

Incident Response: Protect People and Call for Help

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Why this matters

The first person who sees an incident may feel pressure to rush in. Another injury can follow if the hazard is still active. Plan the first actions so people can raise the alarm, get help and stay clear of uncontrolled danger.

Objective: Identify the caller, responder guide and safe limits on helping after an incident.

Key hazards or failure points

Entering live electrical, moving-equipment or chemical danger; untrained rescue; nobody calling; an unknown entrance; premature cleanup; restart before release; sharing identifiable incident images.

Practical controls

- Follow the site response plan: raise the alarm, summon emergency services when needed and direct people away from exposure. Use the approved safe method to stop affected activity within your role.
- Assigned responders act within their training and safe conditions. Specialist rescue, chemical response, isolation and entry tasks require the appropriate capability and authorization.
- Provide clear location, access and known-hazard information. Prioritize care and preventing further harm. Preserve evidence only when safe, and keep incident photographs and personal information within authorized private processes.

Verify It in the Field

Before work, rehearse who calls, who meets responders and who accounts for affected people. Ask a worker to explain the exact location and access instructions. Use normal communication checks; never test-call 911.

From a safe area, identify how to warn others and keep them outside the danger. Confirm the communication route and where people can wait without blocking emergency access. Do not stage a hazardous rescue drill.

Check required on-shift response coverage and equipment readiness with the responsible person. Identify who controls re-entry and restart after an event. Record coverage, access and unresolved gaps before relying on the arrangement.

Stop and reassess

Keep out of uncontrolled hazards and summon the appropriate responders. Hold affected work when required communication or response coverage is missing. After an event, do not re-enter, clean up or restart until the responsible authority releases the relevant activity.

Ask the crew

1. Who calls and who guides responders?
2. What could injure someone trying to help?
3. Who decides when the area can be entered again?

Before an incident: make the first safe actions clear.

Sources: OSHA 1910.38, 1910.151 and 1926.50.

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

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