



# Emergency Plan Guidance



This guidance and template is intended to aid State Authorities in the development of an Emergency Plan for the building they occupy.

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## INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the typical contents of an emergency plan. The contents of an emergency plan will vary based on the building: size, location, age, occupants etc and as such no two plans will be the same. An emergency plan can be as simple as a one page notice for a straight forward premises<sup>1</sup> or it may be a large document which links with a number of other procedures for more complex buildings. It is important to involve all key employees in the development of the plan.

Appendix B – Employee Emergency instruction – this document outlines the basic instruction for employees. It can be posted throughout the building and/or located on shared drives and intranets.

Appendix C – Emergency Plan– is a summary document of the emergency plan for the building. It is contained on a single A3 page. This document is designed so that it can be posted in key areas of the building e.g. where the emergency services will be called from such as the reception. All persons with a role in the emergency plan should have a copy. This plan should meet the requirements of a straight forward premises. Complex premises should consider guidance document in more detail.

### 1. EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

This section of the emergency plan should contain all the relevant numbers that will be required in event of an emergency. First and foremost in an Emergency is the requirement to call for assistance. The Fire Service/ Gardaí / Ambulance can all be contacted at **999 or 112**. There should be staff designated to contact these services and it is useful to provide these designated staff with a sample script of the typical information they will be required to give to the operator. A sample script is contained the emergency plan template Appendix C.

Other external numbers that may be relevant are as follows:

- The local Garda station, fire station, doctor, and hospital- these may be required for instance in the event that a situation is a more localised event.
- Details of the key utility companies emergency numbers should be at hand including:
  - Electricity/Water/Gas/Telephone.
- Security company - the building may employ an external security provider.
- Other facilities/operational related numbers- numbers which are not an immediate requirement should be contained in an index for ease of reference such as part of business continuity plan. In the immediate emergency the list of number should be for priority services only.

There may be some internal contacts which will be required such as:

- Building Manager (the person with overall building responsibility).
- Person responsible for Fire Safety (Fire Officer) / Emergency Co-ordinator.
- Senior management contacts.
- Security.
- Facilities.
- Other Safety contacts: Fire wardens, first aiders, peep assistants. (See Section 2. Roles and responsibilities).

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<sup>1</sup> Straight forward building would typically have a non complex layout; it would have 2-3 levels with no special risks.

## 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES STRUCTURE

This section should outline the various roles and responsibilities with regards to an emergency. These roles should be contained in the plan and should be kept up-to-date appendix C.

### **Person with overall responsibility for fire safety of the building**

A person must be nominated to take responsibility for all aspects of fire safety. Usually the person charged with the management and control of the premises will be the 'responsible person' under the Fire Services Act 1981 and 2003. They shall satisfy Senior Management that they have implemented the fire safety management system within their area of control.

In straight forward premises this person may undertake all elements of the fire safety management system. However in more complex premises these roles will be assigned to other parties e.g. health and safety officer to complete the fire risk assessment, facilities manager responsible for maintaining the inspection and testing requirements of fire safety equipment (fire register) and the emergency coordinator is responsible for developing and implementing the emergency plan.

### **Emergency Coordinator**

The Emergency Coordinator is responsible for monitoring, co-ordinating and facilitating the implementation of emergency evacuation. Their role may include to:

- coordinate the fire wardens and PEEP coordinator.
- give assistance to the Fire Services and Security Services.
- Develop, update and communicate the emergency plan.

### **Fire Warden**

Fire wardens are designated members of staff with duties as part of the emergency plan. Their role may include:

- helping those on the premises to leave.
- checking the premises to ensure everyone has left.
- liaising with the fire and rescue service on arrival (as directed by emergency coordinator).
- shutting down vital or dangerous equipment.
- performing a supervisory/managing role in any fire situation.

Training for this role may include:

- detailed knowledge of the emergency plan for the premises.
- awareness of human behaviour in fires.
- how to encourage others to use the most appropriate escape route.
- how to search safely and recognise areas that are unsafe to enter.
- the difficulties that some people, particularly if disabled, may have in escaping and any special evacuation arrangements that have been pre-planned.
- additional training in the use of fire fighting equipment.
- an understanding of the purpose of any fixed fire fighting equipment such as sprinklers or gas flooding systems.
- reporting of faults, incidents and near misses.

