



# TEXAS ASSOCIATION *of* COUNTIES

## RISK MANAGEMENT POOL

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### Six Essential Emergency Preparedness Tips

Source: BLR

1. **Develop an emergency plan** and communicate it to your employees. It should include escape procedures and escape route assignments, special procedures for employees who perform or shut down critical plant operations, systems to communicate with and account for all employees after evacuation, rescue and medical duties for employees who perform them and means for reporting emergencies.

**Note:** OSHA standards for private employers require development of written emergency action plans (EAPs).

2. **Designate an emergency response coordinator** and a backup coordinator who will be responsible for determining what emergencies may occur and for ensuring that emergency procedures are developed to address each situation; directing all emergency activities; ensuring that outside emergency services are notified when necessary; and directing the shutdown of the organization's operations when necessary. For counties this could be the county judge or possibly another designated staff member or elected official depending on the organization or circumstance.
3. **Form an emergency response team** with members who will be trained to use fire extinguishers, administer first aid, follow county's Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan, shut down organization operations, control chemical spills, perform search and emergency rescue procedures, and respond to emergencies involving hazardous materials, depending on the specifics of your organization's operations.
4. **Keep a copy of important records and files at an off-site, secure location** in case original copies are damaged or destroyed. Online cloud storage services may be a good option for some organizations, as these services should not be affected by local weather conditions in your area.
5. **Have a disaster supply kit** with food, water and other essentials at your organization's facilities for situations where employees must shelter in place either because travel is unsafe or because they are responsible for maintaining critical operations during an emergency closure. The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) has a [list of what to include](#) in a disaster supply kit.
6. **Train employees** on the details of your emergency plan, including evacuation procedures, alarm systems, shutdown procedures, reporting procedures for personnel and types of potential emergencies. Also, make sure to train employees on any hazards specific to your facility, such as toxic chemicals, fire hazards and any equipment that may become hazardous in the event of a power failure or other emergency.