



# COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

## EMERGENCY PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS GROUP A OCCUPANCY

Emergency planning and preparedness requirements focus on helping people know what to do during a fire or other emergency. While buildings are designed with safety features such as sprinklers, fire-resistant construction, and clearly marked exits, these systems work best when occupants are prepared to respond quickly and correctly. The Fire Code requires organizations to develop emergency plans, provide training, and practice fire, evacuation, and lockdown procedures on a regular basis. Preparing occupants in advance reduces confusion, improves safety during an emergency, and helps first responders do their jobs more effectively. The following are requirements for Emergency Planning and Preparedness for Group A Occupancies per Chapter 4 of the 2025 California Fire Code.

### **FIRE SAFETY AND FIRE EVACUATION PLANS**

An approved fire safety and evacuation plan shall be prepared and maintained for Group A occupancies other than those occupancies used exclusively for purposes of religious worship with an occupant load less than 2,000, and for buildings containing both a Group A occupancy and an atrium. (CFC 403.2)

#### **Fire evacuation plans**

Fire evacuation plans shall include the following:

1. Emergency egress or escape routes and whether evacuation of the building is to be complete by selected floors or areas only or with a defend-in-place response.
2. Procedures for employees who must remain to operate critical equipment before evacuating.
3. Procedures for the use of elevators to evacuate the building where occupant evacuation elevators complying with Section 3008 of the California Building Code are provided.
4. Procedures for assisted rescue for persons unable to use the general means of egress unassisted.
5. Procedures for accounting for employees and occupants after evacuation has been completed.
6. Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for rescue or emergency medical aid.
7. The preferred and any alternative means of notifying occupants of a fire or emergency.
8. The preferred and any alternative means of reporting fires and other emergencies to the fire department or designated emergency response organization.
9. Identification and assignment of personnel who can be contacted for further information or explanation of duties under the plan.
10. A description of the emergency voice/alarm communication system alert tone and preprogrammed voice messages, where provided. (CFC 404.2.1)

#### **Fire safety plans.**

Fire safety plans shall include the following:

1. The procedure for reporting a fire or other emergency.
2. The life safety strategy including the following:
  - 2.1. Procedures for notifying occupants, including areas with a private mode alarm system.
  - 2.2. Procedures for occupants under a defend-in-place response.
  - 2.3. Procedures for evacuating occupants, including those who need evacuation assistance.

1. Site plans indicating the following:
  - 3.1. The occupancy assembly point.
  - 3.2. The locations of fire hydrants.
  - 3.3. The normal routes of fire department vehicle access.
2. Floor plans identifying the locations of the following:
  - 4.1. Exits.
  - 4.2. Primary evacuation routes.
  - 4.3. Secondary evacuation routes.
  - 4.4. Accessible egress routes.
    - 4.4.1. Areas of refuge.
    - 4.4.2. Exterior areas for assisted rescue.
  - 4.5. Refuge areas associated with smoke barriers and horizontal exits.
  - 4.6. Manual fire alarm boxes.
  - 4.7. Portable fire extinguishers.
  - 4.8. Occupant-use hose stations.
  - 4.9. Fire alarm annunciators and controls.
3. A list of major fire hazards associated with the normal use and occupancy of the premises, including maintenance and housekeeping procedures.
4. Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for maintenance of systems and equipment installed to prevent or control fires.
5. Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for maintenance, housekeeping, and controlling fuel hazard sources. (CFC 404.2.2)

### **Seating Plan**

In addition to the requirements for fire safety and evacuation plans, the fire safety and evacuation plans for assembly occupancies shall include a detailed seating plan, occupant load and occupant load limit. Deviations from the approved plans shall be allowed provided that the occupant load limit for the occupancy is not exceeded and the aisles and exit accessways remain unobstructed. (CFC 403.2.1)

### **Maintenance**

Fire safety, evacuation, and lockdown plans shall be reviewed or updated annually or as necessitated by changes in staff assignments, occupancy, or the physical arrangement of the building. (CFC 404.3)

### **Availability**

Fire safety, evacuation, and lockdown plans shall be available in the workplace for reference and review by employees, and copies shall be furnished to the fire code official for review on request. (CFC 404.4)

### **Public notification**

In theaters, motion picture theaters, auditoriums and similar assembly occupancies in Group A used for noncontinuous programs, an audible announcement shall be made not more than 10 minutes prior to the start of each program to notify the occupants of the location of the exits to be used in the event of a fire or other emergency.