## Staff members

Information for employees is key to a successful emergency plan. The actions of staff if there is a fire is likely to be crucial to their safety and that of other people in the premises. Basic fire safety instruction should be provided to all staff members. The type of instruction should be based on the particular features of the premises and should:

- Take account of the findings of the fire risk assessment.
- Explain your emergency procedures (reference emergency plan).
- Provide general fire safety guidance including good housekeeping, fire precautions.
- Identify staff with designated roles in the emergency plan.

In small premises this may be no more than showing new staff the fire exits and giving basic instructions on what to do if there is a fire. In larger premises more formal briefings may be required. In all cases the instruction should be recorded and records maintained e.g. along with health and safety records, training records.

Instruction / briefing is necessary when:

- when staff start employment or are transferred into the premises.
- when changes have been made to the emergency plan.
- where working practices and processes or people's responsibilities change e.g. where staff are expected to assist disabled persons.

**Table 1.1** Typical roles and responsibilities structure

Top Management e.g. SG, MAC members	Ultimate responsibility for fire safety management in respect of the activities and premises under their control.	Overall Responsibility
Person with responsibility for the building	Responsible for fire safety management in respect of the premises they control. Acts on the behalf of senior management.	
Emergency coordinator	Monitoring, coordinating and facilitating the implementation of emergency evacuation for the complete building.	
Fire Warden	Coordinating and facilitating the implementation of the fire emergency evacuation for their area of responsibility.	
PEEP Coordinator	Implementing, monitoring and communicating PEEPs in respect of individuals with disabilities/temporarily incapacitated.	Direct Responsibility
Person with responsibility for attending the fire panel	Respond to the alarm and communicate and act on to the appropriate degree.	
Person with responsibility for removing the fire service pack/visitor list etc. from the building	Gather all necessary information to assist in a safe emergency evacuation.	
Facilities Manager/Accommodation	Maintains the building elements, systems and infrastructure in compliance with the fire safety requirements.	
Employees	Comply with the requirements of fire safety legal and other requirements to ensure their and others safety in respect of fire.	
Note: In smaller premises roles may be combined.		

### 3. EVACUATION PLAN PROCEDURE

#### 3.1 Instructions in event of an emergency for all employees who do not have a designated emergency role

Basic fire safety instruction with regards to the emergency plan should be given to all employees. Appendix B contains a sample of this procedure. There are standard fire notice signs available of the shelf, however you should ensure these adequately reflect your building e.g. if there are no call break glass units another method of operating the alarm will be required such as calling reception or other.

#### 3.2 Procedures for persons with designated roles in event of a fire

Appendix C Emergency Plan contains a sample of the procedure in event of fire for those with designated roles. These steps should be considered in respect of your own building where roles could be further broken down or combined. All emergency plans should identify who will attend to the fire alarm and how/who will call the emergency services

Contingency plans should be in place so that more than one staff member is available to conduct the various roles.

### 4. EVACUATION ROUTE

#### 4.1 Emergency escape route plan

It is important to have established evacuation routes in place for a building. The level of detail required will depend on:

- The occupants - are they familiar with the premises? Is there public access?
- The size, type and age of the building - in a small premises evacuation may be relatively straight forward, whereas larger or older buildings may be more complex.

The person with responsibility for the building should, together with each fire warden, develop an emergency escape route plan for their area of responsibility (floor, section or other). Factors which should be considered are as follows:

- Both the primary and secondary escape route for each area (a route may not be useable).
- Ensure one escape stairway/route is not overloaded; it is a natural instinct in an emergency situation for employees to exit through the main entrance they use regularly. Fire drills are important in this case to ensure employees are aware of the alternative routes.
- Whether floor plans are required – these can be a simple box diagram (technical drawings are not be required for straight forward premises). Where plans are used they should be up-to-date and reflect changes in building.
- If an escape route is being used as part of a PEEP, for instance, where evacuation chairs may be used, there may be additional congestion and this will require appropriate management of routes.
- Determine if signage/ lighting are appropriate (part of fire risk assessment).
- In larger building there may be requirements to look at phased evacuation or horizontal evacuation.

