

# Bulletin



*Library of Congress/Office of Compliance Joint Special Edition*

Special Edition No. 1.2, March 2003



## Prepare and Be Aware



This special edition of the Bulletin is provided jointly by the Library of Congress Emergency Management Team and the Office of Compliance as a brief guide and checklist for a range of possible situations. We have not attempted to cover all possible scenarios in depth, but recommend these steps as a minimum in preparation. For more detailed information, we have provided links to additional resources and encourage you to consult them.

### How Should Employees Prepare for an Emergency?

- ✓ **Know your office's evacuation plan:** Know your evacuation route, be aware of the nearest exits, alternate exits in case your primary route is blocked, and where your office will gather in an evacuation.
- ✓ **Evacuation or shelter-in-place:** Be prepared for the two possibilities during an emergency at the office – evacuation or shelter-in-place – and know what to do in either situation.
- ✓ **Remember escape hoods:** Ensure you know the location of your emergency escape hood, as well as locations where extra hoods are stored. Know how and when to use them.
- ✓ **Have contact information:** Be sure to have contact information for co-workers and supervisors, and understand your office's continuity of operations plans. Store this information off-site and/or keep it easily portable (such as in a PDA).
- ✓ **Think of loved ones:** Have an off-site evacuation location to go to if you are unable to return home, and let family know how to reach you there.
- ✓ **Consider your personal needs:** For shelter-in-place events, prepare your own stock of food and water (a three day supply). Plan for any special needs, especially if you have dietary restrictions (such as diabetes).
- ✓ **Create a personal "go kit" for evacuation:** Prepare a stock of water and non-perishable food, a pair of comfortable shoes, and any other special personal items you may need if forced to leave the office. Keep these items limited: for security reasons, it is not recommended that you carry large bags during an evacuation.
- ✓ **Plan for special medical needs:** Keep a three day supply of critical prescription drugs with you at all times, and keep copies of drug and eye glass prescriptions on hand.
- ✓ **Keep your ID with you:** If you are evacuated, be sure to take your official Library of Congress ID for identification and verification purposes, and do not forget your wallet or purse and house keys.
- ✓ **Prepare and be aware:** Plan ahead and consider any special needs you may have if kept away from home for an extended period.

## How Should Employers Prepare for an Emergency?

- ✓ **Have an emergency plan:** Employers MUST prepare an emergency action plan, and all employees must be familiar with the plan. (Required by OSH Act as applied by the CAA. For information or technical assistance regarding the OSHA standards relating to emergency preparedness, employers and employees may contact the Office of Compliance at 202-724-9292 or the Library of Congress Office of the General Counsel at 202-707-6316.)
- ✓ **Evacuation or shelter-in-place:** There are two possibilities during an emergency at the office – evacuation or shelter-in-place. Prepare your office for both situations. Library of Congress Police or other emergency responders will notify your office of which to do depending on the situation and facts at hand.
- ✓ **Train on the plan:** Train your employees on emergency plans, and have unannounced drills.
- ✓ **Plan for visitors and those with special needs:** Be prepared to assist visitors in case of an emergency, and be mindful of all those with special needs, such as the elderly and those with disabilities.
- ✓ **Account for staff:** Be prepared to account for all members of your staff during an emergency, and know when staff have left the office.
- ✓ **Plan for continuity of operations:** Evacuation may prevent access to offices for an extended period of time, so a continuity of operations plan for your office is essential:
  - ▶ Plan an alternate gathering spot away from the Capitol campus (such as an employee’s home) to gather in case the immediate area is unsafe or staff get separated.
  - ▶ Have home and cell phone numbers for all employees so that vital information can be passed along.
  - ▶ Plan how to perform core functions if kept away from the office for an extended period.
  - ▶ Backup critical information, especially computer server files and contact lists, and keep copies stored off-site.
- ✓ **Shelter-in-place essentials:** Make provisions for staff and visitors in case it is impossible to leave the workplace for an extended period (such as during a chemical or radiological event). Essentials for this scenario:
  - ▶ Flashlights, a battery powered radio, and extra batteries.
  - ▶ A reserve of bottled water able to accommodate all employees present.
  - ▶ Non-perishable foods, like canned and dried goods, that require limited preparation.
  - ▶ A first aid kit with basic supplies.
  - ▶ Blankets in case of a loss of heat or for treating shock after injury.
- ✓ **Prepare and be aware:** Listen for important information from emergency personnel, and make sure that all staff are trained and aware of emergency plans.

## Additional Information on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Planning

*Department of Homeland Security Emergency Preparedness Site*  
[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

*Library of Congress Emergency Management Team*  
[www.loc.gov/staff/emt](http://www.loc.gov/staff/emt)

*Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)*  
[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

*Office of Personnel Management Employee’s Emergency Guide*  
[www.opm.gov/emergency](http://www.opm.gov/emergency)

*FEMA’s “Are You Ready? A Guide to Citizen Preparedness”*  
[www.fema.gov/areyouready/](http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/)

*Red Cross*  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

The Office of Compliance protects the safety, health, and workplace rights of employees of the Congress and the Legislative Branch. Established by the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995, the Office is an independent and neutral agency which provides an impartial dispute resolution process and educates employees and employing offices about their rights and responsibilities under the Act.



**The Office of Compliance**  
**110 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, SE Room LA-200**  
**Washington, D.C. 20540-1999**  
**202-724-9250/TDD 202-426-1912**  
**Recorded Information Line: 202-724-9260**  
**[www.compliance.gov](http://www.compliance.gov)**