



Fire and Emergency Procedures

INTRODUCTION

Torbay Council already has emergency procedures designed to deal with major incidents contained within its Major Emergency Guide (The Guide). The procedures and guidelines produced below whilst making reference to the Guide, are in general responses to local incidents which require rapid action to preserve life, protect people at work, and visitors to our premises.

Employers have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act and supporting legislation to protect their employees and other people from serious and imminent danger. To this end managers are required to provide plans for foreseeable emergency situations which may arise.

The following guidelines are for people who have responsibility for buildings or departments within buildings so that they may design and implement emergency procedures.

The procedures should be based on risk assessment; they should protect staff and visitors on Council premises and inform them what to do in the event that an emergency occurs, some of which are listed below.

- Accidents and serious or sudden illness
- Bombs or suspect packages
- Electrical
- Environmental
- Fire
- Gas leaks
- Lifts

Procedures and plans are only effective if they are instructed to all personnel and practised on a regular basis. Practices should be carried out by key people and revised as necessary to remain effective. Records should be kept of all practices held and the monitoring and review process.

Emergency Procedures - Accidents And Serious Or Sudden Illness

The following guidance is for everyone who may come across the scene of an accident, not just for trained first aiders. It deals with a variety of emergency situations and gives basic first aid advice, which can be used in an emergency. Only persons who are fully trained in appropriate first aid procedures may administer additional treatment. If you suspect that a casualty has a serious injury or illness or you are in any doubt as what to do, seek immediate medical assistance by calling the ambulance service 999. Be prepared to give the information, which will be required:

- Your telephone number.
- The exact location – A house or building number, street, town or if in the country a map reference or directions from the nearest recognisable landmark.
- The type and seriousness of the incident – for example: “There has been a traffic accident, there are two cars, the road is blocked, there are three people trapped”.

- The number, sex, and approximate ages of the casualties, and anything you know about their condition – for example, “A man, in his early fifties, suspected of having a heart attack”.
- Details of any hazards such as spilled chemicals, power line damage or adverse weather conditions such as fog, or heavy rain.

General

Take care not to become a casualty yourself if you intend to administer first aid – use protective clothing and equipment where necessary.

Make the area safe. If able to get bystanders to warn other people and keep them away.

Don't delay in sending for assistance where necessary.

Follow the advice below.

Emergency action

If you need help send for it immediately.

If an ambulance is needed, arrangements should be made for it to be directed to the scene without delay.

Preserve the scene as far as possible, other people such as the Police, Health and Safety Executive or other agencies may wish to investigate the circumstances of the incident later on.

Sudden Illness

Re-assure the casualty.

Remove them to a quiet area or first aid room.

Seek expert assistance if in doubt.

Do not offer any medication — casualty may take his or her own personal pain relief tablets as appropriate.

Reporting

Report all accidents and incidents of illness in the normal manner using the Council forms.

Inform your immediate line manager as soon as possible.

First aid materials

If first aid is administered articles used from first aid boxes should be replaced as soon as possible.

Emergency Procedures - Road Traffic Accidents

- If the accident appears serious call the emergency services as before.
- Ensure your own safety; do not create danger to yourself or others.
- If in a vehicle park safely, well clear of the accident, set your hazard lights flashing.
- Do not run across a busy motorway to reach the other side.
- At night, wear or carry something light, or reflective, and use a torch.
- Send bystanders to warn other drivers.
- Set up warning triangles or lights 200metres/250 yards in each direction.
- Switch off the ignition of any damaged vehicle and, if you know how, disconnect the battery.
- Switch off the fuel supply on diesel vehicles and motorcycles.

- Stabilise vehicles. If a vehicle is upright, apply the hand brake and put it in gear, or put blocks at the wheels. If a vehicle is on its side, do not right it, but try to prevent it from rolling over.
- Look out for physical dangers. Is anyone smoking? Are there goods vehicles displaying Hazchem symbols? Are there damaged power lines, or spilt fuel?
- Do Not move injured people unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent further injuries.
- If it is essential to move a casualty, you will need help to support the shoulders and chest, hips and abdomen, and for the legs. You should support the head at all times, one person taking charge of the moving operation.

Emergency Procedures - Bombs And Suspect Packages

(See Torbay Council Civil Emergency Guide. S.7.C)

The threat of terrorist attack by either depositing bombs in our premises or sending devices through the post is far from commonplace and for most of us will remain something we hear about on the news. However as employers the Council has the responsibility to provide plans to minimise the risks to life and property should such an event occur. The following guidance is general in nature because of the diversity of our services and buildings, and will need to be adapted to suit local conditions.