**Note:** Fire drills are a useful method to determine issues with evacuation plans and should be used not just to improve the execution of the plan but the evacuation plan itself. See section 9 – fire drills/fire events

#### 4.2 Assembly areas post evacuation

There should be a designated assembly area for employees post-evacuation. The following should be considered with regards to these assembly areas:

- It should be clearly marked/signed (not always possible in public areas, however employees should be aware of where to locate).
- It should be safe from traffic and not obstructing access and operation of the emergency services.
- It should be well lit and have a good ground surface at a suitable distance from the building.
- Where there are more than one assembly points for the building there should be communication methods for the emergency coordinator and fire wardens.

### 5. PROCEDURE FOR VARIOUS EMERGENCIES

Typically the key emergency that is planned for is a fire emergency. There are other emergencies which should be considered, albeit the procedures may not differ significantly. The templates in appendices B and C contain sample procedures for all employees and the person with responsibility for the building. The business/premises will determine the level of detail required e.g. if a bomb threat is a likely event a more detailed plan may be required where designated employees are tasked with conducting a search of the building. These could be facilities personnel or fire wardens for example.

More recently there has been a rise in the number of potentially threatening or violent incidents in State authorities/ Agencies. There should be procedures in place for dealing with these events. The emergency plan template outlines an example of such a procedure. Additional guidance is available from the SCA in this regard.

