

Sample Emergency Evacuation Plan

Goal: To safely and efficiently evacuate clients and staff from the Public Health Office during an emergency.

When an emergency situation arises, the first priority is to have clients and staff evacuate the building safely. This guide identifies general steps to take when an emergency situation arises. It is understood that each situation is unique and that people must use common sense and good judgment in all situations. There may be multiple reasons to evacuate a building such as a fire, a hazardous spill, a bomb scare, or some other dangerous situation. Listed below are the steps for an emergency evacuation plan.

Emergency Protocol:

- In case of emergency – call 911 immediately. Report the nature of the emergency. **HANG UP LAST!**
- Keep a list of emergency telephone numbers posted at all phones in office.
- Calmly announce to clients and visitors that there is an emergency and they must follow you out as you evacuate the building. If visibility is a problem you may choose to hold hands during the evacuation.
- A staff member will identify his or her self as the person in charge of checking to see that the office has been completely evacuated.
- Once office employees have evacuated the building, they should all meet at a predetermined site. At that time the staff will assess if all employees and clients are accounted for. If someone is missing, the missing person will be reported to emergency personnel on the scene.
- Wait for emergency personnel to arrive and follow their instructions.
- Be sure that injured person(s) receive medical care. Sometimes in emergencies people do not realize that they have been injured.

After the Emergency:

Notify the District office of the emergency situation as soon as possible and follow their directives.

After the emergency, fill out the proper forms as directed by your District Health Office supervisory personnel.

Discuss the situation, and how it was handled, at the next full staff meeting.

Prior to an Emergency Situation:

OSHA trainings should be conducted once each year for local health office staff. All health office staff must be aware of the location of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and procedure in the event of a chemical exposure incident. The Health Office staff is responsible for disposition of medical hazardous waste that is consistent with OSHA standards.

Routine precautions can be taken that may avert an emergency situation by staff and local fire department /Fire Marshall. Investigate who is responsible in your county for maintaining fire extinguishers, inspecting the building, and removing any hazardous material that may be flammable and follow up on any deficiencies.

Each local health office will review the **New Mexico Department of Health Emergency Operations Plan** on a yearly basis and update as needed. If the physical location of local health office changes, the emergency plan will be revised as soon as possible but no less than one month after occupying the new space.

All staff are responsible for knowing where the fire extinguishers are located in the local health office and how to use them. Remember that fire extinguishers must be checked periodically between scheduled maintenance checks.

All staff are responsible for scrutinizing closets, rooms, and storage areas for potential hazards such as oily cloths, hazardous waste, suspicious/unmarked packages or combustible materials. Staff should remove or correct the hazard as soon as possible or report the hazard to the proper authority/maintenance staff as soon as possible for immediate correction.

A floor plan of the local health office identifying the exits and how to evacuate the building are to be posted in the waiting area and in clearly visible areas.

An emergency evacuation drill will be conducted in conjunction with fire drills, which are scheduled at least twice a year. During the mock emergency evacuation drill public health office staff will:

- Calmly announce to clients and visitors that this is a mock emergency evacuation and that they must follow you out of the building.
- Evacuate the building following the exits identified on the floor plan.
- Pretend to call 911
- A staff member will self-identify as being the person to check offices to be sure they are not occupied by anyone.
- Meet in the designated area and account for everyone.
- Document such emergency evacuation drills in meeting minutes.

Courtesy Bernallilo Health Office

EXAMPLE OF SECURITY PROTOCOL

Goal: To make the local health office safe, secure and inviting for clients, potential clients and visitors, while making it unattractive to persons with violent or criminal intent.

Target population: Any individual or individuals demonstrating aggressive, intimidating, potentially violent, or violent behavior. These behaviors can include abusive language; yelling; screaming; threats; harassment; use of force; threats to use a weapon or show of a weapon; body language indicating distress or potential assault such as hostile facial expressions, clenched fists, or other threatening body language. Other signs of potential violence are the sound of breaking glass, explosions, gunfire, endless honking horns, telephone threats, bomb scares, etc.

General Guidelines and Protocols

Each situation or potential incident will be different and it is impossible to foresee every possible circumstance. Staff needs to know that:

- It is important to use their best judgment and common sense.
- They should follow these guidelines to the greatest extent possible depending upon the particular circumstance.
- They are NOT to challenge a perpetrator.
- They are to summon assistance immediately – CALL 911. Calling 911 documents the call and the situation. The police can be cancelled later if not needed.
- They are to give the location of the incident, provide as much identifying information as possible, and keep the line open until the police arrive or the issue is safely resolved. DO NOT HANG UP FIRST.

As a follow-up to each situation, the staff will meet and:

- Discuss each incident or potential incident with the staff to analyze if the situation was handled in the best manner possible and to determine what could have been done differently, if anything, to improve the outcome.
- Acknowledge and recognize staff who handle the incident in the best manner possible by keeping themselves and others safe.
- Be sure that all the appropriate paperwork is filled out and filed.

Physical Security:

1. ACCESS TO THE BUILDING

- a. Public access will be available only through the front door leading to the reception area. Employees will have access to other designated entrances with assigned keys.
- b. Any alternate exits from the local health office must be locked at all times. Clients are to enter and leave through the reception area.
- c. Any employee who loses or misplaces their building key(s) needs to report the information to the Clerk Specialist who will in turn report the loss to the appropriate authority.
- d. NO UNAUTHORIZED person(s) should be admitted through alternate entrances.
- e. Windows are to be secured, shades drawn closed, and doors locked at the end of each day.
- f. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LAST PERSON EXITING THE OFFICE FOR THE DAY TO SECURE THE LOCAL HEALTH OFFICE.

LIGHTING:

- a. County is responsible for maintaining the parking area and adequate lighting. The parking lot should be lit at night. Any burned out lights should be reported immediately to the County maintenance staff.

2. PARKING LOT AND BUILDING SECURITY:

- a. Staff members are encouraged to arrive or leave the area together.
- b. Staff members arriving to work or leaving alone should be aware of their surroundings and survey the building and parking lot for suspicious-looking persons or vehicles. This is especially true during twilight hours, at night, or when working alone.
- c. When working late, it is a good idea to call home and let someone know what time you are leaving.
- d. If the building is not secure upon arrival to work – **DO NOT ENTER THE BUILDING!** Warning signs that the building is not secure are an open unsecured doorway, a broken window or any other appearances of tampering or forced entry. The employee is to go to a safe place and call the police. Do not enter the building without police protection.
- e. If suspicious circumstances exist or suspicious individual(s) are present, do not stop or get out of your car. Drive to a safe location and call the police and follow their instructions.
- f. Persons attempting to leave under suspicious circumstances should request a police escort or surveillance.

Personnel Security:

- a. NEVER give out the home telephone number or address of any employee or client. A safer procedure would be to offer to take the persons name and number and offer to call the staff member or client and leave a message.
- b. Office staff will decide on a distress word or phrase to signal a potentially volatile situation. Any colleague hearing the code should first call 911 and leave the line open while determining the nature of the occurrence.
- c. Staff members are to inform their supervisor if they believe they are being stalked or involved in a domestic violence situation that might escalate to the workplace.
- d. Staff should never jeopardize their own safety or that of any client, visitor, or colleague.
- e. Staff should NOT challenge an aggressive individual.
- f. All incidents should be documented and reported to the individual's supervisor as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after the incident. The report should include a description of the individual(s), the circumstances preceding and during the incident, the nature of the disturbance, and a description of the procedures followed to neutralize the situation.
- g. The office staff should review the incident as soon as possible and analyze how the incident was handled, look for areas of improvement and process the incident.

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