



AmTrust North America
An AmTrust Financial Company

Safety Zone

Emergency Response and Evacuation - Grocery

In today's world, an emergency response and evacuation plan has become a business operational priority. Store management supports safety processes and stresses the importance of a well-planned emergency response.

Each emergency response plan relates to that particular store. Each plan should be comprehensive enough to deal with different types of emergencies and easy to understand. A strong emergency response plan should not just sit on a shelf after development. Instead, the manager should review the plan

- whenever the employees' responsibilities under the plan change,
- when management identifies emerging threats, and
- when the floor plan, access, or egress change.

For a program to be effective during an emergency event, all staff must cooperate. In a grocery environment, shutting down the entire store is rarely an option. Therefore, each department should hold drills lead by evacuation leaders to ensure safe exit. When departments hold evacuation drills, all employees of that department must participate. This allows the drill leader to assess which areas are doing well and which need improvement. Managers should make sure that part time personnel are aware of, and understand the importance of, evacuation procedures.

Many emergency response plans deal with the threats that are most likely to occur in your geographic area, such as earthquakes or floods. However, managers and drill leaders should discuss issues such as civil unrest, power outages, fires, active shooters, and bomb threats, with employees.

Let's review the main elements of a robust emergency response plan.

Emergency escape procedures and emergency escape route assignments

- Be familiar with all the evacuation routes at your store. Management will assign you to a specific department, but certain tasks may require you to be elsewhere. Being unfamiliar with the evacuation route or the meeting place outside of another department may cause confusion. Know your assignment.
- Evacuations should be quick and orderly.

Procedures for employees who remain to perform or shut down critical operations

- Managers should assign personnel to shut down operations (such as turning off gas for stoves) if there is time or need. Managers should assign and train employees to shut down equipment prior to an event.
- Never obstruct fire extinguishers, electrical panels, aisles, exit pathways, or emergency doors.

After an emergency evacuation

- Establish a procedure to account for all employees.
- After evacuating the store, all employees should proceed directly to their assigned reporting areas for a head count. Employees should not wonder off, but wait for further directions.

Rescue and medical duties

- Be sure all employees have emergency contact numbers, including internal contacts. Be sure they have the correct name and job title of persons responsible after an event.

A great rule of thumb is to keep a “to go” bag in your car with a few important items.

- A blanket
- Change and dollar bills
- A pair of walking shoes
- At least one gallon of water
- A few days of any medication you may require
- A flashlight
- A first-aid kit
- A pen and paper
- A foldable shovel

An emergency response and evacuation plan is not only a good idea, it really can save lives.

Are You In The Zone?

1. In an emergency be familiar with your store’s specific _____.
2. In an emergency what things should never be obstructed? _____.
3. Evacuations should be _____ and _____.
4. Where should one go after evacuating the store?
5. List some items that can go in your vehicle’s emergency kit.

I have received information on emergency response and evacuation.

Employee Name: _____ Date: _____

For additional information and resources on this topic and other safety and risk management subjects be sure to visit the Loss Control section on our website:

<https://www.amtrustgroup.com/small-business-insurance/claims/prevention>

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CONTACT INFO:

PHONE: 888.486.7466 ext. 363275
WEB: www.amtrustnorthamerica.com
EMAIL: lcinfo@amtrustgroup.com

MAILING ADDRESS:

AmTrust North America
Loss Control
2605 Enterprise Road, Suite 290
Clearwater, FL 33759