On receipt of a telephone call (include fax or E mail) alleging the presence of a bomb or explosive device

1. Inform the main switchboard immediately who will alert the senior manager present, wait for instructions
2. If a telephone call complete the proforma in the Guide (7.C.A.1)

On receiving instructions to evacuate a building

3. When told to do so by the floor marshal evacuate the building by the assigned route to a designated area
4. Take your personal property with you including coats you may be there for a long time
5. Open doors and windows as you leave
6. Remain at the evacuation site until told to return by the senior manager present

The fire alarm must NOT be used to evacuate on a bomb alert

On discovering a suspicious object or package

1. Do Not Touch or Move the object
2. Contact reception immediately stating what you believe you have found and where it is, describe the object as best you can .
3. Reception must inform the senior manager present who should nominate a control point and implement the evacuation plan (Points 3 to 6 above).
4. If possible leave a distinctive marker near (not touching) the object.
5. Move away from the object to the designated control point, be prepared to explain exactly where the object is, draw a plan if able

The person finding the object should be immediately available for interview by the Police

Emergency Procedures - Electrical

Electricity can kill. Every year about 30 people die from electric shock or burns at work and about the same number from electrical accidents in the home. The use of electricity, the installation of electrical systems, and the safe procedures for carrying out work on electrical systems is heavily regulated because the dangers are well known. However failures can happen, in which case procedures are required to safely deal with the situation. Directorates will need to look at their individual requirements.

Fires and explosions involving electrical equipment. (See also Fire arrangements)

1. Raise the alarm.
2. If able switch off the equipment.
3. If there are any casualties provide first aid as necessary. BEFORE TOUCHING CASUALTY ensure mains electrical supplies are switched off. (See also First aid arrangements).
4. If you can do so safely without putting yourself at risk: Attack the fire using a suitable fire extinguisher, CO₂, or Dry Powder. Always check your exit is clear and allow time to vacate the building.
5. When the fire is extinguished, report the incident to your line manager.
6. Do not switch the equipment back on until a competent person has checked it out.

Failure of Electrical Supplies

Normally failure of electrical supplies (power failure) will not in itself cause serious injury or loss, however it can give rise to conditions where accidents can happen.

For an assessment of what can happen you will have to decide what is the critical equipment and what would happen if it suddenly lost its power source, what could go wrong and who or what could be harmed? For instance; the lights in the offices, what could happen if they went out. For example slips, trips and falls slips would be more likely. Some equipment has emergency back up supplied by batteries, but how long do they last? Most emergency lighting will have batteries to supply enough power for only 15 to 20 minutes, to enable people to evacuate the premises. What will you do if power and thus lighting is off of several hours? What will you do with your staff, can they be employed elsewhere on a temporary basis, or is the power failure widespread and effecting other offices.

Dangerous conditions can arise where power failures leave equipment or machinery in a state likely to cause injury. Most modern machinery has built in fail safe mechanisms, but what about the older equipment without fail safe; will your people be free from risk?

The following checklist has been designed as a tool to assist in the decision making process:

Equipment: -

- Do you have a current register of electrical equipment
- Was the equipment selected for the environment it is being used in
- Was the equipment selected for the intended use it is being put to
- Does it meet BS/EN standards
- Can it be isolated and locked off
- Has the equipment been maintained on a regular basis
- Are records kept

Is it inspected before use daily to ensure: -

- Insulation is sound
- Continuity of earthing
- There are no apparent defects
- Are records kept

People: -

- Are people trained to use the equipment
- Are they competent
- Do they know what to do in case of defects/emergency
- Are managers and team leaders trained also
- Are records kept

Systems: -

- Have risk assessments been carried out
- Have safe systems of work/use been identified and implemented
- Are inspections carried out to ensure safe systems etc are used
- Is the equipment portable appliance tested at required intervals
- Are records kept
- Are all records and procedures reviewed after the event to ensure effectiveness of plans

Emergency Procedures - Environmental

(See also Torbay Council Civil Emergency Guide S.7.D.E&F).

Environmental emergencies can take many forms from road tankers overturning and spilling its contents into a nearby watercourse to fires involving hazardous materials such as asbestos, or even oil spills at sea. Council workers should normally only be involved with environmental emergencies from the point of clean up operations after the incident. In saying this however special precautions may still be required to prevent people from becoming exposed to substances hazardous to health and any other hazards, which may be present during such operations.

In all cases a risk assessment will need to be carried out to determine the level of risk to people and the safety measures (including type and specification of personal protective equipment) to be taken. The following checklist has been designed to as a tool to assist in the decision making process:

Substances

- Has the hazardous substance been identified(Look for hazard warning panels or data sheets)
- How will it harm the environment or the people nearby
- Is it listed in EH 40 Occupational Exposure Limits as hazardous to health
- Can it be contained (prevented from entering water courses or dispersing into the atmosphere)
- Keep records

Equipment

- Is special personal protection equipment such as breathing apparatus required
- Is special equipment such as containment booms drain covers required
- Is decontamination equipment required (for employees and equipment)
- Is equipment inspected to ensure operability
- Is there sufficient equipment for all concerned in the operation, including back up teams
- Have people been trained in its maintenance and use
- Is there sufficient communications equipment for all to remain in contact
- Are records kept

People

- Have people been trained to deal with the situation
- Have they been trained to deal with non routine issues such as equipment failure
- Has a local supervisor been appointed
- Have they received training as above
- Have personnel been medically examined as required by statute (BA wearers)

