

Code of Practice

Emergency Preparedness and Response

OSHJ-CoP-18



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1 Introduction

An important part of any safety and health programme is having the provision of a workplace specific emergency plan. Emergency preparedness and response aims to minimise the effect of an incident both inside and outside of the workplace. It requires the prompt application of defined procedures by the entity and employees, with adequate training and resources. For this to happen, plans and procedures specific to the work activities conducted in the workplace must have been developed, documented and tested prior to the occurrence of an emergency.

An emergency plan should aim to prevent, limit and manage the effects of the consequences on people, environment and property.

2 Purpose and Scope

This Code of Practice (CoP) has been developed to provide information to entities to assist them in complying with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health System in Sharjah.

This Code of Practice (CoP) defines the minimum acceptable requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health System in Sharjah, and entities can apply practices higher than, but not lower than those mentioned in this document, as they demonstrate the lowest acceptable level of compliance in the Emirate of Sharjah.

3 Definitions and Abbreviations

No.	Definitions	Abbreviations
1.	Entities:	Government Entities: Government departments, authorities or establishments and the like in the Emirate. Private Entities: Establishments, companies,

		enterprises and economic activities operating in the Emirate in general.
2.	Risk:	Is the combination of likelihood of the hazard causing the loss and the severity of that loss (consequences).
3.	Risk Assessment:	The systematic identification of workplace hazards and evaluation of the risks associated. This process takes existing control measures into account and identifies and recommends further control measures where required.
4.	Hazard:	Anything that has the potential to cause harm or loss (injury, disease, ill-health, property damage etc).
5.	Incident:	An unplanned event, sequence of events or actions that either resulted or could have resulted in an adverse effect (loss).
6.	Emergency:	A situation that harms (or threatens to harm) people, property or the environment.
7.	Emergency Preparedness:	The development and maintenance of agreed procedures to prevent, reduce, control, mitigate and take other actions in the event of an emergency.
8.	Emergency Plan:	Specifies systematic instructions and procedures that have to be followed before and after the time of an anticipated emergency event.
9.	Emergency Response:	The quick implementation of emergency procedures to reduce the consequences of an emergency.

10.	Workplace:	A place that the entity allocates for the performance of the work. This term shall also include the employees' resting places, their accommodation and similar places that the entity allocates to employees.
11.	First Aid:	Immediate assistance provided to a person (or persons) suffering injury or ill-health before the arrival of medical services. or addressing minor injuries or ill health where medical treatment is not required.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Entity Responsibilities

- Ensure emergency plans are prepared for the workplace.
- Ensure emergency procedures include an effective response to an emergency.
- Ensure evacuation procedures are in place for all workplace locations.
- Review emergency procedures periodically and when there are changes in processes.
- Provide information, instruction, supervision and training to employees as part of the implementation of emergency procedures.
- Adequate resources are provided for the development, implementation and maintenance of the emergency plan and for any equipment and personnel required to support the plan.

4.2 Employee Responsibilities

- Not endanger themselves or others.

- Cooperate with the entity and receive instructions during emergencies and familiarise themselves with emergency procedures.
- Cooperate with the entity and receive safety information, instruction, supervision and training.
- Report any activity or defect which they know is likely to endanger the safety of themselves or that of any other person.

5 Requirements

Emergency preparedness are the actions performed before an emergency. This can include planning and coordination meetings, writing emergency procedures, training employees, conducting emergency drills and exercises and ensuring emergency equipment is available, maintained and ready to use. By preparing for emergencies, the entity will be able to respond effectively to reduce the impact to employees, others, property and the environment.

Emergency response are the actions taken after an emergency occurs. This can include emergency communications, sounding an alarm, coordination of emergency response personnel, provision of first aid to treat injured persons, beginning rescue operations, evacuation of an area and other responses specific to the emergency.

An emergency plan is a document prepared by the entity to prepare and coordinate the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency. The purpose of this plan is to reduce the effects of an emergency situation on employees, others and the entity itself, by clearly defining how emergency response personnel and employees should respond. An evacuation plan is not an emergency plan. Evacuation plans can be found displayed in prominent places in buildings and is a diagram showing people the safest emergency exit routes from a building.

The main requirement for emergency preparedness is that a specific emergency plan is developed. It should be sufficiently detailed to cover the full range of work activities in the workplace, including non-routine work activities such as maintenance or construction that could result in an emergency situation. It should be relevant, realistic and easily understood by all users of the emergency plan.

5.1 Emergency Preparedness

It is important that all aspects of the emergency plan are realistic, workable and agreed to by relevant parties. This includes plans for the actions required, timing, effectiveness of detection methods and decision making processes. The emergency plan should take into account expected and unexpected conditions that may occur in a real emergency, many of which may make it difficult to achieve ideal responses in practice.

