



Severe weather in
your area.

EBOOK

The must-have guide to workplace emergency planning



Police activity in
the parking lot.



✓
Rooms

✓
Push

High winds
warning in effect
until further notice.

Road closures
near office.

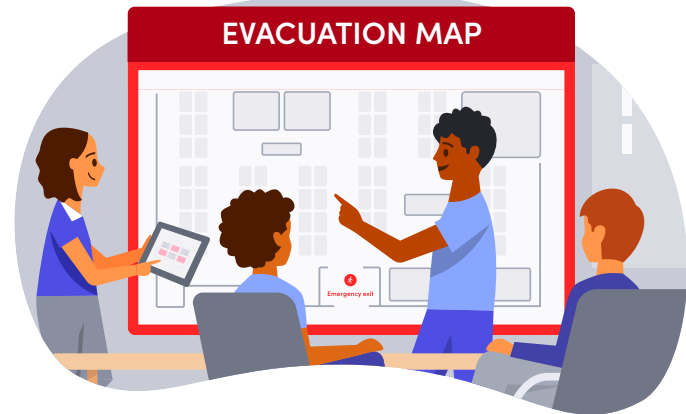


A quarter of companies are operating without an emergency plan.





No process. No clear roles. No training. If that sounds familiar, it's time to take action, because in a real emergency, there's no time to Google what to do next. Without a solid strategy, things can unravel fast, leading to injuries, regulatory violations, lost product, delayed timelines, and reputational damage.

All of that is avoidable if you have the right plan in place.

In this guide, we'll share a step-by-step framework for building and testing a plan that works for your environment, whether that's an office, lab, or factory floor.



What you'll learn

-  How to create a clear, actionable plan for your workplace
-  Ways to prep your team with the right tools, training, and communication
-  Tips for running effective drills and staying audit-ready after an incident
-  How Envoy's Emergency Notifications can support your team before, during, and after a crisis

Step 1: Build your response team

Strong emergency plans start with cross-functional collaboration.

Your response team should bring together the right mix of decision-makers, safety experts, and team leads. Choose folks who are closest to the daily work, because they can help spot gaps, flag unrealistic plans, and lead when action's needed. The exact mix will look different at every company.

Start with this core group:

- ✓ **IT and security** to weigh in on tools, alerts, and access protocols
- ✓ **HR** to represent employee needs and training processes
- ✓ **Facilities or site operations** to address floor plans, utilities, and emergency equipment
- ✓ **Legal or compliance** to advise on regulatory and audit requirements

Then, tailor the team by your environment to cover all of your company's unique risks and operational needs.

Who should be on your crisis crew?

Professional services & tech	Manufacturing	Biotech & pharma
Software & IT services: IT leads, security managers, HR managers, facilities coordinators	Automotive: Plant managers, safety officers, production supervisors, EHS leads	Pharmaceutical manufacturing: QA managers, lab supervisors, compliance officers, security leads
Consulting & professional services: HR managers, security leads, office managers, facilities staff	Electronics: Operations managers, quality control leads, safety coordinators	Medical device manufacturing: Regulatory affairs, quality assurance, lab and safety leads
Financial services: Compliance officers, IT security, HR, facilities managers	Food & beverage: Facility managers, EHS specialists, compliance officers	Research & development labs: Lab managers, principal investigators, compliance and safety staff
	Heavy industry & machinery: Maintenance leads, safety managers, EHS directors	Bioprocessing & production: Process engineers, QA/QC leads, safety coordinators

Once your team is set, make sure everyone has a clear role from the start. Even the best plan won't work in a real emergency if no one knows who's leading. Here are some questions to guide you:

- ❓ Who owns writing and updating the plan?
- ❓ Who handles training and rollout?
- ❓ Who leads during an active response?
- ❓ Who reviews what happened and drives follow-up after an incident?

Step 2: Pinpoint your workplace risks

You can't predict every crisis—but you *can* prep for the ones most likely to affect your workplace.

That starts with a risk assessment tailored to your specific environment. Different workplaces come with different challenges. Your job is to spot the patterns, gaps, and high-risk scenarios that matter most to your business. Start by gathering intel from multiple sources:

- ✅ Historical incident reports and audit logs
- ✅ Near-miss reports and safety observations
- ✅ Employee feedback, especially from frontline teams
- ✅ Local and regional emergency trends (e.g., wildfire zones and flood-prone areas)

Use these insights to create a short list of the emergencies most likely to hit your workplace. This will be the foundation for the rest of your plan—so get specific.

