



Taking care of business

Emergency planning guide

In the event of an emergency, as a business operator, you need to personally respond to protect your business, employees and your customers.

Rohnert Park is a fairly safe city. It is reasonably modern-it was founded in 1962. There are no hills, so landslides and mudslides just don't happen. Nearly all power lines are underground, so downed power lines rarely happen. There is some minor flooding which occurs, and other common problems do happen here. Some can be predicted such as storms, and others are a surprise: earthquake, utility outages and so forth.

What will be presented here are scenarios which outline what you can do to respond to various events. The rest is up to you.

Regardless of what the emergency is, there are some common preparedness practices they all share:

- There is the need to “pre-plan”. You must identify what your needs will be so you can provide for them. This should be written.
- Identify the proper means to provide for yourself and anyone else. Understand how this is to occur and who is to do it.
- Provide contingency plans for changing conditions.
- Know what you have to work with. Gather additional supplies or mechanisms to meet your needs.
- Delegate tasks to individuals clearly. As an example, it may be wise to have one person dedicated to listening to the news and report all pertinent information as it gets broadcast. On-going communications is critical as conditions change and resources become available. Make arrangements with your families so they know how to find you.
- Most importantly: Is it wise to stay in-place or evacuate? If you leave, you must consider how to communicate where you’re going. A pre-designated evacuation area is a good plan.



There are four phases of a disaster. This is the Preparedness phase. Each following phase is dependent upon the Preparedness Phase being done properly.

Natural disasters



- Storms
- Earthquake
- Flood
- Extreme weather: heat or cold
- Fire

In the event of natural disaster, such as are listed above, it's important to perform a quick "size up" before (if possible), during, and as conditions change. An assessment might look like this:

What is the threat? Storm? Frost? Flood? Power failure or shutoff?

What is the possible result? Transportation/traffic jams? Personal safety? Structural damage to buildings? Utility failure?

What resources do we have available to mitigate the problem? Blankets, water, food? A van to evacuate with? A "safe room"? A place to go ?

What course of action makes the most sense? Stay and "ride it out"? Evacuate to a safer place? Cover windows and stay warm?

A "size up" is an on-going process. Conditions will change, your decisions may need to change.

Consult your company's policy. If none exists, you should develop Specific Response Plans.

Things to consider:

Transportation/evacuation may be difficult. It will only get worse as time goes by. If you plan to leave, earlier is better.

Utilities such as electricity, water and heat may be compromised.

Sanitation may work, it may not.

If you must cross water, do so very carefully. There's likely to be pollutants and sharp objects in it. You will find it difficult to know where the edge of the street is.



Utility Failures or PSPS

When utilities fail, we lose power, water, heat, maybe sanitation. If you are in a building with an elevator, you may lose the ability to use it. Most buildings have features which provide illumination which will allow evacuation of the building (up to 90 minutes). If the municipal water system goes out of service, both drinking water and sanitation water will be disrupted. Keep this in mind if you plan to stay in a building without service. Do not use candles or other burning substance for light and heat inside a building. Do you have stored water?

Once the utility fails, do a “size up” and create a response plan.



Utility failures

There is little to do if there is a system-wide failure. If a breaker trips, it is easy to re-set the breaker. Once the fuse box is located, simply slide the switch to “off and then return it to the “on “ position. If it won’t reset, there is another problem.

Utility problems should be reported to whom? Supervisor? Building Maintenance? P.G. & E?



Medical emergencies:

Immediately contact 911.

If the emergency is minor, take precautions you are comfortable with. Do not attempt to move a patient who has fallen. Consult your company's policy on this or follow the advice of your supervisor. First Aid and CPR skills are extremely valuable to have. Part of the CPR process is patient assessment (a.k.a. "size up").



Medical emergencies

You should know the locations of:

- First Aid Kit
- Telephone
- AED, if there is one.

If not a medical emergency, you may call Rohnert Park Dispatch (non-emergency) at 707-584-2610 for assistance.

Notify your supervisor.



Violence or threatening situation

Tips:

Diffuse the situation, if possible.

Leave the situation as soon as it is safe, get with other people.

Alert your supervisor, their intervention may be mandatory.

Consult the company policy.

Creek paths or poorly lit areas can be potentially unsafe places. Walk with someone and pay attention.



Violent or threatening situation

Prevention is the key word here. If you can keep employees talking in a respectful manner, workplace issues will generally resolve themselves.

Customers or others are another issue. If possible, stay in a group when in a lonely place, such as walking at lunch, taking a break outside or walking to your car, especially when dark.

If you observe a threatening situation, or potentially violent encounter, it is best to intervene if it is safe to do so. Merely being highly visible and observing the situation is often enough to stop it. Filming with a cell phone can be a deterrent. Refer to your company's policy.

Report it to your supervisor.

Bomb Threat

If a threat is made, pay attention to the details and....

CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY!!!!!!!

In almost all circumstances, the building must be immediately evacuated.

Take all threats seriously, and.....

Notify your supervisor (after calling 911).

There should be some discussion about how notifying everyone and evacuating everyone is handled.

Many businesses use various codes to identify hazards: Examples “Code White, or Code Orange”, to pass on information to employees and not startle customers.

Drills

It would be wise to have drills on various procedures with, and without customers present, to familiarize staff with procedures. It is during these drills you want to discover flaws in the process.

If evacuating the building, identify where an assembly area would be, and have a person designated to ensure everyone is accounted for.

Each of these scenarios could have its' own drill.

After a drill, discuss what went right and wrong. It's valuable knowledge. A written drill log is usually required by your company's IIPP.

Being prepared will make a huge difference in the resiliency of your business!