



POLICY SAMPLE | Emergency Response and Preparedness (Construction)

Construction projects are dynamic environments where conditions can change rapidly. Despite planning, training, supervision, and hazard controls, emergencies can still occur.

Effective emergency preparedness demonstrates a reasonable precaution for foreseeable harm. Employers should identify potential emergency situations associated with their work, ensure appropriate resources are available, communicate response expectations, and verify that workers understand how to react when an emergency occurs.

Preparedness is not simply reacting to emergencies. It is the deliberate process of anticipating what could go wrong and ensuring that people, equipment, resources, and procedures are ready to respond when needed.

EXAMPLES OF CONSTRUCTION EMERGENCIES

- Construction emergencies may include, but are not limited to:
- Serious injury or medical emergency
- Fall from height
- Structural collapse or partial collapse
- Trench or excavation failure
- Electrical contact or arc flash incident
- Fire or explosion
- Hazardous material release or gas leak
- Confined space emergency
- Crane, rigging, or hoisting failure
- Equipment rollover or vehicle collision
- Workplace violence

Every employer should consider the emergency scenarios that are reasonably foreseeable based on the work being performed and ensure appropriate response arrangements are established.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RESPONSIBILITIES

The Constructor must:

- Establish, maintain, post and communicate project emergency response procedures and requirements.
- Plan drills (as necessary)
- Coordinate site-wide emergency response activities.

The Employer (Trade Contractor) must:

- Identify emergency situations associated with their work;
- Ensure workers receive emergency response instruction; and,
- Coordinate their response activities with the Constructor's emergency plan.

The Supervisor shall:

- Implement emergency procedures at the work level; direct workers, coordinating response resources; ensuring injured workers receive assistance; and; accounting for workers following an evacuation.

Workers shall:

- Follow emergency instructions and evacuation procedures; and
- Participate in emergency preparedness training and drills.



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PURPOSE

To provide workers, supervisors and construction employers with clear guidance for responding to emergencies, minimizing injury, protecting life and supporting an orderly recovery from workplace incidents.

1 | EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Before work begins on a project, every employer should:

- Review the Constructor's¹ ('GC') Emergency Response Plan (for the project), *including emergency contact information*.
- Identify their *trade-specific* emergency hazards associated with their work.
- Communicate these hazards, and the overall emergency response procedure with their workers.

Ensure that they know:

1. Alarm methods.
2. Muster locations.
3. Site access routes.
4. Contact procedures.
5. Notification requirements.

What is an Emergency?

An emergency is any unplanned event that may:

- Endanger life, health, or safety
- Cause serious property damage
- Interrupt operations
- Harm the environment
- Require outside emergency assistance.

Use our [DSG-ProF300 Safety Meeting](#) form to document a meeting with your workers.

SCAN →



- Ensure that first aid equipment and supplies are available.
- Participate in project emergency drills (when required).

2 | EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCESS

STEP 1: STOP WORK

Any worker in the event of an emergency must:

- Stop work immediately.
- Warn nearby workers.
- Move to a safe location.
- Activate alarm methods and emergency procedures (if safe to do so).

STEP 2: NOTIFY

Contact:

- Their Supervisor
 - Site Supervisor
 - First Aid Attendant
 - 911/EMS (where required)
- "This is an emergency at [Project Name]. We have a [injury/fire/collapse/etc.] at [exact location]. Emergency services are required."

STEP 3: SECURE THE AREA

The Supervisor must:

- Stop nearby work activities.
- Protect workers from secondary hazards.
- Restrict access.

Workers must:

- Stay clear.
- Follow instructions.

STEP 4: PROVIDE FIRST AID & DIRECT EMS TO THE AREA

STEP 5: (When safe) INITIATE INVESTIGATION

STEP 6: DETERMINE THE STEPS TO SAFELY RESUME OPERATIONS & PREVENT RECURRENCE

¹ O.Reg. 213/91 s. 17(1), (3); A constructor shall establish for a project written procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency and shall ensure that the procedures are followed at the project; The constructor shall ensure that the emergency procedures are posted in a conspicuous place at the project.



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POST-EMERGENCY RECOVERY

Following an emergency:

Recognize:

- What happened?

Assess:

- What worked well?
- What failed?
- Were resources adequate?

Correct:

- Update plans.
- Revise procedures.
- Address deficiencies.
- Retrain personnel as required.

Evaluate:

- Incident reports
- Investigation findings
- Corrective actions
- Lessons learned.

To ensure timely reporting, consistent follow-up, and verifiable records, employers may choose to use structured reporting tools that reduce barriers to participation and information collection and integrate corrective action.

Our [DSG-Pro Services App](#) provides accessible hazard, incident, and injury reporting formats that:

- Enable workers to report hazards, near-misses, incidents, and injuries;
- Capture key details needed to support investigation and response.
- Generate records that support review, corrective action, and due diligence verification.



CONSTRUCTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE | QUICK CARD

When in doubt: **STOP**, **ESCALATE**, and **SEEK DIRECTION** before proceeding.

If a serious event occurs (i.e. EMS services are required or 911 was called to respond), **PAUSE** routine operations and consider whether regulatory notification might be required.



IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

1. STABILIZE the situation first (see Emergency preparedness & incident response)
2. PRESERVE THE SCENE where required.
3. ESCALATE INTERNALLY (senior leadership / legal / OHS advisor).
4. Determine if notice may be required to MLTSD and worker representation.



REPORTABLE EVENTS:

- Fatality or critical injury² to a worker
- An injury requiring medical attention or disabling a worker from their usual work
- Occupational illness (or notice of a WSIB illness claim)
- Explosion, fire, structural, or equipment failure that could have endangered a worker, even if no injury occurred
- Serious construction-related failures (falls, collapses, crane or hoisting failures)

KEY REMINDERS:

- Reporting obligations are threshold-based, not outcome-based.
- "Near miss with serious potential" may still count.
- Written notice is required, and records must be kept (minimum 3 years).



² CRITICAL INJURIES, defined; A critical injury is an injury of a serious nature that: a) Places life in jeopardy; b) Produces unconsciousness; c) Results in substantial loss of blood; d) Involves the fracture of a leg or arm (but not a finger or toe); e) Involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot (but not a finger or toe); f) Consists of burns to a major portion of the body; or, g) Causes the loss of sight in an eye.