In motion picture theaters, the announcement is allowed to be projected on the screen in a manner approved by the fire code official. (CFC 403.2.2)

### **Fire watch personnel**

Where, in the opinion of the fire code official, it is essential for public safety in a place of assembly or any other place where people congregate, because of the number of persons, or the nature of the performance, exhibition, display, contest or activity, the owner, agent or lessee shall provide one or more fire watch personnel, as required and approved. (CFC 403.11.1)

### **Fire watch duty times**

Fire watch personnel shall remain on duty while places requiring a fire watch are open to the public, or when an activity requiring a fire watch is being conducted. (CFC 403.11.1.1)

### **Fire watch duties**

On-duty fire watch personnel shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Keep diligent watch for fires, obstructions to means of egress and other hazards.
2. Take prompt measures for remediation of hazards and extinguishment of fires that occur.
3. Take prompt measures to assist in the evacuation of the public from the structures. (CFC 403.11.1.2)

### **Crowd managers**

Where facilities or events involve a gathering of more than 500 people, crowd managers shall be provided in accordance with requirements listed below. (CFC 403.11.3)

### **Number of crowd managers**

Not fewer than two trained crowd managers, and not fewer than one trained crowd manager for each 250 persons or portion thereof, shall be provided for the gathering.

Exceptions:

1. Outdoor events with fewer than 1,000 persons in attendance shall not require crowd managers.
2. Assembly occupancies used exclusively for religious worship with an occupant load not exceeding 1,000 shall not require crowd managers.
3. The number of crowd managers shall be reduced where, in the opinion of the fire code official, the fire protection provided by the facility and the nature of the event warrant a reduction. (CFC 403.11.3.1)

### **Training**

Training for crowd managers shall be approved. (CFC 403.11.3.2)

### **Duties**

The duties of crowd managers shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Conduct an inspection of the area of responsibility and identify and address any egress barriers.
2. Conduct an inspection of the area of responsibility to identify and mitigate any fire hazards.
3. Verify compliance with all permit conditions, including those governing pyrotechnics and other special effects.
4. Direct and assist the event attendees in evacuation during an emergency.
5. Assist emergency response personnel where requested.
6. Other duties required by the fire code official.
7. Other duties as specified in the fire safety plan. (403.11.3.3)

### **Public safety plan for gatherings**

Where the fire code official determines that an indoor or outdoor gathering of persons has an adverse impact on public safety through diminished access to buildings, structures, fire hydrants and fire apparatus access roads or where such gatherings adversely affect public safety services of any kind, the fire code official shall have the authority to order the development of or prescribe a public safety plan that provides an approved level of public safety and addresses the following items:

1. Emergency vehicle ingress and egress.
2. Fire protection.
3. Emergency egress or escape routes.
4. Emergency medical services.
5. Public assembly areas.
6. The directing of both attendees and vehicles, including the parking of vehicles.
7. Vendor and food concession distribution.

8. The need for the presence of law enforcement.
9. The need for fire and emergency medical services personnel.
10. The need for a weather monitoring person. (CFC 403.11.2)

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS**

### **Occupant participation**

Emergency fire and evacuation drills shall involve the actual evacuation of occupants to a selected assembly point and shall provide occupants with experience in exiting through required exits. (CFC 405.2)

### **Frequency**

In Group A occupancies other than those occupancies used exclusively for purposes of religious worship with an occupant load less than 2,000, and for buildings containing both a Group A occupancy and an atrium, required emergency evacuation drills shall be held quarterly for all employees or more frequently where necessary to familiarize all occupants with the drill procedure. (CFC 405.3)

### **Leadership**

Responsibility for the planning and conduct of drills shall be assigned to competent persons designated to exercise leadership. (CFC 405.4)

### **Time**

Drills shall be held at unexpected times and under varying conditions to simulate the unusual conditions that occur in case of fire.

### **Recordkeeping**

Records shall be maintained of required emergency evacuation drills and include the following information:

1. Identity of the person conducting the drill.
2. Date and time of the drill.
3. Notification method used.
4. Employees on duty and participating.
5. Number of occupants evacuated.
6. Special conditions simulated.
7. Problems encountered.
8. Weather conditions when occupants were evacuated.
9. Time required to accomplish complete evacuation. (CFC 405.6)

### **Notification**

Where required by the fire code official, prior notification of emergency evacuation drills shall be given to the fire code official. (CFC 405.7)

### **Initiation**

Where a fire alarm system is provided, emergency evacuation drills shall be initiated by activating the fire alarm system. (CFC 405.8)