



# TOP COMPLIANCE (Pty) Ltd

Your Business' Safety Is Our Concern

QSE B-BBEE - Level Four

Website: [www.topcompliance.co.za](http://www.topcompliance.co.za)

## May 2024 NEWSLETTER

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## Managing emergencies at work and at home

***"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." - Benjamin Franklin***

This quote underscores the importance of readiness and proactive planning, especially when it comes to managing emergencies. Preparation can significantly reduce the risks and impacts of unexpected events, ensuring safety and resilience when it matters most.

According to legislation your employer should have an emergency plan in place for your workplace. A comprehensive risk assessment needs to be completed by a competent person who has the knowledge of possible emergencies and disasters that may affect your workplace and or greater community.

Two situations may be encountered.

It is ***not safe inside*** and one will need to evacuate the premises.

It is ***not safe outside*** and one will have to lockdown / duress.

### Possible emergencies that ***may*** require an evacuation from a building, area or community.

1. Explosions (bomb, chemical, fusion, electrical, dust, vapour, physical or nuclear)
2. Bomb threat
3. Civil disturbances
4. Fire
5. Floods
6. Poisoning
7. Pollution, gasses and chemical spills and toxic gas releases
8. Sink holes
9. Workplace violence resulting in bodily harm and trauma

### Possible emergencies that ***may*** require lockdown / duress procedures for your building, area or community.

1. Armed robbery
2. Civil or labour unrest and riots
3. Disease outbreak and epidemic
4. Extreme weather
5. Hostage drama

6. Irrational behaviour and gun fire
7. Plagues: Bees, locusts etc.

The initial moments surrounding any emergency event are crucial. It is therefore vital to have a pre-determined emergency action plan available. Time will always be against one and lives will be dependent on the ability to act fast and swiftly.

In reality many organisations fall miserably short when it comes to establishing and implementing emergency action plans (EAP). Most organisations draft EAP's as a tick box exercise as it is required by law. Seldom is it drawn up with understanding and inputs from people who have a vast knowledge and experience in the field. Contingency planning for business continuity is often not added into the EAP. Start your site-specific EAP by using the following steps to guide you. It is important to include as many people as possible in the planning phase.

### **1. Identify all individuals that may be impacted by the disaster**

From employees, family members to customers, our community members and the emergency responders, are all affected when disaster strikes. A thorough emergency action plan establishes emergency procedures for all people, including those in need of assistance due to disabilities and other conditions or circumstances.

### **2. Establish the roles and responsibilities for all key role players.**

When emergencies occur, chaos can quickly ensue, particularly if no one knows what they are supposed to do or who is in charge. Designating a clear chain of command which tasks specific employees with the authority and responsibility to order and direct evacuations can minimise confusion and save lives. Personnel should also be designated for other key tasks, such as [evacuation marshals](#), accounting for all employees and other parties that may be onsite, [first aiders](#), [firefighting](#), crowd control, assisting those in need of assistance and shutting down critical plant operations.

### **3. Make provisions for [lockdown/duress or evacuation procedures](#)**

Depending on the nature of the event as well as the specifics of your circumstances, one of the earliest decisions you may face during an emergency is whether to lockdown or evacuate your people within your organisation or community. Having a very clear and comprehensive plan in place for both is possible scenarios. One needs to understand that the nature of the emergency or disaster may affect a large area and help may only reach you hours to days later. E.g. civil unrest, severe weather incident etc.

### **4. Prioritise fire safety planning and prevention**

While we often think of the impact of severe weather events on safety and business continuity, fire is a commonly underestimated threat. Do not forget about fire safety strategies, such as compliance with fire safety regulations, routine building safety inspections and a [fire evacuation plan](#).

Implement strategies that can reduce your risk of fire due to arson as a result of civil unrest. Ensure bins are kept away from easy to access areas and are frequently emptied. Keep empty wooden pallets away from buildings as it could cause the fire to spread.

