

safety bulletin

PLIT FACT:

Veterinary practices insured through the PLIT program have experienced more than 500 fires in the past ten years, and the insurance carriers have paid more than \$7M for those claims in building, property, and business interruption expenses.

Emergency Action Plan

How Will Your Employees Evacuate in the Event of an Emergency?

A thoroughly developed Emergency Action Plan (EAP) can help your practice prepare for unforeseen events that can endanger the lives of you and everyone working at the practice. This issue of *Safety Bulletin* will help you develop, refine, and analyze your practice's EAP.

OSHA Requires an Emergency Action Plan

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) in place for the safe response and evacuation of employees in the event of a workplace emergency. The OSHA standard (29 CFR 1910.38) states that employers must have an EAP in writing that is available to employees in the workplace.



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Develop a plan to address your patients in the event of an emergency.

Some situations require the immediate evacuation of employees; others allow time for patients to be evacuated. Identify where you will relocate patients when you're provided with an advanced warning. Create a relationship with another veterinary practice to oversee your patients if you are not able to occupy your practice for a period of time. The AVMA has helpful documents on planning and preparing for an emergency in your veterinary practice under the Disaster Preparedness section at www.avma.org.

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According to the OSHA standard, an EAP should contain procedures for:

1. Reporting a fire or other emergency in the workplace
2. Evacuating the workplace
3. Accounting for employees post-evacuation
4. Training employees in first-aid medical treatment
5. Contacting employees

EAP #1: Reporting an Emergency

Detail how you will notify local emergency response in the event of a workplace emergency. Examples include an alarm system connected to local response or a designated person to call 911. Also determine how the practice will report a workplace emergency to others working in the practice. Examples include a public address announcement, an alarm system, or a simple verbal communication (yelling "fire").

EAP #2: Evacuating the Workforce

Evacuation procedures need to include all types of emergencies your practice might face. A fire necessitates that employees know where the closest exit door is and where to meet outside the practice. A tornado requires employees

to know where to shelter inside the practice and when it is safe to go outside. Each emergency situation is different in the response it requires.

EAP #3: Accounting for Employees Post-evacuation

As soon as employees follow evacuation procedures, a manager should account for everyone. Larger practices should perform a roll call to ensure that all employees have escaped and are safe.

EAP #4: Training Employees in First-Aid

If any employees are capable and certified to perform first-aid, include procedures for handling first-aid during emergencies. Identify what injuries can and cannot be treated. Minor wounds and small burns can be treated by first-aid kits. Major injuries or serious burns need to be treated by trained medical personnel.

EAP #5: Contacting Employees

Include an employee contact list in your EAP that includes the individual's name, job title, phone number, and an emergency contact name and number. Technology provides immediate contact options to notify staff members. Identify the best emergency communication methods

and establish a notification protocol (such as text messaging, Twitter, cell phone, email). You want to make sure that employees do not come to work if there is a dangerous situation.

EAP Review

Review your EAP with your entire staff:

- When the plan is created
- When new employees are hired
- After any changes to the plan are made
- After any changes to the building are made
- Annually as a refresher

Summary

OSHA requires that employers have an EAP in place for the safe response and evacuation of employees in the event of a workplace emergency. Take time today to ensure that your EAP is current and that it meets your practice's needs. You can access a model emergency action plan that you can customize for your practice at www.avmaplit.com. Login and go to the education center; then click on emergency planning and business continuity.

EAP Exercise: Determine Your Potential Hazards and Plan

Emergencies may include fire, burglary, workplace violence, chemical spills, medical emergencies, earthquakes, wildfires, blizzards, loss of electric power, terrorist threats, and more. When developing your practice's EAP, consider the emergencies that your practice might face. Be creative during this exercise. Consider what has happened in the past, and what is currently happening in other parts of the country. Is it possible your practice could face a similar emergency? If so, consider those scenarios when you develop your EAP.

For a coverage comparison and quote, call **800-228-7548** or visit **www.avmaplit.com/quote**.

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