

Emergency response planning

Emergencies and disasters can occur to any business at any time and without warning. Having a formal emergency response plan in place can make it easier to respond quickly and efficiently, whatever happens. But, while many businesses consider their fire exposure, emergency response planning needs to cover other risks such as water damage, widespread serious illness and loss of power too.

As every business is different there is no generic plan. Instead a business needs to identify the specific risks it is exposed to and make emergency response plans that minimise the impact on its operations.

At site level the planning process should follow these steps:

1. Identify the risks the site is exposed to and list them in order of priority.
2. Determine the actions required to minimise the loss for each risk.
3. Create a written plan that includes:
 - a. Objectives
 - b. Actions to be taken before, during and after, including any tools and materials required
4. Conduct training for staff including testing and drills.
5. Review the plan regularly and ensure changes are shared with staff as required.

Planning in practice

Most businesses will need a pre-fire plan to set out its response in the event of a fire. As well as creating this with the local Fire and Rescue Service, who should be conducting annual familiarisation visits to the facility, a grab pack (see section for more details) should also be put together and kept in an easily accessible place onsite such as reception or a gatehouse.

The plan should include the names of every employee who would be involved in the response and define the following roles:

1. **Person-in-charge.** This person would liaise with the fire brigade upon their arrival, passing over vital information.
2. **Notifier.** A notifier has the responsibility of ensuring the fire brigade is notified (as a back-up to any direct link that may be in place). It is also their responsibility to determine the

level of response required depending on the emergency.

3. **Utilities isolator.** This person ensures gas and electricity supplies are isolated, if required, before the fire brigade arrives on site.
4. **Job specific role.** This person may have a unique role in relation to their normal duties or experience. For example an oven operator manually operating a fire suppression system or isolation of flammable liquid transfer equipment.
5. **Sprinkler control valve operator.** Where a sprinkler system is installed, this person would be responsible for the main control valve in the event of a fire, ensuring it remains open until instructed to close it by the person-in-charge.
6. **Fire pump operator (if installed).** This person would be responsible for the pump house in the event of a fire, ensuring the fire pumps start automatically and remain operational until instructed to stop them by the person-in-charge.

Employees currently trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers should also be named in the plan, along with the date of their last training.

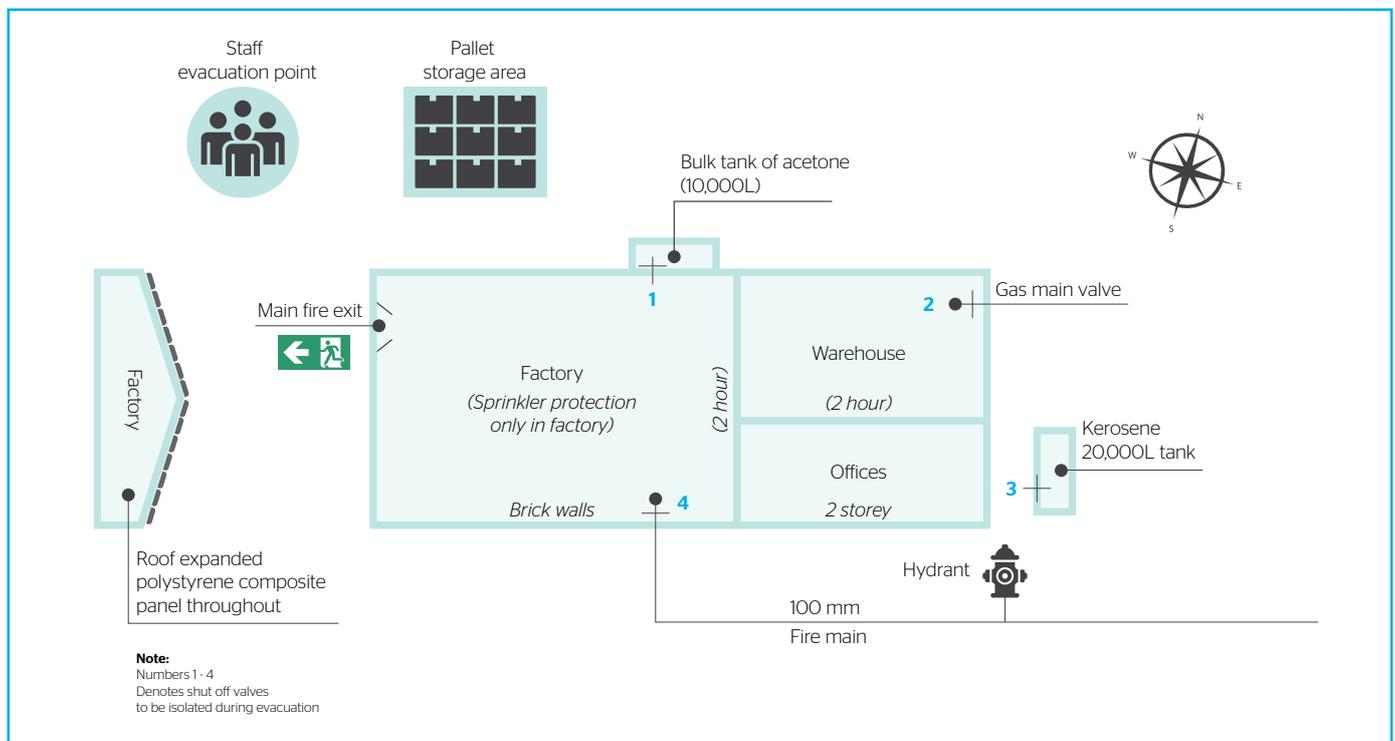


Creating a grab pack

Every site should have a grab pack to give to the emergency services. This ensures they have all the information they need and can respond quickly and efficiently. It should include the following:

- A site layout plan showing
 - General layout
 - Basic building construction details
 - Fire exits
 - Fire separation
 - Location of hazardous materials, with name and approximate quantity
 - Location of utilities isolation points (electricity, gas, compressed air etc)
 - Position of fire hydrants or other fire fighting water sources
 - Site drainage plan

An example of a site layout plan



- Hazardous materials data sheets
- Key site personnel contact details
- Contaminated fire fighting water containment strategy
- Critical and priority business areas of the site

In addition, the emergency response plan should also be available to the fire brigade at all times.