



COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

EMERGENCY PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS GROUP B 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 B 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 buildings containing a Group B occupancy where the Group B occupancy has an occupant load of 500 or more persons or more than 100 persons above or below the lowest level of exit discharge and for buildings having an ambulatory care facility. (CFC 403.3)

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.

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. A list of major fire hazards associated with the normal use and occupancy of the premises, including maintenance and housekeeping procedures.
6. Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for maintenance of systems and equipment installed to prevent or control fires.
7. Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for maintenance, housekeeping, and controlling fuel hazard sources. (CFC 404.2.2)

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 all office buildings 2 or more stories in height, Owner(s) or operator(s) shall employ either one of the following methods of providing emergency procedures and information to the building occupants:

1. Emergency procedures information published in the form of a leaflet, brochure, or pamphlet shall be available to all persons entering the building. Emergency procedures information shall be located immediately inside all entrances to the building, as determined by the authority having jurisdiction. Locations shall be clearly marked.
2. A floor plan providing emergency procedures information shall be posted at every stairway landing, at every elevator landing, and immediately inside all public entrances to the building. The information shall be posted so that it describes the represented floor level and can be easily seen immediately upon entering the floor level or the building. Emergency procedures information shall be printed with a minimum of 3/16-inch high non-decorative lettering providing a sharp contrast to the background.

Emergency procedures information shall provide all ambulatory, nonambulatory, and the physically disabled instructions to be followed in the event of an emergency. Emergency procedures information shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Location of exits and fire alarm initiating stations, if required;
2. What the fire alarm, if required, sounds and looks like (audible and visual warning devices)
3. Fire department emergency telephone number 911;
4. The prohibition of elevator use during emergencies, if any. (19 CCR § 3.09)

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

Required emergency evacuation drills shall be held annually for all occupants 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.

Exceptions:

1. In severe climates, the fire code official shall have the authority to modify the emergency evacuation drill termination points and frequency.
2. In Groups R-2.1, I-2, I-3 and R-4, where staff-only emergency evacuation drills are conducted after visiting hours or where care recipients are expected to be asleep, a coded announcement shall be an acceptable alternative to audible alarms. (CFC 405.5)

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)