### **5. Safeguard IT and cybersecurity**

While protecting people is always the first priority, protecting your organisation's data and IT systems is also vital to ensure that you can continue with your core business quicker once the emergency has been

resolved. If you do have to evacuate, will you have access to critical information to facilitate business continuity?

## **6. Detailed documentation**

An evacuation plan is only as good as its documentation, which should detail all the essential information. Physical copies should be clearly marked and accessible with at least one copy stored offsite, while electronic copies are also invaluable if access to your facility becomes limited.

## **7. Employee training and practicing**

The more your employees know about the types of emergencies which may occur as well as how to respond to them, the more seamless your organisational response will be. Training should be done annually and at the time of employment as part of [induction training](#), as well as at routine intervals due to changes related to everything from your building's design and/or layout to staff turnover.

## **8. Implement routine reviews and update training**

Emergency response planning is dynamic, not static. Regularly review your plan to determine areas in need of changes. One simple way to identify problem areas while reinforcing emergency evacuation procedures with your constituents? Drills. Learn from which aspects go smoothly and which do not and revise your plan according to these strengths and weaknesses.

## **9. Plan for contingency plans for after the disaster**

Your evacuation plan is not done just because the event itself has ended. The best evacuation and duress plans also have mechanisms in place for supporting employee health, wellbeing and recovery after a disaster. How long will it take before your company can continue with your core business?

## **10. Consider communications**

No emergency evacuation plan is complete without covering the critical component of communication. How will you make sure your employees and community have access to the information they need when they need it? Keep in mind that the most effective methods of communication vary from person to person. A multimodal communications plan is the best way to guarantee that information is delivered and received in the most efficient, effective way. Consider the impact of loadshedding on cell phone communications. Sometimes the towers are out and cell phones have no signal.

How quickly your company can get back to business after a civil unrest and looting attack, a fire or flood often depends on emergency planning done today. Do not wait. Plan now!

With that all said. Do you have a plan for your home and your community?

Civil disturbances include riots, demonstrations, threatening individuals or assemblies that have become disruptive.

1. Call the police. Dial 112 on a cell phone provided there is signal. With all the loadshedding and theft there may be a possibility that communication is compromised. Do you have access to other means of communication?
2. Do not provoke or become part of the disturbance.
3. Secure your work area, log off computers and secure sensitive files, if safe to do so.
4. Remain inside and away from doors and windows if the disturbance is outside.

Prepare now and be aware of the hazards that can threaten your community.

1. Connect with your local CPF on the various platforms.
2. Make a family evacuation and communication plan that includes family phone numbers, out-of-town contacts and family meeting locations.
3. Build an emergency go kit with enough food, water, medication, first aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, and important documents and other necessary items for at least 5 days.
4. Start with the five P's.
  - people and pet supplies,
  - prescriptions,
  - papers,
  - personal needs and
  - priceless items.
5. Create a family emergency plan that outlines evacuation routes, meeting points, and contact information for family members and neighbours. Check with your neighbours, family, friends and elders through video chats or phone calls to ensure they are taken care of.
6. Install smoke detectors, carbon monoxide alarms, and fire extinguishers in your home. Regularly check and maintain these devices to ensure they are in working order.
7. Keep up to date on local news.

Keep in mind unique needs for your family or special equipment for pets. Emergency services cannot be guarantee that they will be able to notify everyone if conditions rapidly deteriorate.

Best is to plan together and implement plans that are specific for the possible threats that may exist in your workplace and community.

Should you require any further information regarding your planning of your site-specific EAP please contact us on [info@topcompliance.co.za](mailto:info@topcompliance.co.za)

Click on the link for more information regarding [training to draft and prepare your site specific EAP](#)

Yours in health and safety.