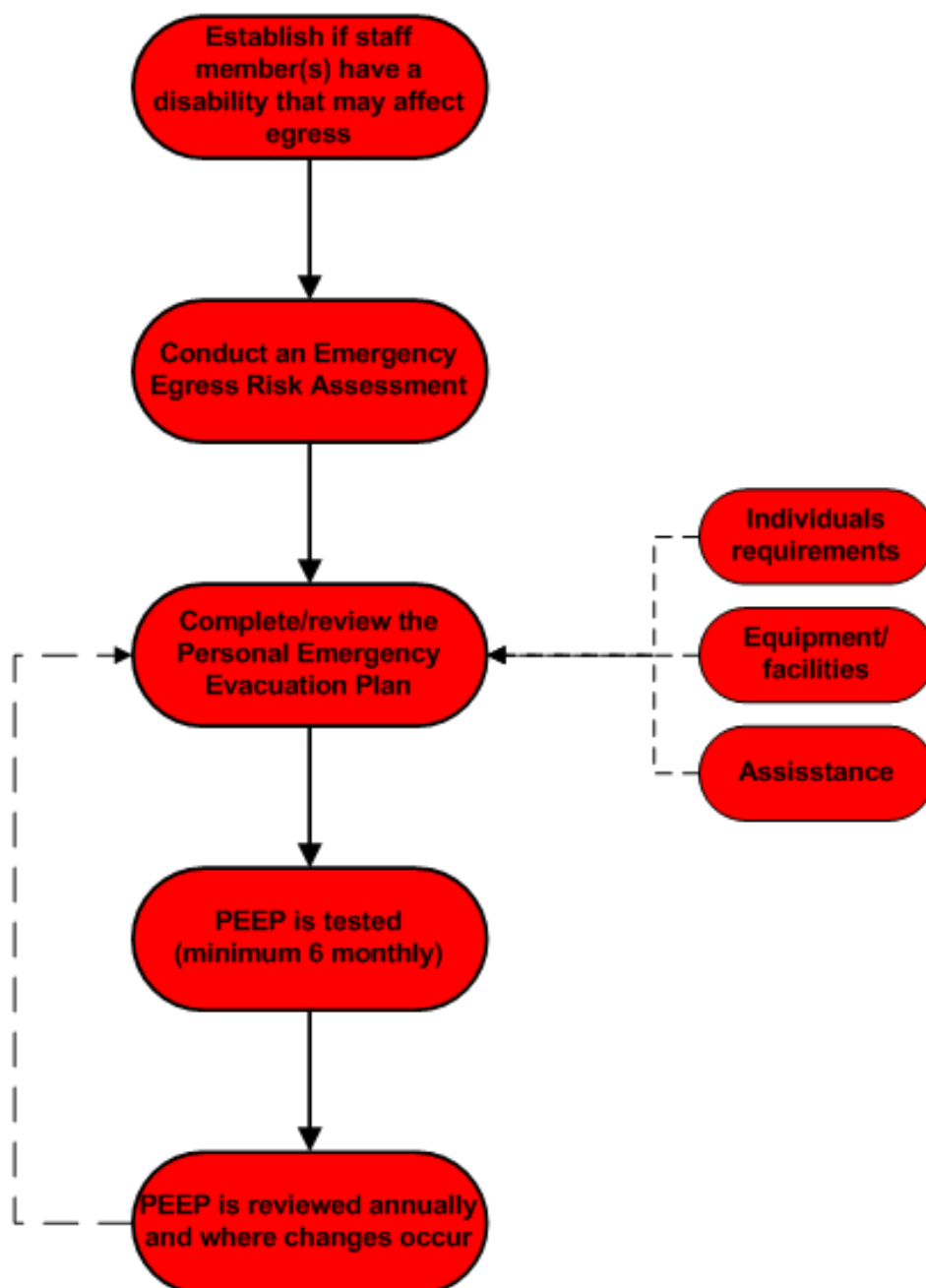


## 6. PEOPLE AT RISK AND PERSONAL EMERGENCY EGRESS PLANS (PEEPS)

In the event of an emergency suitable evacuation must be provided for people with disabilities. The person with responsibility for the building or person designated by them must:

- Carry out an assessment and formulate an agreed PEEP with individuals upon notification of a disabilities.
- Implement any actions identified.
- Continually monitor the PEEP.

Figure 1.2 The procedure to be taken for a PEEP



Communication with persons with disabilities about the fire or emergency evacuation process is vital to ensure its success and to reduce the need for emergency escapes except in exceptional circumstances. The most effective form of communication for PEEP is through a combination of awareness sessions, documentation and drills.

Developing a PEEP and subsequent evacuation strategies will depend on a number of factors:

- The impairment – visual, hearing or mobility.
- Building design- size and age.

One solution will not fit all situations. It will require careful planning and communication with all parties involved. The following are some common factors which typically arise or require consideration:

- Consider all location in building where person requires evacuation from - the person may be in meeting room or canteen etc. When considering mobility impairments in so far as is possible, common areas should be located on ground floors.
- There should be practical arrangements in place for visitors who may have a disability. For instance hosting the meeting on ground floor where there is a mobility impairment, designating a person to assist in evacuation where it is a visual impairment.
- Evacuation chairs should not be considered an automatic solution to the escape route requirements of wheelchair users. Using an evacuation chair may put the disabled person at risk from injury, so it's best to limit their use.
- People with a learning difficulty may need to practise their routes of escape on a more frequent basis than six months. If so, this should be written into their PEEP. However there will also be cases where the drills might present additional risks to the person involved. Any drills conducted with these persons should be kept to a minimum and discussed/agreed prior to carrying out the drill.
- Where there are specific pieces of equipment in use for PEEP's there should be sufficient numbers of staff to be trained in the use of, handling and lifting in to and out of chairs, as well as manual handling risk assessment and specific training in lifting correctly when using the chair.
- Lifts used for emergency evacuations must comply with the requirements and criteria for an evacuation lift, set out in BS 9999-2008 - Code of practice for fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings.
- Refuge areas are difficult to provide in older premises due to the fire safety standard requirements. In extreme cases, stairwells of sufficient sizes and fire resistance could be used as a temporary area for locating while preparing for evacuation.

Where a suitable solution cannot be developed advice can be obtained from the National Disability Authority who have produced the following guidance to assist in developing a PEEP:

- Promoting safe egress and evacuation for people with disabilities - a risk assessment checklist. <http://www.nda.ie>

There are also a number of other guidance documents available including the following UK publication:

- UK Guidance- Fire safety risk assessment – means of escape for Persons with disabilities.
- <http://www.communities.gov.uk>

## 6. INFORMATION FOR THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

When the emergency services arrive at the scene they will take charge and manage the situation. The person responsible for the building should have the information available for the emergency services to assist them with their task. The information should be available to the person calling the emergency services as well as being available at the assembly area the emergency plan in appendix C contains a sample of building details that may be relevant. Where buildings are particularly large /complex or are high risk you should contact the fire service to discuss the arrangements. Consideration should also be given to who may be required to assist the fire service e.g. facilities/ accommodation personnel with in-depth knowledge of the building.

