

## **Trainer's Corner**

### **Disaster Training or Training Disaster?**

Emergency training is not “one size fits all”. The proper emergency response to a fire might be quite different than to a hurricane, a release of toxic chemicals, or a terrorist attack. Not knowing the difference could make a bad situation a lot worse – and you don’t want to wait until a disaster. So the first step in an effective training program is to identify what types of emergencies might actually occur and determine the appropriate response for each. This may mean that you need to have more than one type of training for different possible emergencies.

**OSHA’s guidelines are a good start.** Although OSHA’s standards related to emergency response provide little specific direction on what training must include, other OSHA publications have specific guidelines for emergency response training. These guidelines include the following general training points:

- Recognizing potential hazards and threats that might create an emergency
- Contents of the company’s Emergency Action Plan (EAP)
- Location and use of common emergency response equipment, such as alarms
- Individual roles and responsibilities
- Warning, alarm and communication procedures and systems
- Evacuation and shelter procedures
- Reporting and accountability procedures (that is, making sure everyone is accounted for in an emergency)
- Equipment shutdown procedures

Because fast response is critical in an emergency, practical exercises and drills should be considered essential to effective emergency training. And remember that employees with specific emergency response duties must receive additional, specialized training.

**Don’t forget to update emergency training.** OSHA also provides guidelines on when to provide emergency training. Clearly, it’s not enough simply to train once and forget about it. OSHA encourages emergency training.

- Immediately after developing an EAP
- After revisions to the EAO
- For all new employees
- For employees with new responsibilities or assignments
- When new equipment, materials, or processes are introduced
- When exercises and drills show unsatisfactory performance
- In any event, at least annually