

Event Emergency Action Plan

Producing an Event Emergency Action Plan (EAP) has a number of benefits that will help your organization deliver a safe and successful event:

- It assists you in identifying risks or potential risks.
- It assists you in identifying what measures need to be put in place for the protection and well-being of the public and participants who will be attending your event.
- It reduces the risk of loss of life and property damage resulting from an emergency.
- It identifies individual/groups/organizations roles and responsibilities.

Developing an Emergency Contingency Plan

Step 1 – Identify the risks or potential risks that could affect the event. Risks could include such factors as weather, crowd composition/crowd behavior, criminal activity, bomb threats, fire, environment, nearby or adjacent infrastructure, situations requiring evacuation or shelter in place, etc.

Definitions:

- **Hazard** – a potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.
- **Risk** – A measure of the probability and severity of adverse effects that result from an exposure to a hazard.
- **Threat** – the presence of a hazard and an exposure pathway; threats may be natural or human-induced, either accidental or intentional.

Step 2 - For each risk scenario identify the mitigating action that could be taken in advance to reduce or eliminate the risk. Adjust the event plan accordingly.

Step 3 - Where the risk cannot be eliminated in its entirety identify the residual risk(s) and the most appropriate action(s) to be taken, and by what organization, should that situation arise. Record this information in an EAP.

Step 4 - Approval of the Plan. The EAP should include a section that is signed by all parties involved in the plan, where they indicate their concurrence with the plan and agree to their responsibilities. Including the approval signatures is essential, for it assures that all parties involved are aware of and understand the EAP and agree to do their assigned roles should an emergency take place. Note: As part of the event approval process the City of Edmonton may request submission of your groups EAP for review.

Step 5 – Ensuring Understanding of the Plan and Readiness. Ensure that all members of your organizing committee/group are briefed and understands the EAP and particularly their roles and responsibilities in advance of the event occurring – Remember no one has time to read a plan once an incident occurs. Depending on the complexity of the event and contingencies recorded in your EAP you may wish to conduct training or tabletop exercises to ensure understanding of your EAP and readiness of staff.

Step 6 – Critique. Conduct a post event critique and record what worked and what can be improved upon. Safeguard these lessons learned for future use.

Elements of an Event Emergency Contingency Plan

An Event Emergency Contingency Plan should include the following elements:

Command and Control

- Identify the Event Manager (Person who has overall responsibility). Include his/her name, where they will be located during the event, and how they can be contacted.
- Identify other key personnel (i.e. Safety Officer, Medical / First Aid Coordinator, Traffic manager, Communications Manager, etc. Include his/her name, where they will be located during the event, and how they can be contacted.
- Develop an event notification chart with the above information and distribute to event agencies/groups as appropriate. (A notification chart is a diagram of the hierarchy for notification in an emergency, including who is to be notified, by whom, and in what priority. The chart should be prominently displayed in the EAP document; often it is the first page of the EAP).
- In developing your notification chart and procedures consider both internal and external persons and agencies that should be notified. These may include: sponsor personnel, Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Management officials, Police, Fire Services, local Hospitals and others, as appropriate.
- Identify who is responsible to make the notification call to the appropriate emergency agencies, e.g. call to 911, or other emergency agencies, and
 - Notification procedures should be developed to ensure the timely notification of persons responsible for taking emergency actions. The procedures should be brief, simple, and easy to implement.
- Emergency procedures should outline what initial actions need to be taken by the event organizers and staff in notifying event participants and the public through an appropriate method (i.e. public address systems/warning systems).
- Event participants should be briefed on what actions they are expected to take when alerted of an impending risk.

Responsibility of Individual Agencies/Groups

- List the agencies/groups participating in the event and briefly list their responsibilities and major tasks.
- The EAP must specify the person(s) responsible for declaring an emergency under various circumstances and for initiating emergency actions.

Resources

- List any equipment to be used for public safety during the event or in the event of an Incident e.g. hand held radios, fire extinguishers etc.

Communications

- How the event control/organizers will communicate with the event staff/marshals and vice/versa.
- How the event control/organizers will communicate with the public.
- Include a list of persons who will have radios and what channel or frequency they can be contacted on).
- Include a list of persons who at the event location will have access to a phone and their contact telephone numbers.
- Communications systems can include portable radios, telephones, cellular telephones, public address systems, etc.
- Consider using loud audible signals to notify the public and staff of specific emergencies, e.g. shelter in place, evacuation, etc. For example, a number of blasts on an air horn to inform staff and public of issues has proven effective.

