

Emergency Management Audit For Businesses

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This manual is based on Business Planning Guides produced by and copyrighted to Wellington City Council's Emergency Management Office. We endorse their work in developing and producing the "Emergency Planning Manuals", numbered 1 through 3, based on significant research and analysis both internationally and locally.

Disclaimer

The recommendations included in this publication are intended to be used to improve emergency preparedness, and every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information given. However, local authorities do not assume responsibility or liability for any injury, death or property damage that may result from a natural or technical hazard.

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Hazards and Your Business

This manual is for distribution to business owners and operators to audit annually the emergency preparedness of their business.

This manual is the third in a series of three produced for businesses. Manual One concentrated on identifying existing and potential hazards to your business. Manual Two helped initiate the planning process and the incorporation of a Business Emergency Plan into your overall corporate/business plan.

Time and money spent on emergency preparedness is an investment into your business. Planning and preparation by your business before a disaster will minimise the loss of revenue and more importantly the loss of life. Overseas experience indicates that many businesses are ill prepared for most disasters.

When planning for disaster management, auditing an Emergency Plan means taking a formal approach to determine the adequacy and completeness of the plan. **This manual, Manual Three** is designed to take you through the process of auditing any emergency preparedness measures you may already have, and to incorporate any new hazards into your Business Emergency Plan.

Why do an audit of an existing Emergency Business Plan?

All business are dynamic, whether it be taking on new staff, moving to different premises or moving into new business ventures. These changes could also mean a change in potential hazards, or the level of emergency preparedness of your business. Therefore it is important for your Business Emergency Plan to change as your business changes.

The Checklists are designed to take you through an internal audit of the main aspects of your Business Emergency Plan:

- **Hazard Identification**
- **Preparedness and Planning**
- **Resources**
- **Emergency Response Organization**

Under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, employers must identify all potential hazards in the work place and regularly review their assessment of all hazards. This audit could be done in conjunction with your existing obligations under these acts.

An annual audit of your existing Business Emergency Plan will help ensure that all your employees, facilities, and business activities are prepared to meet emergency conditions.

The scale of your audit will depend on the type and degree of changes to your business. If substantial changes have occurred it would be worthwhile working back through the checklists in Manuals One and Two, to fully prepare your business for an emergency.

Under the 1992 Health and Safety in Employment Act, you are obligated to safeguard inhabitants of the building from possible injury, have adequate fire exits, and prevent adverse affects arising from an emergency involving fire or hazardous substances.

Hazard Identification

All premises and facilities should be evaluated to determine their potential hazards. Manual One can be used to help you determine the major external hazards to a building or facility. This process can be combined with your Occupational Safety and Health Audits to identify internal hazards.

Have there been any changes in your business which will mean that there has been a change in the existing hazard analysis of your business?

Changes such as:

Has your business moved to a premises, built new buildings or made extensions to existing buildings?

Are any of these buildings in areas likely to be affected by:

- Groundshaking
- Liquefaction.....
- Flooding
- Wildfire
- Strong winds or heavy rains
- Slope stability
- Tsunami

Hazards associated with hazardous substances can be difficult to monitor. Potential risks can arise from the manufacturing, storage, transportation of and disposal of hazardous substances.

- Has your business moved into any new ventures using hazardous substances?
- Has use of hazardous substances changed near new or existing facilities that could endanger your business?
- Are hazardous storage areas marked on your facilities plan?
- Have you considered your obligations under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Bill?

If you answered **yes** to any of the Hazard Identification questions you need to consider what action can be taken to reduce the harmful impact of that hazard on each facility. Working through the checklists in the rest of this manual is a good way to assess your preparedness for any new hazards identified.

Preparedness and Planning

Changes in staff, facilities or business ventures will all alter your level of preparedness. By making advance preparation and ongoing updates to your plan, your operations will be restored in the minimum of time. The Following checklist is a guideline for auditing your preparedness:

- Does your business have a current Emergency Plan?
- Does it include any new hazards identified above?
- Does your business have a specific Emergency Plan for each building occupied?
- Does your building or business have a co-ordinator for developing/updating it's emergency plan?
- Do any facilities have adequate warning systems in place?
- Are emergency lighting and batteries present in all your building? Are they checked regularly?
- In multi-use buildings are any new tenants (and existing tenants) aware of your Emergency Plan?
- Do you have clear, explicit and up to date notification procedures and a call out list covering both business and non-business hours?
- Are essential computer data bases, programs, software backed up off-site sufficiently often to facilitate a timely business recovery?
- Does your plan address the probable occurrence of different types of emergencies occurring simultaneously ? i.e after an earthquake you may have to contend with flooding from burst pipes as well as continuing aftershocks.
- Does the company have a required inspection schedule to reduce potential hazards?
- Have business recovery concerns been included in the response plan?
- Have employee's families made their own personal/family emergency plan? Contact you local Emergency Management/Civil Defence.

If you have answered **no** to any of the **Preparedness and Planning** questions you need to further prepare your facility for an emergency. This can be assisted by referring to the Seven Steps to Preparedness in Manual Two.