Common workplace emergencies

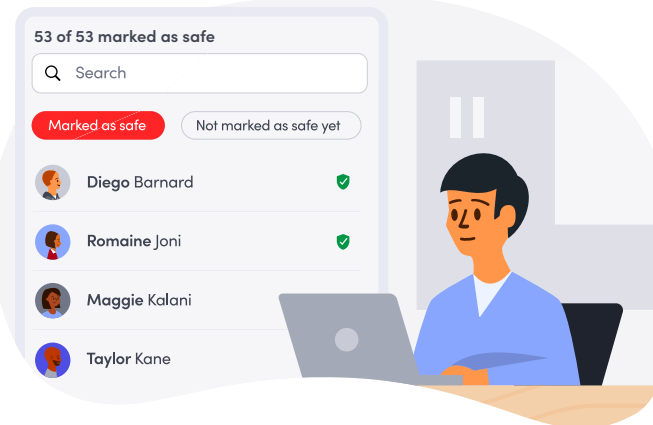
- ❗ Natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, wildfires)
- ❗ Utility failures (e.g., power, water, HVAC, network)
- ❗ Workplace injuries or medical emergencies
- ❗ Chemical or hazardous material spills
- ❗ Fire or smoke-related incidents
- ❗ Workplace violence or intruder threats
- ❗ Cyberattacks with real-world impact (e.g., door access system outages)
- ❗ Equipment breakdowns or production halts
- ❗ Supply chain or transportation disruptions

Step 3: Map out your plan

Once you've identified your workplace's top risks, it's time to build your response.

Start with a core plan that covers shared roles, communication, and procedures everyone needs to follow. Then, add specific actions for each major scenario—because what works for a power outage won't work for a chemical spill.

A clear, detailed plan helps your team stay focused and move quickly. Make sure it covers every phase of an emergency: before, during, and after. Here's what to include:



1 Clear command structure, roles, and responsibilities

Decide who's in charge of what during each type of emergency. You don't need to repeat Step 1—just make it crystal clear who owns each task in a crisis. Assign backups in case your primary contacts are unavailable.

2 Evacuation and assembly plans

Lay out evacuation routes, exits, and safe zones on workplace signage and [digital maps](#). Make sure emergency kits, AEDs, fire extinguishers, and other safety gear are clearly marked, too.

Assign people to sweep specific areas, help visitors, and check headcounts at the assembly point. Remember to consider accessibility needs and alternate routes if a main path is blocked.

3 System shutdown procedures

If waiting to shut things down could put people or property at risk, make sure you've got clear instructions for powering off machines, equipment, or critical systems. Spell out who has the authority to act and what steps they need to follow.

4 Emergency contact lists

Keep a living document of key contacts—internal response leads, first responders, emergency vendors, and employees—and how to reach them. Sync your HRIS with your [emergency notification system](#) so you always have up-to-date info on employees and visitors who are onsite during an emergency.

5 Communication channels and protocols





Pick alert channels that actually work for your environment, whether that's SMS, mobile apps, email, lobby screens, or even kiosk alerts.

Decide who's responsible for sending alerts, set up approval steps, and use [messaging templates](#) so you're not scrambling to write them in the middle of a crisis. Remember to tailor your messaging. For example, a chemical spill and a power outage need very different responses.

Step 4: Train, practice, repeat

You've built your plan. Now it's time to prepare your team to bring it to life.

Training shouldn't be a one-time presentation buried in a new-hire slide deck. It needs to be clear, repeatable, and easy to act on. Everyone should know how to:

-  Spot common emergencies in your environment
-  Recognize and act on alerts like alarms, notifications, or screen messages
-  Respond safely—what to do, where to go, and how to mark themselves safe
-  Reach out to your response team if something's off or you need help

And don't forget: training goes beyond employees. Visitors, contractors, and vendors should also know what to do in an emergency, even if they're only onsite for a few minutes. Include a quick overview of your emergency procedures in the registration process so they're informed before they step into the workplace.

Drill planning cheat sheet

Use this cheat sheet to plan what to test, what to watch for, and what tools to lean on.

Drill type	What to evaluate	Tools to support it
Evacuation drill	Evacuation route clarity, headcount process, timing	Evacuation maps, assembly checklists, real-time presence data
Chemical spill simulation	Team response time, communication flow, escalation steps	Multi-channel alerts, incident response templates, physical alarms
Severe weather test	Notification delivery speed, how quickly alerts go out and who gets them	Weather event alerts, multi-channel alerts, location-based targeting, alert delivery tracking
Power loss scenario	System shutdown steps, backup power protocols, team coordination	Shutdown SOPs, offline signage, backup communication systems (PA, two-way radios)
Intruder or lockdown	Alert speed and accuracy, room lockdown timing, safe zone clarity	Multi-channel alerts, alert delivery tracking, physical lockdown alarms

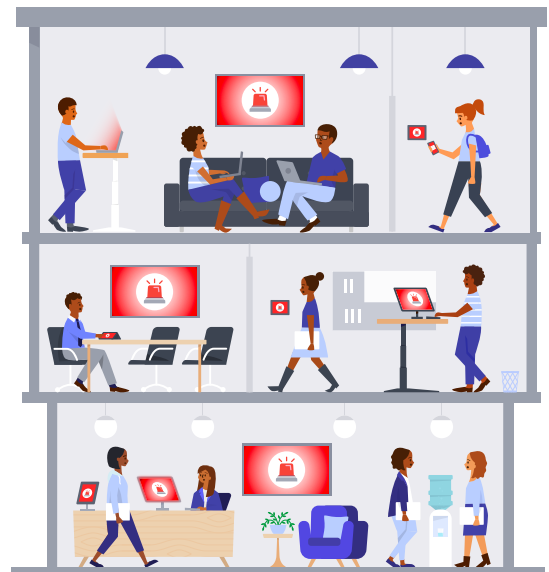
Step 5: Put your plan to the test

The only way to know if your plan works is to test it out.