- Do they have any medical condition which would exclude them from carrying out work with particular substances

Systems

- Has a risk assessment been conducted
- Have safe systems of work been identified and implemented
- Have people been trained in their use
- Are there systems/locations for the disposal of contaminated equipment etc. Are records kept? Remember to monitor and review all systems, procedures and records at the end of the incident to ensure they continue to be effective

Emergency Procedures – Fire

Fire causes injury, damage and in the worst cases death. Most injuries and deaths occur through the inhalation of smoke and toxic fumes caused by products of combustion. All premises are required to have fire evacuation plans following a fire risk assessment, which have to be communicated to all people who enter into any of the Council's premises. These plans must be tested at least once per annum. Some fire authorities require further tests dependant on the type and occupancy of the building or work carried out.

Tests, faults and false alarms should be recorded, including times of activation and length of time it takes to clear a building. Causes of false alarms and faults should be investigated and dealt with as soon as practicable. Alarms should only be deactivated as a last resort, if so alternative methods of detection and raising the alarm must be put in place prior to de-activation. (The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 is dealt with in Section 1 of the manual). The following fire evacuation procedures are common to most buildings. They may need modification for individual characteristics of a site.

Evacuation procedure in the event of a Fire

Any person discovering a Fire

1. Sound the alarm
2. Call the fire brigade if not already done so
3. Attack the fire if it can be done safely using the fire extinguishers provided, ensure your escape route is clear, **always leave enough time to escape**

On hearing the fire alarm

1. Leave the building by the nearest route, do not stop to pick up personal belongings
2. Close all doors and windows behind you if safe to do so, always leave enough time to escape.
3. Report to the assembly point

Emergency Procedures - Gas Leaks

Because of the volatility of gas the utmost care must be taken when dealing with suspected leaks. If you smell gas or believe that gas may be leaking into the atmosphere in your area these guidelines should be followed:

Leakage without fire

- Evacuate everyone from the area to a safe place (do not use electrical fire alarm systems)
- Inform your line manager (use a phone away from the area)
- Do not smoke.
- Do not use naked flames.
- Do not turn electric switches on or off.
- Turn off the gas supply at the main isolation valve do not use the installation again until the fault has been rectified
- Do open doors and windows to get rid of the gas (doors are most important)

- Keep all personnel away from the area
- Call Transco on 0800 111 999
- For major gas leaks call the Fire Service.

Leakage of gas which has ignited

- Sound the fire alarm and evacuate the premises
- Call the Fire brigade if not already done so
- If possible, but without taking personal risk shut off the gas supply at the main isolation valve

Emergency Procedures - Passenger Lifts

Passenger lifts are commonplace in offices and buildings throughout the country. As such they are often overlooked when it comes to emergencies that can and do happen.

One of the more frequent incidents are lifts which jam or become stuck between floors. This can lead to panic and severe stress for those people who may be trapped inside. In such cases where passenger lifts in council premises stop for any reason and cannot be simply restarted then the following procedure should be adopted: -

Manual winding of passenger lifts and opening lift landing doors.

Council employees must not operate lift winding equipment manually, or open lift landing doors under any circumstances, lift winding etc. or the opening of doors in emergency cases must only be carried out by:

- I. Appointed Competent Lift Engineers
- II. The Emergency Services (Devon Fire and Rescue Service).

N.B. Keys to the lifts are held within the lift motor rooms, Torworks, and at the Property Services Division Tel. 207867, they should be contacted immediately to provide the keys to the lifts. In the event of an incident requiring the release of lift passengers the following procedure must be adopted:

- a) Establish which lift alarm has been activated by the lift control panel indicators, or which bell has sounded in the building. Then establish the exact whereabouts of the lift by walking up or down the stairs to each level of the building and calling out.

Do Not attempt to open the lift doors and look up or down the lift shaft.

- b) Reassure and advise the trapped person(s) that you are aware of their circumstances. Try and ascertain the number and condition of the people involved.
- c) Raise the alarm by phoning 999, and Torworks using the Priority Call procedure. Ask for the Devon Fire and Rescue Service. Give your location, the number of people trapped, and if known their condition. If a person's condition is unknown or in doubt ask for the ambulance service as well.
- d) Inform the lift occupants that the Emergency Services have been contacted and that help is on its way. Continue to remain in contact with the lift occupants and reassure them that help is on its way; monitor the situation as closely as possible to ascertain if the situation changes in anyway. Remain calm and reassuring at all times.
- e) Upon arrival of the Emergency Services, pass all relevant details to the Officer in Charge, provide necessary access/override keys. The Emergency Services will take control of the situation.
- f) When the lift occupants have been released, try to ascertain the names and addresses for

recording and reporting purposes.

- g) Remain at the scene until the incident has been resolved and the lift shaft secured to prevent access unless told to leave by a senior officer.
- h) Once the lift is isolated and secure, the appointed lift engineer should be contacted to inspect and return the lift to the correct operation
- i) Make a written record of the incident.