Emergency Response Organisation

- Does your business have an Emergency Response Organisation?
- Have all new staff been trained in evaluation procedures?
- Are all emergency response members given training at least once a year?
- Are any changes to employees responsible in an emergency made known to all staff?
- Have you had a comprehension drill in the last year? Have modifications been made to your plan, in accordance with any areas of weakness discovered during your drill?
- Has a chain of command been established and identified in the plan for your emergency response?
- Do the employees involved in emergency response meet regularly for planning and co-ordination?
- Do all employees have a current copy of business emergency management procedures, containing detailed fire response, evacuation, search and rescued first aid information?

If you answered **no** to any of the **Emergency Response Organisation** questions you need to further prepare your facility for an emergency. Refer to appropriate sections in Manual Two.

Resources

- Are adequate first aid kits supplies prepared for your business?
- Are first aid kits checked regularly?
- Do all staff know where first aid kits are kept?
- Have employees been instructed in alternative sources and rationing of food and water?
- Are all your businesses utilities prepared for an emergency?
- Are your staff trained in emergency shutdown procedures for utilities?
- Do you have a communications systems other than a telephone for contacting employees' families, and emergency services if necessary?

If you have answered **no** to any of the **Resources** questions you need to further prepare your facility for an emergency. Refer to appropriate sections in Manual Two.

Fire

Fire presents a special hazard to businesses. The New Zealand Fire Service is able to offer the best advice on Fire Safety. The following checklist outlines the major steps to reduce the fire hazard of your business:

- Are periodic fire drills conducted?
- Are fire safety audits conducted on a regular basis by trained employees and/or New Zealand Fire Services personnel?
- Are fire/smoke alarms and/or sprinkler systems installed in all new facilities?
- Are all employees (especially new employees) familiar with the location of fire extinguishers, fire alarms and evacuation procedures?
- Are fire/smoke alarms and/ or sprinkler systems periodically inspected
- and continually maintain in accordance with the 1992 Health and Safety in Employment Act?
- Are fire extinguishers regularly inspected monthly and serviced annually?

If you have answered **no** to any of the **Fire** question you need to further prepare your facility for an emergency. Refer to the 'Fire' section in Manual Two. Contact the New Zealand Fire Service about any further obligations your business may have.

Earthquakes

Earthquakes are a hazard in most parts of New Zealand. Business should take extra steps to improve their preparedness for an earthquake. This could be done in conjunction with your obligations under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 and Building Act 1991. The following checklist can be used to audit your existing earthquake preparedness:

- Are there regular inspections to identify potential internal hazards in an earthquake?
- Have any new buildings been checked for their earthquake resistance?
- In new buildings have external components been checked for their earthquake resistance?
- Are all employees familiar with what to do during an earthquake? How to evacuate the building? Alternative exit routes out of the building? And where to meet after evacuation?
- Is space beneath desks and table kept clear and readily accessible during an earthquake?
- Have you fulfilled your obligations under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 and Building Act 1991?

If you have answered **no** to any of the **Earthquake** questions you need to further prepare your facility for this emergency. Refer to the appropriate sections in Manual Two.

Flooding

Floods are common in many areas, and water damage can be devastating businesses. If you determined that your business is prone to flooding in the hazard assessment (Manual One) extra emergency preparedness steps need to be taken:

- Is your building flood proof?
- Do your staff know what to do during a flood?
- Do you have a supply of sandbags?, or, know where to obtain them from if needed urgently?
- Have you installed pumps and emergency power supplies?
- Do your staff know to relocate all records and equipment as high as possible during a flood?
- Are vital pieces of equipment, such as emergency generators, located above expected water levels?
- Are chemicals stored in a high safe place? Or, can they be easily transferred to a high place?

If you answered **no** to any of the **Flood** questions you need to further prepare your business for this emergency.

Storm

Anyone can be exposed to storms. Business can prepare themselves in order to minimize the risk of danger or injury:

- Do your employees know what to do during a storm?
- Do you have emergency supplies in case staff are unable to return home?
- Have you established a system whereby employees are told to stay home, or released from work early?
- Have all loose external fittings been secured, such as boards and roofing iron?

If you have answered **no** to any of the **Storm** questions you need to further prepare your facility for this emergency.

Volcanic Eruption

Warning systems will provide notice of impending eruptions in volcanically active areas. Businesses can prepare themselves to minimise risk of damage:

- Do you employees know what to do during an eruption?
- Do you have a mobilisation plan for essential employees to close down and protect machinery if required?
- Does your company have an alternative location to operate from?
- Are vital records and databases stored off site?
- Has security been arranged to protect damaged premises?

Chemical Alert

Technological hazards may occur at any time and may be accompanied by fire. They tend to be of short term duration but businesses are likely to have little warning.

- Do your employees regularly practice evacuations?
- Do employees know what to do during chemical alert?
- Does your staff succession plan include authority to dismiss staff from an alternative site?
- Does your plan identify local chemical manufacturing or storage facilities that make your facility vulnerable?

Tsunami

Recent scientific research indicates a very low possibility of tsunami affecting the New Zealand Coast line. At most it is considered that the water would not rise more than 1-2 metres above normal levels. Precautions would therefore reflect those for floods for any vulnerable businesses.

