

850 Emergency Action Plans and Fire Prevention and Control

851 General Responsibilities

851.1 Installation Heads

Installation heads are responsible for implementing emergency action plans and a fire safety program for the protection of people, mail, and Postal Service property. This is required by 29 CFR 1910, Subparts E and L. This program must include (but is not limited to) training, education, inspection, enforcement, drills, emergency evacuation teams, written emergency action plans, written standard operating procedures for hazardous materials releases, and fire prevention plans as required in this subchapter. As an independent establishment of the executive branch of the federal government, the Postal Service must also conform to the National Response Plan (NRP) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS) established by the Department of Homeland Security. Plans and procedures required by OSHA and described in this subchapter will be integrated into or coordinated with the NRP and NIMS as appropriate by the Office of Emergency Preparedness.

851.2 Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors must be constantly alert for fire hazards or other emergency situations and take immediate action to correct unsafe practices and conditions. If an immediate corrective measures is beyond his or her capability, the manager must take short-term precautions to ensure the safety of employees and protection of the workplace. Conditions that cannot be corrected immediately must be reported to a higher authority for corrective action. Managers must ensure that marked aisles and exits are maintained and clear and that all employees are trained in the evacuation and emergency procedures of the installation, including emergency alarm systems. Supervisors or managers are responsible for ensuring that personal protective equipment is available to employees who respond to spills and breakage involving hazardous materials.

852 Emergency Action Plan

852.1 Responsibility

Each Postal Service facility with more than 10 employees on the rolls must maintain an emergency action plan (EAP) in writing. If there are 10 or fewer employees, the plan may be communicated verbally. Safety personnel and/or collateral duty facility safety coordinators (FSCs) may provide advice and technical assistance, where needed, in the development of such plans. The plan must include actions specifically designated for management and for employees to take to ensure employee safety and protection of property from fire and other emergencies (e.g., tornadoes, earthquakes, and hazardous

materials (HAZMAT) spills). Management Instruction EL-810-96-1, *Hazardous Materials and Emergency Response*, provides guidelines for setting up standard operating procedures (SOPs) for releases and describes the relationship of the SOP to the EAP.

852.2 **Content**

The EAP must include the following elements (at a minimum):

- a. Procedures for emergency evacuation, including the type of evacuation, exit routes, and illustrations of those routes; shelters; and location of fire alarms and extinguishers. Shelter in place procedures must also be documented, if applicable.
- b. Procedures for employees who remain to operate or shut down critical building systems before they evacuate.
- c. Procedures to account for all employees after emergency evacuation (or shelter in place) has been completed.
- d. Procedures and details for special assignments.
- e. Procedures for reporting fires and other emergencies based on local requirements.
- f. Names or regular job titles of persons or departments who can be contacted for further information or explanation of duties under the plan.

852.3 **Posting**

Post items a and f (listed in 852.2) of the EAP in a prominent location.

853 **Emergency Evacuation Teams and Drills**

853.1 **Emergency Evacuation Teams**

853.11 **Organization**

In installations having 10,000 square feet or more, an emergency evacuation team (EET) of Postal Service employees must be maintained on each work tour. EETs may be maintained in smaller installations when warranted by the type of operations conducted. If available, EET members should be selected from volunteers. Every Postal Service installation with an organized EET must prepare and maintain a written policy statement that establishes the EET and describes (a) its basic organizational structure; (b) the type, amount, and frequency of training members will receive; (c) number of members; and (d) functions the EET will perform at the facility. This statement may be a part of the fire prevention plan.

853.12 **Size**

The size of a facility's EET will depend on the amount of fire-extinguishing and control equipment, the number of exits, and the number of employees on duty. A schedule must be developed to ensure the availability of the EET.

853.13 Duties of Emergency Evacuation Teams

The organizational statement must clearly indicate that at no time will a Postal Service EET fight any fire beyond the incipient stage or respond to HAZMAT emergencies. For Postal Service purposes, an incipient fire is one in the initial or beginning stages that can be controlled, contained, or extinguished by portable fire extinguishers without the need for personal protective clothing or self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). The use of SCBA requires a level of skill and training not usually expected of Postal Service employees. Other EET duties include, but are not limited to:

- a. Stopping conveyor belts.
- b. Closing doors to rooms and covers at dump holes and conveyor openings.
- c. Directing the fire department to the fire.
- d. Evacuating injured and handicapped personnel.
- e. Inspecting the fire site with the fire department to determine that the fire is completely extinguished and that no possibility of rekindling exists.
- f. Moving vans from loading docks.
- g. Shutting down all electrical power to the building (or sections of the building) as directed by the local fire department.
- h. Maintaining perimeter security to prevent reentry until officially instructed to permit it.
- i. Accounting for all employees after emergency evacuation has been completed.
- j. Assisting the fire department to maintain crowd control.

