

Preparation is crucial during a crisis

An Emergency Action Plan is practical and highly useful during a crisis, providing critical information to emergency responders, neighbors and the community, and helping to save lives and minimize damage. In addition to creating a safer farm or ranch, developing and implementing an EAP is an effective loss prevention measure for legal liabilities that can arise from emergency situations.

Your Emergency Action Plan should establish simple, easy-to-follow steps that can save crucial decision-making time during a crisis or emergency situation.



Creating your Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

In this guide, we've outlined steps that will help you develop an effective EAP for your farm or ranch. Your plan will be tailored to your specific operations, so while creating a good EAP requires some up-front effort, it will reduce valuable response time during an emergency.

How you can use it

Your EAP won't be effective if no one knows about it. Talk about the plan with everyone who works on your farm or ranch, along with family members, and spend some time reviewing it at least twice a year. Share updated copies with everyone, and keep them in your home, office and vehicle so no matter where you are when an emergency situation occurs, you'll be prepared.

Getting started

- Map out emergency escape procedures and emergency escape routes.
- Outline procedures for people who will remain on the farm or ranch to operate critical functions while others evacuate.
- Establish procedures to account for people after evacuation.
- Identify communications procedures for reporting fires or other emergencies.
- Collect names and contact details for everyone who would need to be contacted in an emergency.
- Know who's in charge. An emergency coordinator should be on-call or on the premises at all times and able to respond quickly. Clearly identify chain of command during an emergency.
- Keep it simple. If your plan gets too complicated, it'll be harder to use.



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These instructions detail items to consider while creating your EAP. Keep in mind that EAPs vary according to unique aspects of different farms and ranches.



STEP 1: Identify potential emergency situations

Make a list of any emergencies or worst-case scenarios that could occur on your farm or ranch.

Examples to consider:

- Tornadoes or other natural disasters
- Explosions
- Electrical fires
- Chemical spills
- Flooding or hurricanes
- Wildfires
- Loss of power
- Product contamination
- Human entrapment in grain or equipment
- Collapse of structures
- Severe falls
- Medical emergencies such as heart attacks or seizures

After you've listed your emergency scenarios, decide for each one what supplies, tools and responses you would need if they occur.

One efficient way to do this is to list potential emergencies on one side of a piece of paper and the response measures on the other side. As you complete this process, you'll find that the response side of your paper will begin to outline your response and prevention needs.

Pay special attention to fire emergencies. List all major fire hazards in your operations and develop a list of proper handling and storage procedures to help prevent them.

STEP 2: List all people and contact details

Include key contact details for each person who is on your farm regularly — whether that is employees, contractors, vendors or delivery people. Think about the people you would need to contact about the farm in an emergency.

If you have employees, you'll want to maintain an up-to-date roster with current contact information for each person. Whenever possible, include cellphone numbers and emergency contact information for each person.

STEP 3: List emergency phone numbers

Post these phone numbers in easily accessible locations throughout your farm, home and office. Include them in your cellphone and in a prominent place in your EAP:

- Fire department
- Ambulance/rescue
- Police department
- Air ambulance
- Nearest hospital(s)
- Electric power company
- Gas company
- Railroad agent (home and depot), if appropriate
- Insurance company (agent, home office, claim reporting numbers)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Salvage company

Leave space for additional important contact information, including changes or updates.



Did you know?

OSHA requires employers with 11 or more employees to have a written Emergency Action Plan. No matter how many employees you have, it's always a good practice to have a written EAP. Preparation is crucial during a crisis.

STEP 4: Develop maps of your operations

Develop a map for each property/location you have. Using grid paper to keep your maps to scale as much as possible, include these elements:

- All buildings
- Access roads
- Gate access and other openings in fences
- Railroads and rail intersections on your property
- Power lines/power line cutoff locations
- Water hydrant connections or nearby bodies of water (that could be used in a fire)
- Any unique installations/equipment

For each building you have listed, indicate the type of construction. Label each building and include the equipment and inventory contained in each. This is especially critical for buildings used to store chemicals, petroleum products and other hazardous or flammable materials.

Indicate on your maps the locations of all work areas and emergency escape routes. Include information that may be useful to firefighters or other emergency responders.

Update maps whenever you complete renovations or expand your operations. Be sure to distribute these maps to your local fire officials and to your Nationwide® Farm Certified agent.

STEP 5: Designate evacuation routes

The best way to designate evacuation routes is to show them on the maps you created in Step 4. Indicate escape routes with a highlighter. Then, make sure all family members and employees receive a copy, and post them in easy-to-see work and common areas throughout your farm or ranch.

If you have to evacuate — whether it's for a fire, explosion, or other emergency — it is crucial to account for each person on your premises. Establish an assembly area or areas to account for the people you've identified in Step 2. This location should be some distance from your operations and preferably along the route that fire or rescue personnel would use to access your farm or ranch.

When disaster strikes, everyone on your farm or ranch should understand that they are to quickly move to the appointed assembly area. Practice assembling with disaster drills to ensure everyone on your farm is prepared to make a quick evacuation.

For visitors, it's a good idea to establish a sign-in policy on your farm or ranch. That way, you'll know who is on your property and where they are so that everyone can be directed to the assembly area in the event of an emergency.



Contact your
Nationwide® agent
to discuss putting
your EAP in place.

STEP 6: Establish alternative communications

It's common to lose telephone service following a fire, explosion, hurricane, or other serious emergency, so your EAP should specify at least one alternative means of contacting help. You can equip farm or ranch vehicles with two-way or CB radios.

Whatever system you decide on, be sure it's clearly identified in your EAP, and make sure it's maintained and working properly by checking it regularly.

STEP 7: Prepare for regulatory investigations

Following a crisis, you may be visited by OSHA, the EPA, attorneys or other regulatory agencies — especially if someone has been injured or if deaths are involved. Someone should accompany representatives from these outside organizations at all times during inspections on your farm or ranch. It's a good idea to require all individuals to sign in and out of your property.

STEP 8: Preplan salvage operations

Following a disaster, cleanup efforts may involve working to identify and salvage undamaged inventory, so you'll want to establish a product inventory system and share the inventory with your insurance agent.

Your EAP should include a method for debris disposal. Be aware of what materials the landfill nearest your farm operation may accept, and find alternatives if needed.

Establish and follow specific procedures for disposing of chemicals and other hazardous materials in compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other regulators. Plan your methods for cleanup and disposal.

Include contact information for one or more salvage contractors on your emergency phone listing.



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