Drills and simulations help you spot gaps, build muscle memory, and help your team stay calm under pressure when a real emergency hits. Start small and build up. You don't need to run a full-blown evacuation right away. Try a table-top walkthrough or alert system test first, then expand to larger team exercises.

Treat every drill like it's the real thing. Time your response, log the issues, and use what you learn to tighten the plan. Here are some scenarios to practice:

- ! Evacuations (floor-wide or building-wide)
- ! Hazardous material incidents or chemical spills
- ! Severe weather warnings and response
- ! Power outages or system shutdowns
- ! Workplace violence or intruder lockdowns



Mastering emergency drills across industries







Need help tailoring drills to your workplace? Use these tips based on your industry.

Professional services & tech	Manufacturing	Biotech & pharma
Practice sending location-specific alerts (e.g., for one office or region only)	Time your drills to different shifts to see where the gaps are	Simulate lab-specific incidents like freezer failures or cleanroom breaches
Include remote teams in virtual scenario walkthroughs	Use backup methods like PA systems or two-way radios where devices aren't allowed	Train on how to pause sensitive processes safely
Use screen takeover messages in lobbies and shared areas	Make sure floor supervisors know how to confirm headcounts	Document each drill clearly for audit and compliance purposes

Step 6: Review and refine your plan

If you're not learning from each emergency, you're leaving gaps in your plan.

After each drill or real emergency, evaluate your response so you can close those gaps and strengthen your next one. Here are some questions to answer:

-  What went well?
-  Where did things break down?
-  Did alerts go out quickly and reach the right people?
-  Did everyone know their role and follow through?
-  Were there any delays in decision-making or getting help where it was needed?
-  What needs to change in your plan, tools, or training based on what you learned?

Use what you learn to tighten your plan, update roles, and improve training. This isn't just about getting better. It's also about staying audit-ready.

If your system automatically logs alerts, delivery stats, and response times, you'll have the records you need for compliance reviews, post-incident reports, and internal audits.

Tailoring Tips



Professional services & tech:

Remember to include visitors in your alerts—they especially need clear instructions since they won't be as trained up on your emergency procedures.



Manufacturing: Plan for shift changes, loud machinery, and limited device access on the floor.



Biotech & pharma: Outline special procedures for regulated spaces, like cleanrooms, cold storage, and hazardous material handling.

Driving better emergency comms with Envoy

Envoy offers a better way to prepare, respond, and remain compliant.

Envoy Emergency Notifications gives you complete visibility and control through every phase of a crisis—right from the platform you already use to manage your workplace.

Before an emergency

Stay ready with proactive tools and clear plans.

- ✓ Schedule practice alerts and run drills using built-in templates.
- ✓ Get severe weather alerts automatically delivered from weather.gov.
- ✓ Customize notification workflows in advance so you're never scrambling

During an emergency

Move fast with real-time visibility and multi-channel reach.

- ✓ Send alerts instantly across SMS, email, push, and lobby displays.
- ✓ Target messages based on real-time presence data—only notify the people who are actually impacted
- ✓ Enable two-way check-ins so people can mark themselves safe or request help.
- ✓ Manage everything from a single dashboard—monitor threat status, track delivery, and adapt in real time.

After an emergency

Document everything for audits, reports, and peace of mind.

- ✓ Review time-stamped delivery stats, read receipts, and check-in data.
- ✓ Access full incident logs to evaluate your response and improve next time.
- ✓ Export reports to stay audit-ready and meet compliance requirements like OSHA and SB 553.



Send an emergency notification

✓ SMS

✓ Email

✓ Push

✓ Slack

✓ Teams

Send

Turn your emergency plan into real-world readiness.

See how Envoy can help your team take control of emergencies.

[Book a demo](#) today.

About Envoy

Envoy builds workspace management technology that makes it simple to run secure, compliant, and connected workplaces across every location. Over 16,000 workplaces and properties around the world rely on Envoy to create great experiences for employees and visitors while meeting safety, security, and compliance needs at scale. From corporate headquarters and labs to manufacturing sites, Envoy powers the places where people work best together.

Learn more at envoy.com

✓
Visitors

✓
SMS



✓
Email

✓
Push