853.14 Membership

Building maintenance employees and security personnel should form the nucleus of the EET. Additional personnel may be assigned to assure adequate coverage on all tours. The assigned members are:

- a. *EET Leader.* The installation head is responsible for appointing the EET leader, who should normally be the superintendent for building maintenance or someone in a similar position. The EET leader must establish a procedure to provide quarterly review of the program to ensure operational efficiency.
- b. *Assistant EET Leader.* The EET leader appoints an assistant EET leader.
- c. *EET Members.* Members are appointed as needed to cover all tours, with an alternate for each member. The alternate and regular should have different days off. The leader ensures that all members are physically capable of performing the duties that may be assigned to them during training or actual emergencies. Employees with known heart disease, epilepsy, or chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases must not be permitted to participate in any EET activity unless they present a certificate of fitness from their personal physician stating that they are physically capable of performing such duties. Employees with physical disabilities are permitted to be EET members; however, their

job assignments must be governed by their ability to perform specific tasks.

853.15 **Training**

Members are required to complete initial basic level and annual refresher training. Training and education must be provided to members and alternates before they are expected to perform EET activities. To the extent feasible, Safety and fire department personnel should assist in establishing the EET and training its members. EET leaders and training instructors must receive more comprehensive training and education than other members. Such training may be available from state firefighting academies and local fire departments. Training for all members must be on the clock and must cover:

- a. Coordination of team activities.
- b. Performance of specific EET duties for each member and alternate.
- c. Familiarization with all fire-extinguishing equipment.
- d. Familiarization with fire alarm systems and fire and other emergency reporting.
- e. Classification of fires and the equipment used for each type.
- f. Stopping fires from spreading along conveyor belts and between work levels.
- g. Performance of first aid and rescue procedures.
- h. Conducting EET drills at least once a year to ensure efficiency.
- i. Familiarization with the facility incidental release (HAZMAT) SOP (First Responder Awareness Level).
- j. Familiarization with procedures for special situations (e.g., tornado sheltering and earthquakes) where applicable.

853.16 **Exposure**

At no time should EET members or alternates perform a task that exceeds their level of skill, ability, or training, or expose themselves or other employees to unnecessary dangers and risks, including hazardous materials emergencies.

853.17 **Special Hazards**

The leader must inform EET members and alternates about special hazards to which they may be exposed during fire or other emergencies, such as storage and use of flammable liquids and gases, toxic chemicals, radioactive sources, and water reactive substances. In addition, EET leaders must inform team members of any changes that occur in relation to the special hazards. The EET leader must develop written procedures that describe actions to be taken in situations involving the special hazards. The procedures must be made available for inspection by EET members and must be included in the training and education program (see facility written hazard communication program).

853.18 **Installations Without Emergency Evacuation Teams (Less Than 10,000 Square Feet)**

In installations that do not have EETs, the installation head is responsible for ensuring that supervisors or employees are assigned the following functions in case of fire or other emergency:

- a. Notification of fire department, police, ambulance, or other emergency services.
- b. Evacuation of personnel including injured or handicapped employees promptly.
- c. Accounting for all employees after emergency evacuation has been completed.
- d. Securing of mail, monies, receipts, and accountable and valuable papers.
- e. Use of fire extinguishers.

853.2 **Drills**

At least one emergency evacuation must be conducted annually on each work tour. Sheltering drills are appropriate in locations prone to tornadoes or earthquakes. The importance of fire drill training must be impressed upon all Postal Service employees. In conducting fire drills, the following objectives must be met:

- a. Prompt sounding of alarms and notification of fire department, police, or other emergency services.
- b. Orderly evacuation in minimum time.
- c. Proper securing of mail, monies, receipts, and valuable papers.
- d. Correct performance of EAP assignments by designated EET members and alternates.

854 **Fire Prevention Plan**

854.1 **Responsibility**

Each installation head managing a Postal Service facility with more than 10,000 square feet must maintain a written fire prevention plan (FPP). Installation heads managing smaller facilities may maintain written FPPs when warranted by the operations conducted. Safety personnel and/or collateral duty FSCs may provide advice and technical assistance, where needed, in the development of such plans.

854.2 **Content**

The FPP must include the following elements (at a minimum):

- a. A list of the following:
 - (1) Significant workplace fire hazards.
 - (2) Handling, storage, and control procedures.
 - (3) Ignition sources (e.g., welding, electrical equipment, and heaters).

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- (4) Types of fire protection equipment or systems available to contain, extinguish, and control fires.
- b. Names or regular job titles of personnel responsible for maintaining the equipment used to prevent or control fires.
- c. Names or regular job titles of personnel responsible for control of fuel-source hazards.
- d. Procedures to control the accumulation of flammable and combustible waste materials and residues so that they do not cause fires.

854.3 **Employee Training**

854.31 **General**

Employees must be instructed by their immediate supervisor in the following procedures at least once a year and any time there is a change in the plan or their role:

- a. Evacuation and emergency procedures of the installation.
- b. Use of fire-extinguishing equipment. (Employees whose work station is in or adjacent to high-hazard operations must be trained in the use of appropriate fire-extinguishing equipment for that specific operation.)
- c. Good housekeeping practices.
- d. Observance of smoking rules.
- e. HAZMAT incidental release SOP using Handbook EL-812, *Hazardous Materials and Spill Response*.

