ADM 01-06, Employee Emergency Plan under the AODA

**PURPOSE**

Under the [Employment Standard](https://www.aoda.ca/what-is-the-employment-standard/) of Ont. Reg 191/11, it is the duty of the employer to provide accessible emergency information to workers with disabilities. Employers must also create an individualized workplace emergency response plan for any worker with a disability who needs assistance during an emergency.

Accessible emergency information is any visual or audio material that explains what workers should do if there is an emergency at the workplace. Examples of emergency information include:

* posters displayed in prominent locations
* videos workers watch during training

Workers with disabilities must receive emergency information in formats they can access, in accessible formats. a worker who needs this accommodation will ask for it. However, some workers may not remember to ask for this accommodation, because emergencies do not happen every day. Employers should open a discussion with any workers who use accessible formats or [communication supports](https://www.aoda.ca/what-are-communication-supports/) to find out how best to make emergency information accessible to them.

**SCOPE**

For the purpose of this policy applies to all employees with disability who requires an individualized emergency response plan.

**PROCEDURE**

An individualized workplace emergency response plan is a written document that details all assistance a worker needs during a workplace emergency. A worker might need assistance with various tasks involved in responding to an emergency, including:

* Activating an alarm, or finding out that an alarm is sounding or flashing
* Locating or following paths to building exits
* Communicating with emergency responders
* Moving through crowds in stressful situations
* Travelling through and out of buildings without using elevators
* Finding and using designated waiting areas

While there are only a few guidelines that outline what an individualized workplace emergency response plan must include, there are some best practices that all businesses should follow when creating one.

## Emergencies in the Workplace

Before employers are ready to create individualized workplace emergency response plans, they must be aware of what happens during an emergency at their workplaces. They should be aware of everything workers are expected to know and do during an emergency. Employers should also know whether their building has set-ups that will help workers with disabilities know and do these things. They can start by reviewing:

* Evacuation and fire safety plans
* Alarms
* Maps
* Exits
* Designated waiting areas

Employers should then think about how people with different disabilities might find out what they need to know, and get where they need to go, during an emergency. Employers’ knowledge about the emergency procedures in their buildings can help them make these procedures as accessible as they can.

#### Emergency alerts and signage

Buildings should have multiple signals, such as audio, visual, and vibratory alarms. There are many devices on the market that emit both audio and visual cues. Workers must know what cues they can expect to receive if an emergency arises.

Visual signage needs to be legible for anyone to read. Signage should contain images, Braille, large print, and good colour contrast. Another way employers can strengthen their plans is by offering audio directions via public address system (PA system). These directions must be clear enough to lead workers unassisted to a general exit route, where they can seek assistance and safely exit the building.

#### Exit route

The exit strategy must be safe for everyone to use. If stairs are the only option for exiting the building, the employer should offer backup aids, such as a stair-descent device or evacuation chair, for any worker who does not use stairs. Elevators should not be considered as an option to use in an emergency exit strategy.

Exit paths should be clear of any obstacles on the floor and overhead. All doors should be labelled.

Individualized Workplace Emergency Response Plan

Workers who have [disclosed](https://www.aoda.ca/disclosure-of-disability-in-the-workplace/) their disabilities to their employers may discuss their need for an individualized workplace emergency response plan. However, some workers may not need a plan. Other workers may need a plan but may not mention it because they are focused on every-day accommodations instead of emergencies. Therefore, if someone with a disclosed disability does not mention the need for a plan, the employer should do so.

Moreover, the employer should offer every worker the chance for a plan, whether they have disclosed disabilities or not. Workers may have disabilities that they have chosen not to disclose, such as hearing loss or a learning disability. Workers may not disclose because their disabilities do not affect their day-to-day job tasks, but these workers may benefit from a plan if their disabilities affect their emergency response. Employers can help keep all workers safe by telling all workers that plans are possible. In addition, employers should offer plans to any workers with temporary disabilities, such as a broken leg or a short-term visual impairment after eye surgery.

## Initiating and Developing an Individualized Employee Workplace Emergency Response Plan

The employer will respond to an employee who requests an emergency response plan to address a barrier the individual may experiencing in responding to an emergency. The Human Resources Generalist will meet with the employee to initiate and plan a reasonable accommodation. initiate the request for reasonable accommodation.

Workers with disabilities and employers develop an individualized workplace emergency response plan together with the Human Resources Generalist and sign it. Employers must also seek out co-workers who will volunteer to help a worker in the event of an emergency. The plan must be kept confidential. For this reason, the employer must receive a worker’s consent before sharing any of the worker’s information with chosen volunteers. Kinds of help that volunteer coworkers can provide include:

* Telling a worker that the fire alarm is sounding
* Guiding a worker to the exit
* Explaining to emergency responders how a worker can communicate with them
* Calming a worker in the crowded environment of an emergency exit
* Physically supporting a worker and/or the worker’s mobility aid[s]
* Waiting with a worker away from designated waiting areas

Furthermore, the plan should list:

* The names, locations, and contact information of volunteers
* How the worker will be involved in every part of the emergency response, from the first alarm signal to the end of the process
* Which parts the worker will know about or do on their own, which parts they will perform with assistance, and what volunteers should do
* Any alternate routes a worker and volunteer may use when exiting the building

### Employee information

The individualized workplace emergency response plan will include the worker’s name, department and location of work.

### Co-Worker information

The plan should also list the same information about co-workers who have volunteered to help the worker. There should be more than one worker volunteer, in case the first person is absent or away from their work station at the time of an emergency.

### Emergency contact information

A worker’s personal emergency contact information is good to have if the worker is experiencing panic, stress, or injury. Include the following emergency contact information in the plan:

* Name
* Phone number
* Relationship to the worker

Assistance methods and equipment

The plan should list any assistance workers with disabilities need, and explain how volunteers should offer it. In addition, the plan should describe any mobility devices the worker uses. Some devices the worker might use every day. Other devices, such as evacuation chairs, might only be needed for emergencies. This section of the plan should include:

* What kind of device(s) a worker uses, for example, a walker, wheelchair, cane, crutches, or [service animal](https://www.aoda.ca/service-animals-in-the-workplace-are-they-allowed/)
* The location of the equipment or device(s), if it is stored
* How to use the equipment or device(s)

### Reviewing the Plan

Employers and workers should review an individualized workplace emergency response plan when the:

* worker’s location changes
* worker’s individual accommodation plan is reviewed
* employer reviews its general emergency response policies

REFERENCES: Accessibility Manitoba

 aoda.ca

Appendix A: Individual Emergency Response Plan Worksheet

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Employee’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Employee’s Position: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Work Location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Manager’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone / Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Alerts

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will be informed of an emergency situation by:

□ Existing alarm system □ Pager device

□ Visual alarm system □ Co-worker

□ Other

Assistance Method

List types of assistance (ie. staff assistance or transfer instructions)

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Equipment Required

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Evacuation Route and Procedure

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Alternative Evacuation Route

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Emergency Support Staff

The following people have been designated to help \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in an emergency.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Location and/or Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Type of Assistance: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Consent to Share Emergency Response Information

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ give consent for Nipigon District Memorial Hospital to share this individualized workplace emergency response information with the individuals listed above, who have been designated to help me in an emergency.

Employee’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Employee’s Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Manager’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Next Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_