



COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

EMERGENCY PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS GROUP M 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 M 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 M occupancy where the Group M 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 containing both a Group M occupancy and an atrium. (CFC 403.8)

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)