854.32 **Training for the Emergency Action Plan and Fire Prevention Plan**

854.321 **Emergency Action Plan**

To maintain the EAP, a sufficient number of employees must be designated and trained to (a) assist with the execution of a safe and orderly emergency evacuation, and (b) deal with incidental and emergency releases of HAZMAT in the mail and elsewhere. This pool of employees must be kept current. See MI EL-810-96-1, *Response to Hazardous Materials Releases*.

854.322 **Fire Prevention Plan**

To maintain the FPP, the immediate supervisor must inform all employees of the fire hazards in the work area to which they may be exposed.

854.323 **Orientation**

The immediate supervisor must orient all newly assigned employees to those parts of the EAP and FPP that the employees must know to protect themselves in an emergency.

854.324 **Review**

The written plans must be kept at the workplace and be made available for employee review. The EAP and FPP must be reviewed with each employee of the installation:

- a. Annually.
- b. Whenever there is a change in employee responsibilities or designated actions under the plans.
- c. Whenever the plans are revised.

855 **Fire Inspections**

855.1 **Responsibility**

Managers and supervisors that have been trained by safety and/or fire protection personnel must conduct fire inspections. Training must include instruction on how to conduct inspections, identify unsafe practices that cause fires, and eliminate or correct hazards. The installation head is encouraged to seek assistance from local fire officials and permit them to conduct fire inspections and prefire planning programs.

855.2 **Frequency**

Fire inspections must be conducted in all Postal Service-owned and Postal Service-leased installations. Semiannual inspections are required in all installations with less than 100 workyears of employment in the regular workforce. Quarterly fire inspections are required in all installations with more than 100 workyears of employment in the regular workforce and in vehicle maintenance facilities.

855.3 **Procedures**

Fire inspections may be scheduled to coincide with semiannual or annual safety inspections. They must be documented using the fire inspection checklists that are published periodically and available in the Safety Toolkit.

855.4 **Corrective Action**

Deficiencies identified in safety checklists must be reviewed by the hazard abatement committee and corrected.

Local authorities must be notified immediately upon discovery of fire hazards that are not under Postal Service jurisdiction, but that affect Postal Service personnel, mail, or property.

856 Alarm Systems and Extinguishers

856.1 Alarm Systems

Every Postal Service facility must have an established employee alarm system that complies with OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910.165 and that includes:

- a. Procedures for informing each employee of the preferred means of reporting emergencies, such as manual pull-box alarms, horns, public address systems, radio, or telephones. The installation head must have emergency telephone numbers posted near telephones, on employee bulletin boards, and at other conspicuous locations where telephones serve as a means of reporting emergencies. Where a communication system also serves as the employee alarm system, emergency messages must have priority over nonemergency messages.
- b. Procedures for sounding emergency alarms in the workplace. For those installations with 10 or fewer employees in a particular workplace, direct voice communication is an acceptable procedure for sounding the alarm provided all employees can hear the alarm. Such workplaces need not have a backup system. An alarm device must:
 - (1) Give a warning that provides sufficient reaction time for safe escape of employees from the workplace, the immediate work area, or both.
 - (2) Be in compliance with applicable alarm requirements in Handbooks RE-4, *Standards for Facility Accessibility*; AS-503, *Standard Design Criteria*; and MS-56, *Fire Prevention and Control*, to include audible and visible signals.
 - (3) Have the capability of being heard or seen above ambient noise or light levels by all employees in the affected areas of the workplace. (Tactile devices (e.g., vibrating pagers) may be used to alert employees who would not be able to recognize the audible or visual alarms.)
 - (4) Give a distinctive and recognizable signal to evacuate the work area or to perform actions designated under the EAP (such as shelter in place). If the employee alarm system is also used for alerting EET members or for other purposes, a different signal must be used for each purpose.
- c. Procedures for maintaining and testing employee alarm systems in compliance with appropriate NFPA and OSHA standards.

856.2 Extinguisher

The number, type, location, maintenance, and inspection of fire-extinguisher equipment and systems must be in accordance with Handbook MS-56 and 29 CFR 1910.157–1910.163 as required.

Exception: The maximum travel distance to any portable fire extinguisher must not exceed 50 feet.

Fire-fighting equipment that is in damaged or unserviceable condition must be removed from service and replaced immediately.

857 **Vehicle Protection**

Fire extinguishers and emergency warning kits are to be placed in vehicles in accordance with Handbook PO-701, *Fleet Management*.

858 **Codes, Standards, and Ordinances**

Compliance with Postal Service standards, OSHA standards, NFPA codes, national building codes, and state and local fire codes is required. Managers must refer matters concerning prevention, extinguishment, and control that are not covered by municipal or other regulations to higher authority for resolution.