

Emergency Response Plan Template for Meetings & Events



A key component of organizing an event is the safety and security of the participants. Like any other aspect of producing an event, planning for emergencies cannot be disregarded. The purpose of an Emergency Response Plan is to provide guidance and information to key logistical staff about the steps to prepare for and follow in case of an emergency. The plan should address general emergency response procedures as well as specific protocol for the Emergency Response Team to quickly respond to medical, or human-caused and nature-caused emergencies.

This template offers a framework for developing an Emergency Response Plan for events. It is recommended that a President or CEO approves the final plan before implementation.

Policy Statement

Having an Emergency Response Plan is a critical component of our responsibility to our staff and to those we serve. The hope is that these plans will never have to be used. However, in the event that something does happen, we want to be sure staff are as prepared as possible and will know what actions to take to protect our staff and participants' safety and wellbeing.

As an event team member, you are expected to read this plan in its entirety although some components will only be applicable depending on your role and nature of the event.

Pre-Planning Protocol

1 Select an Emergency Response Team Manager and team for each event.

This should be done at the beginning of the planning phase when conference teams are assigned. Emergency Response Team Manager is responsible for reviewing and maintaining the emergency response plan, monitoring threats and hazards, and serving as the response team lead on site in the event of an actual emergency.

- a. Facility appointed Emergency Response Team Lead for the facility: This person is the point person who works in tandem with the Emergency Response Team Manager.
- b. Emergency Communications Manager: Assign a person to act on behalf of the organization ensuring there are no inappropriate or unauthorized statements made to the media about the situation. They will monitor news and communicate with staff as well as manage on site press and distribute press information.
- c. Event Housing Manager: Communicates with registration staff, transportation company, tour company, child care and housing bureau.
- d. Registration Coordinator: Communicates with temporary staff; sets up travel services help desk, provides information on airports, car rentals, trains, buses, ride-sharing; help desk for international attendees.
- e. Speaker Manager: Communicates with the speakers by phone, e-mail and in person at the event.
- f. Exhibit Operations Manager: Communicates with general service contractors, exhibitors, and Crisis Team.

2 Conduct site inspection.

As part of the site inspection process:

- a. Identify emergency exits, fire alarms and extinguishers. Ask about the venue's alarm protocol.
- b. Identify AED locations and First Aid kits.
- c. The event facilities have (or should have) emergency plans and should be contacted immediately when an emergency occurs. Their emergency response plans should be part of the plan. Review this plan as part of the pre-conference meeting.

- d. Designate an Emergency Management Room: During the site inspection for an event, designate a private room that can be locked and is not located near the main meeting space and registration area. This room may be used for other purposes during the event, but can be turned into an emergency management room if necessary.
- e. Hotel Security and Safety Assessment Form:
<https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=16105>

3 Prepare legal contracts.

Insert contract language for the safety of attendees into all venue and accommodations contracts including indemnification and force majeure. Negotiate or encourage the client to negotiate for an extension of the hotel conference rate for attendees and staff in the event attendees are unable to leave the area. Ask insurance agency for a cancellation insurance policy that covers events being cancelled or disrupted due to weather conditions, terrorist threats or labor strikes.

4 Gather participant information during registration. Ensure the following information are also included on the registration forms:

- a. "In case of emergency" section
- b. Emergency Contact name/relationship
- c. Address
- d. Phone: cell and home/office
- e. Medical conditions or allergies that the organizers should be aware of?
- f. If so, ask them to please list the physician's name and number.

Onsite Emergency Response Procedures

The following procedures provide a guide to work from in the event of an emergency. Although no two situations will be identical, these steps will always be applicable.

1 General Emergency Call Procedures:

- a. Remain calm.
- b. Establish the exact location of the emergency (e.g., Grand Ballroom B in the West Tower).
- c. Assign a person to call the event's Emergency Response Team members to notify them of the identified emergency and that emergency personnel will also be called.
- d. Call the emergency telephone number (or 911) established in call procedure information.
- e. Explain the type of emergency (e.g., fire, medical emergency, etc.).
- f. Give your name and a telephone number and/or house phone extension at which you can be reached.
- g. Wait for further directions from emergency personnel.
- h. If safe, wait for emergency personnel to arrive. Have designees posted at intervals (e.g., at the door to the meeting room, outside the elevators, at every major turn between the outside door and the location of the emergency) to direct emergency personnel to the emergency.

2 Possible Scenarios.

The following potential scenarios should be included in the Emergency Response Plan with procedures for each:

- a. Terrorist/bomb threat
- b. Medical emergency
- c. Fire
- d. Severe weather

Documentation and Forms

In addition, the following will prove invaluable during an emergency and should be included in the plan.

1 Meeting Event Summary Report.

Include an updated summary for every event with dates, locations, facility plans, and emergency team assignments.

2 Incident Report Form.

A readily-accessible form to report an incident at the event both for the hosting organization and any emergency personnel.

3 Emergency Response Communication Chart and Key Contacts List.

This easy-to-use document puts all of the vital information in one place and should be printed and provided to each member of the Emergency Response Team.

Summary

Staff members should be asked to familiarize themselves with plan prior to each meeting and be ready to take action when and if it becomes necessary.

Someone's life—including your own—may depend on it.

BE SAFE!