The objectives of an emergency plan, include but not limited to:

- Prevent injuries and fatalities.
- Protect people in the community and the environment.
- Reduce damage to property, equipment and materials.
- Assist with and accelerate the return of normal operations.

5.1.1 Identifying Emergency Scenarios

Emergencies are sudden events, although their likelihood of occurrence can be predicted with some degree of certainty. When preparing for emergencies, the entity should initially identify the possible scenarios that could affect their work place and pose a threat to the entity. Not all emergency scenarios are relevant to all entities, these scenarios depend on:

- Work activities undertaken at the workplace.

- Location of the workplace.
- The environment surrounding the workplace.

Examples of emergency scenarios, include but not limited to:

Workplace Scenarios	Natural Scenarios
• Fire. • Explosion. • Building collapse. • Major structural failure. • Release or escape of hazardous materials. • Terrorist activities. • Loss of utilities such as power or water. • Confined space. • Work at height.	• Flooding. • Earthquakes. • Severe storms and wind events. • Severe temperature events. • Pandemic disease such as Covid 19.

Table 1: Emergency Scenarios

5.1.2 Assessment of Emergency Scenarios

Desktop exercises are discussion based meetings where emergency response personnel assess the identified emergency scenarios relevant to the entity. This exercise will assess the risk of each identified scenario separately and determine the likelihood and the consequences of emergency scenarios occurring, and the control measures required to protect employees and the entity's business.

Having an understanding of what could happen will enable the entity to determine what resources are needed to develop plans and procedures to prepare for emergency situations.

Having identified the emergency scenarios you then need to evaluate the consequences of these scenarios, including but not limited to:

- Chain reactions of an event triggering others must be considered. Such as a fire may lead to an explosion which then causes structural failure of a building.
- Partial or total evacuation.
- Casualties.
- Damage to the environment.
- Damage to critical infrastructure.
- Damage to equipment.
- Disruption of work.
- Loss of documentation or other vital information.

Further information on risk assessment can be found in OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control.

5.1.3 Emergency Response Personnel

The entity shall appoint emergency response personnel who take charge and make decisions on behalf of the entity during an emergency. They shall lead the emergency response and have the capability and authority to:

- Assess and communicate the situation.
- Implement the emergency response plan.

- **Activate resources.**
- **Communicate and liaise with external organisations, such as, police, civil defence and ambulance services.**
- **Execute safe evacuation, where required.**

During an emergency the key to ensuring prompt actions are taken is the availability of employees who are appointed and trained. These employees shall form part of the emergency response personnel who respond to the type of emergency involved, including but not limited to:

- **First-aiders.**
- **Fire Wardens.**
- **Evacuation Marshalls.**
- **Assembly Point Coordinators.**

5.1.4 Resources and Equipment

Having allocated employees roles and responsibilities the entity will need to consider the resources and equipment that will be required, including but not limited to:

- **Fire fighting equipment, could include fire extinguishers to put out small fires or where the risk of explosion has been identified with possible major consequences, and depending on the risk assessment, entities may consider a fire engine to be stationed onsite.**
- **First aid boxes could include resources to treat a small cut or in some entities such as malls this may include automated external defibrillators (AED) available for trained, competent first-aiders to administer emergency treatment.**

- Emergency personal protective equipment, where the risk of chemical spills has been identified, entities may include the provision of fluid resistant overalls and respirators adequate for the risks involved, to enable suitably trained employees to clean up the chemical spills.
- Rescue equipment, for the entity where confined space work activities are undertaken a rescue plan and rescue equipment shall be prepared, prior to the work commencing.
- Ambulance response times where employees are working in remote areas, the entity and employees need to know the response time for emergency medical assistance if a serious injury occurs.
- Civil defence response times for facilities storing highly flammable materials where specialised fire fighting equipment may be required, such as fire fighting foam to smother and extinguish fuel fires.
- Temporary power generators, back up power may be required in the event of an emergency when power from the national grid has been interrupted, in the event of a fire temporary power generators should engage and provide emergency lighting and water pressure for water sprinkler systems.
- Communication equipment, emergency response personnel may use handheld portable two way radios with a dedicated emergency channel to coordinate emergency response.
- Emergency response personnel who are familiar with the work area ensuring the prompt evacuation of a building in the event of a fire.

Further information on first aid can be found in OSHJ-CoP-16: First Aid at Work.

5.1.5 Emergency Response Procedures

Factors to consider when developing procedures, include but not limited to:

- The type or nature of the emergency.
- The scale and severity of the emergency.
- The size of the workplace.
- The physical layout of the premises and the distribution of employees.
- The response time for assistance from outside of the workplace.
- The requirements of UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice and Aman System.
- The Government entities shall comply with the requirements of The National Standard For Business Continuity Management System – National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority (NCEMA).