Planning Considerations

- The location of the venue can have an impact on emergency responses during an emergency. Designated emergency access and egress routes need to be identified in the traffic management plan. Venue sites that have geographical impacts to emergency response agencies need to be identified in the planning process.
- Depending on the nature of the event, the plan should be available for review by emergency services agencies to ensure that any pre-planning that is required is addressed in a timely manner.
- The event emergency contingency plan should be broken down into components - i.e. traffic management plan, medical plan, security plan, emergency procedures plan, contingency plans for specific situations risks that may arise, etc.

Risk Specific Contingencies

Where the risk cannot be eliminated entirely identify the most appropriate action(s) to be taken, and by what organization, should that situation arise. While these will vary for each event and event site it is suggested that the following should be considered. Note: event risks and hazards are specific to each event and location – some or all of the following may be appropriate to your event:

Weather

- Identify what seasonal weather conditions will be prevalent at the time and make appropriate plans. Also, identify any severe weather conditions (i.e. thunderstorms, high winds, extreme cold, blizzards, etc.) that could arise at the time of your event, and under what weather conditions you would be required to:
 - Modify or cancel your event?
 - Evacuate or Shelter in Place persons attending your event?
 - What is your 'wet weather' plan?
 - Consider making a weather call (go or no-go) in advance of the event where appropriate and identify the time that this will be made, by who, and how the decision will be communicated to event staff and participants.

Lost/Found Persons / Property

- What steps will be taken for re-uniting people who get separated?
- Where is lost property to be taken to? If it is not reclaimed, what will happen to it?
- Event organizers should exercise special care to provide well identified signs, announcement by public address systems or pre-event handouts that clearly designate such services. In setting up a lost and found service, it is important for event organizers to assign individuals who will remain at the lost and found area until the event is fully terminated.

Crowd Control

- Does your event require that you plan for crowd control throughout or are there situations that could arise that would require you to take steps to provide for crowd control / security? If so, adequate training of event personnel and the use of fencing equipment are measures to consider in the management of crowds.
- Consider that for large crowds, it is essential that staging be of sufficient height and visibility to project the activities to the crowd adequately. Security for the stage should be carefully planned:
 - Consider providing for a separation of the stage from the crowd, i.e. use of snow fencing could be considered.
 - When setting up the stage, always leave a well identified emergency access route. Such a route is especially important when emergency medical care is needed by participants near the front of the crowd.

Shelter In Place

- Describe the actions to be taken and the shelter location in the event of a decision to have event participants and staff shelter in place. Ensure in advance that the shelter infrastructure selected is appropriate in terms of robustness when compared with the anticipated risk and ensure the capacity to house persons from a fire safety perspective.
- Negotiate the use of this 'shelter in place' infrastructure and how it can be accessed in advance of the event.
- Have pre-scripted public information messaging available for shelter in place and coordinate who will be responsible for passing on the information to the public, and by what means in advance of the event.

Evacuation Plan

Describe the actions to be taken if the event location had to be partially or fully evacuated.

- Estimate time required to conduct the evacuation (how long it will take from the time a decision to evacuate is made, to when all evacuees can be moved to safety. This will help to identify the lead time required and your decision point to order an evacuation. Your plan should ensure that everyone can be evacuated to safety in the time available and identify the resources required.
- Identify:
 - Who will make the decision to evacuate the public from the event location?
 - Who will co-ordinate the evacuation (be in charge)?
 - How will the event staff/marshals and participants be informed and briefed of the situation?
 - Do the event staff/marshals have specific tasks in the event of an evacuation?
 - Which exits will the public be directed to?
 - To where will the public be evacuated?
 - Who will inform the emergency services (Police, Fire, Ambulance, etc.)?
 - How will the persons evacuated for be accounted for? (this is particularly important should persons be evacuated to more than one location)

Note: If your event is a linear type event i.e. sponsored walk, bike ride, etc. you will also need to consider:

- If required how do you stop the event?
- How do you inform the safety staff?
- How do you collect and account for the participants?
- To where do you evacuate the participants?

Have pre-scripted public information messaging available for evacuation and coordinate who will be responsible for passing on the information to the public, and by what means in advance of the event.

Traffic Management

- Ensure the emergency services have unobstructed access into the event location at all times.

First Aid Services

- Who is providing the Medical / First Aid services?
- Where is the first aid located?
- Are communications in place to enable calls to 911 for EMS/ambulance support?
- Is it accessible to ambulances?
- Consider communications links to the event control/organizers for their situational awareness and/or action?

Media

- If there was an incident at the event that attracted media interest, consider who would speak to the media and where this would take place.
- Have pre-scripted messaging available for anticipated risks

Other Risks / Hazards

- Consider any other risks or situations that you may have identified in your planning and identify how and by who they will be managed.