

## Emergency Preparedness: Got Your Ducks in a Row?

Your level of preparation for emergencies will determine how well your employees and your facility survive these incidents. It will also establish how OSHA views your compliance with emergency action requirements.

Just about anywhere you look in the OSHA standards; you'll find some reference to workplace emergencies.

Subparts E, H, K, L, and Z of the general industry standards, for example, all mention emergency preparedness and issue a lot of rules with which you must comply.

The nature and scale of your emergency planning and compliance effort, of course, depend on the kind of business you're in and the types of workplace emergencies you and your employees are most likely to experience.

But all employers need to have a plan that anticipates the worst and prepares employees to survive any possible event—even the most catastrophic.

### Critical Compliance Questions

Here are just a few of the critical questions you need to ask to make sure you're in compliance with OSHA preparedness requirements:

- Do you have a written emergency action plan that spells out the what, when, how, and who of emergency response?
- Are all your employees familiar with your emergency action plan?
- Do workers have assigned evacuation routes and designated gathering places outside your facility?
- Have you established and tested effective communications systems for use during workplace emergencies?
- Do employees understand how to carry out any emergency duties they've been assigned?
- Do they know how and to whom to report workplace emergencies?

-Are your alarm systems in compliance with the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.165 (Employee Alarm Systems)?

-Do you have functioning emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers and sprinkler systems?

-Do you hold regular fire drills, evaluate performance, and retrain as necessary?