Having considered these factors, all emergency procedures shall at a minimum include, but are not limited to:

- All possible emergencies, consequences, required actions, written procedures and the resources available.
- Detailed lists of the emergency response team members, their roles and responsibilities and contact details.
- Evacuation plan of the premises showing the location of evacuation routes, fire fighting equipment, first aid equipment, electricity, gas and water service lines.
- The emergency plan shall provide specific written instructions for each member of the response team.

5.1.6 Training

Effective emergency response requires a complete understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each member of the emergency response team. The provision of training is an integral part of a robust emergency preparedness program.

Comprehensive training in the use of emergency response equipment and personal protection devices and tactics is necessary for ensuring the best response capability. This section of the plan shall provide details of the training program for the team. The amount, type and frequency of training for each member of the team shall be clearly specified.

The entity shall provide employees with training in languages and in a format that employees understand, including but not limited to:

- Induction training for new employees.
- Refresher training for existing employees when their roles and responsibilities change.
- When new equipment or materials are introduced.
- When emergency procedures are revised.
- When feedback from a drill or exercise indicates the need for improvement.
- When the validity of the certificate expires.

Periodic refresher training shall be conducted to ensure employees competency is maintained, including but not limited to:

- Where training certification has expired.
- Where identified as part of a training needs analysis.

- Where risk assessment findings identify training as a measure to control risks.
- Where there is a change in legal requirements.
- Where incident investigation findings recommend refresher training.

The entity must record and maintain accurate training records of OSH training for employees.

Further information on training can be found in OSHJ-GL-08: Training and Competence.

5.1.7 Drills and Exercises

Developing the capability of the entity to deal with emergencies effectively is practiced by conducting emergency drills and exercises. This is the practical part of training for emergencies and allows for the development of employee's skills and awareness. It also allows for the entity to monitor and evaluate the adequacy of the emergency plan. The objectives of conducting emergency drills and exercises, include evaluation of the following, but is not limited to:

- Practicality of the plan, structure and organisation.
- Adequacy of communications and interactions between parties.
- Emergency equipment effectiveness.
- Adequacy of first aid and rescue procedures.
- Adequacy of fire fighting equipment.
- Adequacy of the emergency response team and training.
- Evacuation and head count procedures.

Full emergency evacuation drills must be conducted at least once per year to ensure that all employees and emergency response team members are familiar

with all the aspects of the emergency plan. Where possible, the participation of external organisations, such as police, civil defence and ambulance services should be considered.

The entity is required to comply with the UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice with regards to fire drills and exercises.

The schedule of drills, exercises, observations and corrective measures identified shall be recorded.

5.1.8 Review

The effectiveness of the emergency plan and its implementation within the entity shall be reviewed on a regular basis. The emergency plan shall be reviewed to ensure the information contained in the plan is accurate and up to date. The emergency plan should be reviewed following any drills, exercises, incidents or changes in processes.

Following any reviews or amendments to the emergency plan, relevant employees must be provided with training. In certain circumstances it may be required to communicate to relevant external services of any relevant amendments.

5.2 Emergency Response

Emergency response includes the actions taken immediately after an emergency has been identified. Based on the emergency scenarios identified earlier in this document, the entity will then need to decide on the actions they need to take, including but not limited to:

- Declaring an emergency.
- Sounding the alarm.
- Evacuating the danger area.

- Closing down machinery, equipment, power, water or other utilities.
- Alerting relevant authorities for additional help.
- Beginning rescue operations.
- Treating casualties.
- Fighting fire.

Incident detection and information gathering are crucial in responding effectively to an emergency. The entity can assist the emergency response team by providing a flowchart or decision tree which will assist team members to ensure they make critical decisions correctly.

For each type of emergency, there are actions that may need to be taken, including but not limited:

- Identifying the type or nature of the emergency and assess if there are casualties.
- Locate the source, the area of immediate risk and the potential for escalation.
- Raise the alarm, alert the emergency response team leader and activate the appropriate warning system.
- Liaise with external emergency services as they arrive on-site and cooperate as required.
- Mobilise the appropriate resources to isolate the hazard as far as possible and to implement first aid.
- Initiate procedures for the protection of personnel, environment, plant and property. Consider the need to evacuate non-essential personnel and the need for an emergency shutdown of operations.

- Implement procedures for the protection of vital resources, continuity of critical services and security of the property and records.
- Arrangements to headcount personnel and to log events.
- Activate emergency communications links, notify senior personnel, the appropriate agencies and neighbours where appropriate.
- Keep up to date with developments and ensure that the means of giving and receiving information, advice and assistance are functioning effectively, including those related to public relations.
- As appropriate, implement approved procedures for rehabilitation.