## 7. CONTINGENCY PLANS

In some cases there will be requirements to have contingency plans in place in the event of a failed plan or system. You should consider likely failures/events in the event of an emergency and have a contingency plan in place. These could include:

- An emergency exit becoming unusable - employees should be aware of alternative routes etc.
- The fire alarm system failing - having an alternative method of raising the alarm e.g. a bell, having internal phone calls to relay information to all areas.
- Evacuation lift / refuge area may not be accessible – persons with disabilities may require an alternative refuge area such as in a protected stairwell.
- Someone gets injured and can't escape- use escape stairs as refuge.
- Replacement staff for various roles and responsibilities in event those persons are not present at the time of the emergency.

## 8. CRISIS MANAGEMENT & BUSINESS CONTINUITY

In a crisis scenario it is likely that the emergency services will be there at hand to manage the crisis, each situation will differ depending on the type and scale of the emergency. Some factors which should be considered are as follows:

### Emergency situation - Crisis Management

- Arrangements in the event a building cannot be reoccupied- consider the fact that employees will more than likely not have their personal belonging with them:
  - Is there transportation available?
  - How will they communicate to others in absence of personnel mobile phones etc.
- Persons may be distressed or injured.
  - Consider having an area designated for first aid.
- Designated roles in managing a crisis
  - Management team should be present and have designated roles.
  - Who will liaise with staff/management
  - Will the media be present- appropriate designated person to deal with the media

## Post event - Business Continuity

When the situation is contained (fire or other) the building may no longer be useable. State Authorities do not purchase property insurance however for some of the smaller Agencies or third party premises there may be property insurance in place and their relevant insurer should be notified immediately. The State Claims Agency should be notified of all fire events. In the case of a serious event the Gardaí may prevent access to the building and/or a fire investigation will be required.

Business continuity is considered to be a holistic management process that identifies potential impacts on a business and builds a framework for resilience into processes and procedures. The aim is to have effective safeguards and responses to protect the business in the short, medium and long term.

The majority of businesses today will have a Business Continuity Plan in place. The next steps following an event should be in line with this plan and it may consist of: IT backup sites, remote access for employees, new office locations or other. When determining this element of the emergency plan you consult Management to determine what business continuity arrangements are in place for your Authority/Agency and implement the relevant requirements.

## 9. TESTING THE EMERGENCY PLAN- FIRE DRILLS/ FIRE EVENTS

Fire/evacuation drills should be carried out at regular intervals to test the effectiveness of the arrangements, including arrangements for those who are at particular risk. In multi-occupancy buildings it is important to co-ordinate and carry out joint drills to evaluate the arrangements for total building evacuation, the facilities for egress and assembly, roles and responsibilities and communications. Depending on the size/complexity of the building the drills should test various scenarios/situations for instance the main escape stairs is non accessible and the occupants must find alternative means of escape.

A debriefing should be carried out after a fire/evacuation drill; these are a valuable way of getting feedback from fire wardens and others regarding the actual operation of planned arrangements. Outcomes and actions of debriefs should be actioned and tracked to closure.

A fire drill should be held twice a year and while a false alarm or small fire event are not considered a drill it is important to consider the outcomes of these events by conducting debriefs and implementing appropriate corrective actions. A template for recording fire events is contained in Appendix A.

## 10. COMMUNICATION AND REVIEW OF THE EMERGENCY PLAN

The emergency plan can be communicated to staff in the following ways:

- A copy of the emergency plan should be available to relevant staff members – shared drive, intra net page or other.
- General procedures in event of a fire should be posted along escape routes, see Appendix B and C
- Evacuation/Roll call lists for their areas of control should be kept up to date. Copies of these lists could be located on shared drive, internal web page or other.
- All new members of staff and those which are relocated to an area should be provided with a briefing by the fire warden (or other) for their area on the emergency evacuation route, assembly point location and other emergency plan details relevant to their role.

