Emergency procedures – flowcharts

Joseph McHugh and Sandesh Sheth describe how to construct an emergency procedure flowchart.

**Introduction:** Emergency procedures are the foundation of any crisis management plan. The objective of the emergency procedures is to be able to protect lives and minimize damage to assets and to try to ‘nip the incident in the bud’ before it escalates into a disaster. The authors developed the following emergency procedures flowchart during the implementation of a business continuity management system. The process flows depicted by the flowcharts enable easy understanding and also provide a quick reference guide for all concerned.

**Caveat:** Please adapt them based on your organization’s uniqueness.

**List of incidents covered:** emergency response procedures are used to address incidents that may occur during routine operations. Below is a list of some of the incidents that would trigger the initiation of emergency response procedures:

- Fire
- Explosive Devices
- Civil Disturbance
- Power Outage
- Water Incident
- Severe Wind
- Snow

We will address each of the emergencies in detail in the following flowcharts.

**Need:** The need is to create flowcharts that convey the first actions to be carried out and the escalations and process flows based on the emerging scenario.

Before the construction of the flow charts the following need to be defined:

- Primary contacts
- Emergency response team members
- Crisis management team members
- Floor Marshals
- Roll call / head count lists
- First aid trained personnel
- Emergency service providers contact numbers
- Emergency contact numbers for all employees
- Vendor contact numbers
- Call trees for employees, contractors and vendors
- Floor plans with detailed information
- Building evacuation drills
The following additional details need to be defined
Alarm monitoring service provider details- contact number, disabling procedure, testing procedure.
The following additional details need to be defined
Procedure to handle bomb threat calls – bomb threat checklist and agencies to be notified.
Civil disturbance

The following additional details need to be defined
- Shelter-in-place procedure
- Flooding within premises.
Water related incident

Water Related Incident

Data Center

Location of affected area

Employees in Data Center will activate the Incident Procedure

Office Area

Employees in Office area will activate the Incident Procedure

Primary Contact informs Emergency Response Team

Emergency Response Team informs Crisis Management Team

Emergency Response Team contacts Vendors

Crisis Management Team directs JIS actions

The following additional details need to be defined
Flooding incident procedure – mapping of vital records locations to danger areas, location of shielding material, contact numbers of restoration vendors.
Power Outage

The following additional details need to be defined:
- Soft shutdown procedures
- Determine reorder point of fuel for backup generator.
Severe windstorm / hurricane

Severe Wind Incident

Watch Alert issued

Emergency Response Team is on alert

Emergency Response Team verifies alert

Emergency Response Team prepares for any mobilization

Warning Alert issued

Emergency Response Team verifies alert

Emergency Response informs Crisis Management Team

Crisis Management Team directs future actions

The following additional details need to be defined:
- Equipment for keeping alert
- Mobilization resources and procedures.
Snow storms

The following additional details need to be defined
- Lights out procedures
- Skeleton crew operations procedures
- Mobilization resources and procedure.
**Conclusion**

This article highlights the process to develop flow charts for emergency procedures. Each flow chart has to be complemented by the required details. The flow charts in themselves are only able to summarize what needs to be done and should be used during top-level designs, trainings and awareness campaigns.

**About the authors**

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