5.2.1 Evacuation

Evacuation covers an orderly partial or full evacuation of the workplace and if required, procedures to evacuate the surrounding community.

The emergency response team shall assist in the safe evacuation of employees, contractors, visitors and others. Evacuation consists of the following actions, including but not limited to:

- Raising the alarm or reacting to the alarm being raised.
- Evacuating the area via the designated evacuation routes.
- Moving methodically through the premises to ensure the area is clear of all personnel.
- Moving people from inside buildings to the assembly point outdoors.
- Conducting an assembly point headcount to ensure that the facility is completely evacuated.
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6 References

OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control

OSHJ-CoP-16: First Aid at Work

OSHJ-GL-08: Training and Competence

UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice

7 Document Amendment Record

TITLE		Emergency Preparedness and Response	
DOCUMENT AMENDMENT RECORD			
Version	Revision Date	Amendment Details	Pages Affected
1	15-SEP-2021	New Document	N/A
2	24 June 2024	Change to the guideline code (OSHJ-GL-26 to OSHJ-GL-08)	-
2	24 June 2024	Checklist Added	19
3	01 MAY 2026	The name has been changed from the Prevention and Safety Authority to Sharjah Police Headquarters	Applied throughout the entire document
3	01 MAY 2026	The logo has been changed	

8 Appendic1. Checklist

The checklist is used by Sharjah Police Headquarters to monitor compliance levels during audit and inspection operations; it is not intended for use by government entities or private establishments.

Every code of practice or guideline published by the Sharjah Police Headquarters within the Sharjah occupational safety and health system contains requirements that employers in the Emirate of Sharjah must comply with. Each manual includes an inspection checklist that summarizes the essential items used by the Sharjah Police Headquarters auditor to verify that government entities or private establishments comply with the manual's requirements. Auditors can add additional essential items as necessary. The inspection checklist also includes a manual reference for each essential item, as well as a sample of acceptable compliance evidence for each item. The Sharjah Police Headquarters' auditor may request additional compliance evidence based on the item's condition, as well as the severity and potential impact of non-compliance.

The Sharjah Police Headquarters' auditor uses the inspection checklist to provide a comprehensive report on the entity's status. We will use the same checklist to monitor manual standard violations. Non-compliance with these standards constitutes a violation of Executive Council Resolution No. 15 of 2021 regarding the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System. If the Sharjah Police Headquarters' auditor detects non-compliance, they can issue violations based on the approved violation list.

In this manual, the Sharjah Police Headquarters provides information and standards that employers conducting activities in the Emirate of Sharjah must adhere to. This is to ensure the safety of workers, property, and the environment. Adhering to the requirements of this manual helps improve the level of occupational safety and health at the workplace, and it shields private establishments from potential violations or financial penalties for non-compliance.

The Emirate of Sharjah's Executive Council Resolution stipulates that employers must exercise due diligence to ensure the safety and health of workers, contractors, visitors, and all those affected by the employer's activities. To avoid non-compliance, employers must ensure adherence to the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System requirements. Entities should develop their procedures and inspection checklists according to their activities, nature of work, and risk level.

Depending on recorded or reported incidents, and as necessary, the Sharjah Police Headquarters may amend the requirements in this manual. As a result, the attached inspection checklist may change. Occupational safety and health practitioners must stay up-to-date on published standards and any changes to the inspection checklist attached to each manual.

Audit/Inspection Checklist

Code Title	Emergency preparedness and response	Code No.	OSHJ-CoP-18	Rev. No.	3.0
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Sr.	Checklist Item	Clause in the Code	Acceptable means of compliance
1	Are the possible emergency scenarios in the workplace identified?	5.1.1: Identifying Emergency Scenarios	– Copy of Emergency plan document – Interviewing the ER team
2	Is there a dedicated emergency response team available with an appointed person in charge?	5.1.3: Emergency Response Personnel	– Check for the ER team document – Check the training certificates of ER team representative – Check for previous emergency drills / situations performance
3	Are the equipment and resources for the emergencies available and ready to use?	5.1.4: Resources and Equipment	– Visual inspection of resources / equipment allocated for emergency use. – Check for documentation for the inventory of emergency resources / equipment
4	Is there an Emergency Response Procedure for the workplace?	5.1.5: Emergency Response Procedures	– Copy of Emergency Response Procedure
5	Are the ER team representative trained for the emergencies?	5.1.6 : Training	– Check for training plan – Check training record – Check training certificate

6	Are the employees trained in the emergency procedures?	5.1.6 : Training	– Check for training plan – Check training record
7	Are there emergency evacuation drills conducted once/year and recorded?	5.1.7: Drills and Exercises	– Copy of emergency evacuation and fire drills Records. – Check for performance of evacuation and fire drills.