Review of plan

- This plan is subject to an annual review or if there are changes to building/operations etc

# APPENDIX A - FIRE EVENT REPORT

Fire Event Report			
Date of Report:		Completed by:	
Date of Event:		Start Time:	Finish Time:
Buildings/Floors/Departments/Personnel who participated:			
<p style="text-align: center;">Event type</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Drill <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Incident <input type="checkbox"/> Other ( <i>scenario based emergency evacuations etc.</i> )			
Event description			
Was an alarm sounded?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Was an evacuation of these areas completed?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
If an evacuation was not completed, explain why.			
Result	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	N/A
1. Personnel response			
2. Occupant/visitor response			
3. Personnel familiar with duties			
4. Effectiveness of procedures			
5. Speed of Evacuation			
6. Communication			
7. Personnel familiarity with protection systems			
Event de-brief summary			
Corrective actions <i>Have actions been closed out from previous report?</i> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Emergency Coordinator		Date	
Forward report to H&S section /SCA (fire incident)		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Additional reports/minutes attached		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

# APPENDIX B - EMPLOYEE EMERGENCY PLAN

## EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

### Key Emergency details

Person with overall responsibility:

Emergency Coordinator:

Fire Warden:

First Aider:

Assembly area:



#### If you discover a fire:

1. Operate the break glass unit.
2. Evacuate the building.
3. Report to assembly point and inform fire warden of the event.

#### If you hear alarm:

1. Evacuate the building by the nearest safe exit.
2. Report to the assembly point.
3. Await further instructions.

#### If you are trapped in a fire:

1. Isolate yourself away from the fire.
2. If a phone is available, call 999/112 and let them know your location and situation.
3. If a window is available, try to signal to passer bys that you are trapped.
4. Stay near the floor to avoid smoke and fumes.
5. Make noise at regular intervals to help emergency services find you.



#### General:

- Close all doors behind you where practical.
- Do not use lifts.
- Do not bring personal belongings.

### Bomb Threat

- If you receive the call with a threat, do not hang up. Attempt to engage the caller and get as much information as possible:
  - What exactly is the threat? When will it explode? Where was the bomb left? Where is it right now? What does it look like? What kind of bomb is it? Who placed the bomb? Who is the target? Why was the bomb placed?
  - Information about the caller, for example, male or female, accent. Listen for any background noise that may indicate the location of the caller.
- Report it immediately to An Garda Síochána on 999 or 112.
- Act on the advice of An Garda Síochána with respect to evacuation.
- Bomb threats received through the post or by other means should also be reported immediately to An Garda Síochána.

### Gas Leak

- Evacuate the area and contact the person with responsibility for building.

### Medical

- Call for assistance 999 or 112 or first aider (depending on seriousness of the situation).
- Make the person comfortable.

### Potentially threatening or violent incident

- Raise alarm to line manager or colleague. (use safe phrase "xxx")

# APPENDIX C - BUILDING EMERGENCY PLAN

## EMERGENCY PLAN

### STAGE 1 – Response to alarm

- Identify the situation by:
  - Communicating with the person who raised the alarm.
  - Contacting the fire alarm panel respondent.
- Determine course of action:
  - Upgrade alarm (if necessary) to full building alarm and evacuation – direct call emergency services or
  - Silence/cancel alarm (if a false alarm).
- Attend the fire panel immediately.
- Locate the alarm (by floor/detector).
- Relay location to person with responsibility for building and/or relevant fire warden.
- On indication from above:
  - Escalate alarm (if necessary) and call emergency services.
  - Suppress alarm if false alarm.
- Attend the locus of the alarm.
- At locus of the alarm extinguish fire if safe to do so.
- Where persons are trapped do not attempt to enter unless safe to do so – call for assistance.
- In a place of safety inform the alarm panel respondent to escalate alarm or cancel due to false alarm.

