



September is National Preparedness Month. Emergency preparedness is the ability to survive on your own, with out rescuer assistance, for a period of time after a critical event such as natural disasters or severe weather, power outage, fires, chemical spills and laboratory emergencies, or active violence.

You may be required to deal with an emergency when it is least expected and proper planning before an emergency is necessary to respond effectively. Several Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations require employers to institute emergency plans, such as emergency action plan requirements, confined space rescue and hazardous waste operations. Plans should include at a minimum: (1) a method for reporting emergencies, (2) escape routes, (3) accounting for employees such as a designated assembly areas, (4) names, titles, departments and telephone numbers of individuals within and outside your organization for additional information, and (5) procedures for employees who remain to perform or shutdown critical operations.

### Tips for Success When Talking to Your Team

- **Preparation is Key:** Have plan on what to do ahead of time. Work with coworkers so everyone is on the same page.
- **Stay Positive:** Keep the focus on what can be done to keep a safe workplace, instead of focusing on what is wrong or has gone wrong in the past.
- **Share a Story, Ask for a Story:** Story telling is a powerful method to convey information. Stories from employees make the topic even more relatable.

Being prepared is not only having a plan, but it also includes practicing the plan such as drills and tabletop exercises. A recent survey indicated that large size companies have emergency plans, but as much as 23% do not test or exercise their plans.

Emergency exercises help to improve the overall strength and effectiveness of the emergency plan and the ability of team members to perform their roles and carry out their responsibilities

To ensure employees are prepared at Northwestern, Risk Management, Research Safety, and the Department of Safety and Security provide training for emergencies such building evacuations, fire extinguisher training, laboratory emergencies and active violence.

To learn more about emergency planning and exercises visit the [Building and Evacuation and Exercises](#) program on the Risk Management Website and the Department of Safety and Security [Emergency Management](#) website.

Learn more: Complete the Emergency Preparedness training at [learn.northwestern.edu](http://learn.northwestern.edu)

## Emergencies Can Happen at Home.

Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so it is important to know which types of disasters could affect your areas. Know how you'll contact one another and reconnect if separated. Establish a family meeting place that's familiar and easy to find. Consider these steps when planning for emergencies at home:

Step 1: Put together a plan by discussing these 4 questions with family and friends:

1. How will I receive emergency alerts and warnings?
2. What is my shelter plan?
3. What is my evacuation route?
4. What is my family/household communication plan?

Step 2: Consider specific needs in your household such as:

1. Different ages within the household
2. Responsibilities for assisting others
3. Locations frequented
4. Dietary and medical needs
5. Pets or service animals

Step 3: Download and complete a [family emergency plan](#), available on FEMAs website.

Step 4: Practice your plan with your family/household