the precise form the plan takes depends on the needs and specificities of the entity, a product of governmental structure (for public entities) and/or the results of a risk assessment (for everyone else). Provided it fits the entity's emergency management strategies, policies, resources, and capabilities, the emergency response plan format is a decision taken at the entity level.

Incident management structures rarely prescribe compliance with certain template formats, though policymakers might. What are the most common templates? They include:

Plan template structure	Description	What's in its primary sections
Traditional functional structure	Most commonly used EOP (Emergency Operations Plan) format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic plan. Provides an overview of the entity's preparedness and response strategies. Describes expected hazards, outlines agency roles and responsibilities, and explains how the entity's keeps the plan current.</li> <li>• Functional annexes. Individual chapters that focus on missions (e.g., communications, damage assessment).</li> <li>• Hazard-specific annexes. Describe the policies, situation, CONOPS, and responsibilities for particular hazards, threats, or incidents. Explain the procedures unique to that annex for a hazard type.</li> </ul>
Emergency support function (ESF)	Used in the National Response Framework (NRF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic plan. Provides an overview of the entity's emergency management system. Explains the hazards faced, capabilities, requirements, and the entity's emergency management structure.</li> <li>• Unique annexes. Describe the framework through which an entity's departments and agencies, the private sector, not-for-profit and voluntary organizations, and other nongovernmental organisations coordinate and execute the common emergency management strategies.</li> <li>• Individual ESF annexes. Identify the ESF coordinator and the primary and support agencies for each function.</li> <li>• Separate support or incident annexes. Describe the policies, situation, CONOPS, and responsibilities for particular hazards, threats, or incidents.</li> </ul>
Agency-/department-focused format	Addresses each department's or agency's tasks in a separate section, enabling EOP users to review only procedures specific to their agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic plan. Works similarly to the above.</li> <li>• Lead and support agency sections. Discuss the emergency functions completed by individual departments, agencies, and nongovernmental partners.</li> <li>• Hazard-specific procedures. Describe the policies, situation, CONOPS, and responsibilities for particular hazards, threats, or incidents.</li> </ul>



Finally, planning before, during, and after an emergency event is crucial to the response effort. That's why most emergency management organisations (and the frameworks they follow) accord so much responsibility to planning.




Planners are often helped in their role by emergency management software, as well. Platforms like Noggin Emergency give Planning Sections all the tools needed to effectively manage emergencies, through the entire lifecycle of preparation, response, and recovery as well as business-as-usual operations for emergency preparedness and critical infrastructure resilience.

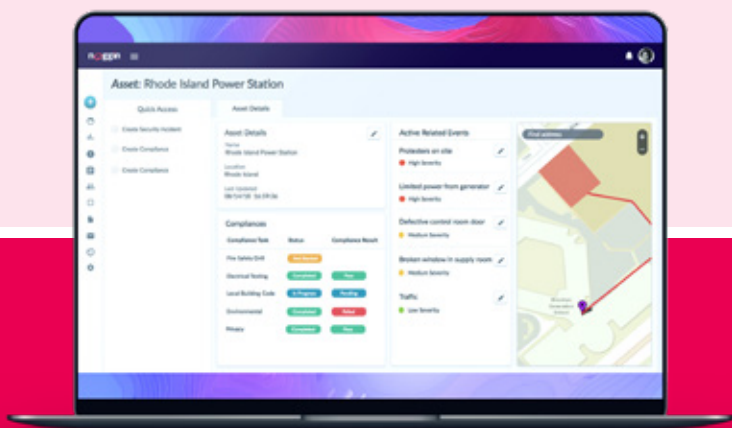
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