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| <a href="#"><u>Occupational health and safety auditing and consulting</u></a><br> <p>A hand holding a magnifying glass over the text "Safety Auditing". To the left, the text "AUDIT POLICY GUIDELINES REGULATION" is visible. To the right, the text "SAFETY &amp; HEALTH BEST PRACTICE RESPONSIBILITY AWARENESS COMPLIANCE STANDARDS COMMITTEE" is visible.</p> |  <p>A red shopping cart icon next to the text "SHOP ONLINE" with a mouse cursor arrow pointing at it.</p> <a href="#"><u>Online safety shop</u></a> |                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|  <p>A blue circle containing a white icon of a first aid kit and a stethoscope.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  <p>A red circle containing a white icon of a downward-pointing arrow inside a square.</p>                                                           |  <p>A purple circle containing a white icon of an open book with a magnifying glass over it.</p> |  <p>An orange circle containing a white icon of safety equipment: a hard hat, a safety vest, and safety glasses.</p> |
| <a href="#"><u>First aid equipment</u></a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <a href="#"><u>Signage</u></a>                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <a href="#"><u>Legal posters</u></a>                                                                                                                                                 | <a href="#"><u>Safety Equipment</u></a>                                                                                                                                                                   |

**Courses offered by Top Compliance (Pty) Ltd**

| ONLINE ACADEMY - <a href="https://academy.topcompliance.co.za/">https://academy.topcompliance.co.za/</a>      |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Occupational Health and Safety Courses                                                                        |  |
| <a href="#">Safety representative – Legal Liability</a>                                                       |  |
| <a href="#">The Occupational Health and Safety Act &amp; responsibilities of management – Legal Liability</a> |  |
| <a href="#">Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment</a>                                                     |  |
| <a href="#">Food facility health &amp; safety course in terms of R638</a>                                     |  |
| <a href="#">Basic Ladder Safety Course</a>                                                                    |  |
| Fire Fighting and Prevention Courses                                                                          |  |
| <a href="#">Fire Marshal - Basic firefighting</a>                                                             |  |
| <a href="#">Fire &amp; Evacuation marshal - Basic firefighting with emergency action planning</a>             |  |

| ONSITE TRAINING                                                                                               |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| First Aid Courses:                                                                                            |         |
| <a href="#">Level 1 - US 119567 - Perform basic life support and first aid procedures</a>                     | 2 days  |
| <a href="#">Level 2 - US 120496 - Provide risk-based primary emergency care/first aid in the workplace</a>    | 3 days  |
| <a href="#">Level 3 - US 376480 - Provide first aid as an advanced first responder</a>                        | 3 days  |
| <a href="#">Level 1 &amp; 2 - US 119567 &amp; 120496</a>                                                      | 3 days  |
| <a href="#">Level 1, 2 &amp; 3 - US 119567, 120496 &amp; 376480</a>                                           | 5 days  |
| <a href="#">Level 2 &amp; 3 - US 120496 &amp; 376480</a>                                                      | 3 days  |
| <a href="#">Child and infant CPR &amp; choking</a>                                                            | 6 hours |
| <a href="#">Adult CPR &amp; choking</a>                                                                       | 6 hours |
| <a href="#">Adult CPR &amp; choking and AED</a>                                                               | 1 day   |
| Occupational Health and Safety Courses                                                                        |         |
| <a href="#">Safety representative – Legal Liability</a>                                                       | 1 day   |
| <a href="#">The Occupational Health and Safety Act &amp; responsibilities of management – Legal Liability</a> | 1 day   |
| <a href="#">Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment</a>                                                     | 1 day   |
| <a href="#">Food facility health &amp; safety course in terms of R638</a>                                     | 6 hours |
| <a href="#">Basic Ladder Safety</a>                                                                           | 6 hours |
| Fire Fighting and Prevention Courses                                                                          |         |
| <a href="#">Fire Marshal - Basic firefighting</a>                                                             | 6 hours |
| <a href="#">Fire &amp; Evacuation marshal - Basic firefighting with emergency action planning</a>             | 1 day   |