

Emergency Evacuation: Know the Route and Count the Crew

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Why this matters

An evacuation plan has to work from where we are working today. A new fence, delivery or locked gate can change the route. A meeting point is useful only if everyone can reach it and someone knows who should be there.

Objective: Show how to raise the alarm, reach the assigned assembly point and report for accountability.

Key hazards or failure points

Blocked or unfamiliar exits; alarms people cannot recognize or receive; changed assembly points; visitors or remote workers missing from the count.

Practical controls

- Review today's emergency instructions: reporting method, evacuation signal, routes and assembly point. Explain how shelter-in-place instructions differ; leaving the building is not the response to every emergency.
- Keep assigned routes usable. Include contractors, visitors and anyone needing assistance in the arrangements. Name the person collecting the count and the backup.
- During an evacuation, follow the plan and report directly for accountability. Report missing people and their last known location to the coordinator; do not re-enter to search.

Verify It in the Field

Before work, the leader and crew walk the assigned route where safe, using today's plan. Check doors, gates, signs and the assembly location against actual conditions. Resolve blocked access with the site coordinator.

Ask someone to explain the alarm and reporting method. Confirm the coordinator has a current crew list, including workers elsewhere on site. Check alarm coverage through the site's authorized test or inspection process; do not trigger an unannounced alarm.

Record the route checked, changes, checker and time on the separate field sheet. An old map or yesterday's headcount does not verify today's arrangements.

Stop and reassess

Hold affected work if a required exit is blocked, emergency communication is unavailable or accountability arrangements are unclear. Notify the coordinator, correct the gap, recheck and rebrief. In an emergency, follow the plan immediately. Re-entry requires the designated authority's clearance.

Ask the crew

1. What changed along our evacuation route today?
2. Can you show where we assemble and who will count us?
3. What will you do if the route is blocked or a coworker is missing?

Before exposure: know the route, the signal and the person receiving your report.

Sources: OSHA 1910.38; 1926.35. Follow the applicable site emergency plan.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance, references, supervisor check and attendance record accompany this talk.