### STAGE 2 – Evacuation

- Direct full evacuation of building.
- Gather fire pack including:
  - Evacuate building.
- In conjunction with deputy fire warden conduct sweep of area of control.
  - Exit building promptly after sweep.
- Implement PEEP plan.
  - Implement PEEP plan.

### STAGE 3 – Assembly Point

- Manage overall assembly.
- Liaise with fire warden, PEEP coordinator and alarm panel respondent to ensure all persons accounted for.
- Liaise with emergency services.
- Communicate all relevant details of the event to the emergency coordinator.
- Conduct headcount.
- Communicate headcount outcome to the emergency coordinator.
- Communicate safe evacuation to the emergency coordinator.

### STAGE 4 – Reoccupy building/Crisis Management

- Reoccupy Building**
- Debrief with wardens and others with roles in emergency plan.
  - Re-set / service fire equipment.
- Cannot Reoccupy Building**
- Crisis management.
  - Business continuity.

**Fire Service/ Gardaí/ Ambulance 999/112**

What is the emergency?  
Nature – Gardaí/Medical/Fire  
What happened?  
Are you / others safe and out of danger?  
In case of fire identify type / locus/ size e.g. Electrical.

Gardaí phone: 01-3300333    Electric: 01-3300333    Security: 01-3300333  
 Doctor: 01-3300333    Water: 01-3300333    Telephone: 01-3300333  
 Hospital: 01-3300333    Gas: 01-3300333

**Building Name/Address:**

**Size:** X stores, basement, occupants

**Purpose:** Office/laboratory etc....

**Special risks:** PEEP  
Chemicals  
Gas  
Oil

**Keys/access codes for locked area:** Name of person or location

**Items requiring salvage:** Paintings etc.

**Building occupant list\*:** Located with fire wardens

**Visitor list\*:** Located with fire alarm panel respondent

**Building plans\*:** See attached plans or copy of fire register  
 -Location of services:  
 (electrical/gas shut off)  
 -Fire detection protection equipment:

\* Fire alarm panel respondent responsible for bringing these items to the assembly area

Title	Name	Area	Contact Number
Person with overall responsibility:			
Emergency Coordinator:			
Senior Fire Warden:			
Senior Fire Warden:			
Fire Warden:			
Fire Warden:			
Fire Warden:			
Peep Coordinator			
Traffic Coordinator:			
First Aider:			

### Bomb Threat

- Take the lead from the Gardaí.
- Conduct a sweep of the building to identify if there are any suspect devices.

### Flooding

- If there is a flood warning:
- Move business critical/ valuable items to safe area.
  - Place sand bags where the water could gain access.
  - Turn off gas and electricity.
  - Move vehicles to high ground if possible.
- During flood - Your safety should be your first concern.
- Do not touch electrical switches or electrical device.
  - Do not make phone calls, including cell phones, while standing in wet areas.
  - If there are people injured or in need of rescue, call 999 or 112 immediately.
  - Don't try to walk or drive through floodwater.
  - Avoid contact with floodwater - it may be contaminated with sewage.

### Gas Leak

- If a gas pipe is damaged (or if you smell gas in the area):
- Turn off the gas supply at the control valve.
  - In a safe area (away from smell) report to Bord Gáis Emergency Service 1850 205050.
  - Do not use matches, lighters, mobile phones or other ignition sources near the leak.
  - Do not operate any plant or equipment.
  - Open all windows, evacuate the affected area.
- When you have completed the above:
- Do not attempt to repair/cover up the damage.
  - Do not turn the supply back on until the emergency team have repaired the damage.
- Remember any damage to gas pipes, even if the pipe does not appear to be leaking, must be reported to the network provider.

### Potentially threatening or violent incident

- Employee raise alarm to line manager or colleague.
- Line manager evaluates the situation and determines whether to call the Gardaí.
- Line manager should contact emergency coordinator if situation escalates.
- The emergency coordinator should:
  - Restrict access for visitors to reception area (no access to offices, toilets car parks etc.)
  - Direct an evacuation of building if required.

Emergency Contacts

Building Details

Emergency Personnel



**Risk Management Unit, State Claims Agency, Treasury Building, Lower Grand Canal Street, Dublin 2.**

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