Emergency Preparedness: Natural Disasters
Natural disasters can strike anywhere and at any time, putting workers at risk for injuries and illnesses.

Companies and workers may be required to deal with a disaster when they least expect it, making proper planning before an emergency necessary to respond effectively.
Preparing for a natural disaster before one happens is an important part in making sure companies and workers have the necessary equipment, know where to go, and know how to keep themselves safe during disasters, such as:

- Hurricanes
- Floods
- Tornadoes
- Earthquakes
Your company may be required to have an emergency action plan (EAP). An EAP identifies different emergencies that could happen at your workplace and the correct response actions for each of the potential emergencies.

These plans must be in writing, kept at the workplace, and be available for you to review.
Whether or not your company is required to have an EAP in place, having an *evacuation plan* in place before a natural disaster can help avoid confusion and prevent injuries and property damage.
Some things an evacuation plan should **include** are:
- Conditions that will activate the plan
- Chain of command
- Emergency functions and who will perform them
- Specific evacuation procedures, including routes and exits
- Procedures for accounting for personnel, customers, and visitors
Your company should make sure all workers know what to do in case of an emergency.

Evacuation plans and procedures should be practiced on a regular basis and updated as needed.
In addition to knowing and following your company’s EAP or evacuation plan, there are some additional preparations you should make that can apply outside of the workplace when you are at home.
If you are located in an area that experiences hurricanes, it is important to be familiar with the warning terms used for hurricanes and your local community's emergency plans, warning signals, and shelters.
Warning terms for hurricanes include:

- Hurricane/Tropical Storm watch: hurricane or tropical storm conditions are possible for the watch area within 48 hours
- Hurricane/Tropical Storm warning: hurricane or tropical storm conditions are expected for the warning area within 36 hours

Be prepared to follow instructions from the local authorities and evacuate if instructed to do so.
Preparing for a **tornado** requires identifying a place to take shelter, being familiar with and monitoring your community’s warning system, and creating procedures to account for personnel.
Underground areas, such as a basement or storm cellar, are the recommended places to shelter from a tornado. If an underground shelter is unavailable, you should:

- Seek a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible
- Stay away from doors, windows, and outside walls
- Stay in the center of the room, and avoid corners because they attract debris
- Avoid auditoriums and other buildings that have flat, wide-span roofs
If you are located in an area that could flood, you should monitor National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio or commercial radio and television stations for information about flood watches and warnings.
Be prepared to move to higher ground immediately if you receive information about the potential for flash flooding. You should be prepared to evacuate before water levels rise and potentially cut off evacuation routes.
Do not drive through **flooded areas**. As little as 6 in. of water can cause a vehicle to lose control or stall. A foot of water is enough to float many cars.
If you are located in an area where earthquakes are a potential threat, you should identify safe places to shelter in your workplace and home, such as under a sturdy table or desk or against an interior wall away from windows or tall objects that could fall on you.

The shorter the distance you have to move to get to safety, the less likely you are to be injured.
Practice “drop, cover, and hold on” in each safe place so that they become an automatic response:

- Drop under a sturdy desk or table
- Hold on to one leg of the table or desk
- Protect your eyes by keeping your head down
When preparing your household for natural disasters, put together a **disaster supplies kit** to make sure you have the necessary items and supplies in case of an emergency, such as:

- **Water** – one gallon of water per person per day for at least 3 days, for drinking and sanitation
- **Food** – at least a 3-day supply of non-perishable food
- **A battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert**
When preparing your household for natural disasters, put together a disaster supplies kit to make sure you have the necessary items and supplies in case of an emergency, such as:

- A flashlight and extra batteries
- A first aid kit
- A cell phone with chargers and a backup battery
Store your disaster supplies kit items in airtight plastic bags and keep your kit in one or two containers that are easy to carry, such as plastic bins or a duffel bag.

After assembling your kit, remember to maintain it so that it is ready when needed. Replace expired items as needed and re-think your needs every year and update your kit.
Natural disasters can create life-threatening hazards for workers on the job and after their shift.

Preparing for natural disasters before they happen can help companies keep their workers safe when things turn deadly.
1. A(n) __________ identifies different emergencies that could happen at your workplace and the correct response actions for each of the potential emergencies.
   A. Emergency action plan (EAP)
   B. Job safety analysis (JSA)
   C. Safety data sheet (SDS)
   D. Lockout/tagout (LOTO)

2. Some things an evacuation plan should include are conditions that will activate the plan and __________.
   A. Work permits
   B. Hot work procedures
   C. Specific evacuation procedures
   D. A job safety analysis

3. Your company should make sure __________ know what to do in case of an emergency.
   A. Some workers
   B. Competent persons
   C. Supervisors
   D. All workers

4. A hurricane or tropical storm watch means hurricane or tropical storm conditions are possible for the watch area within __________.
   A. 48 hours
   B. 36 hours
   C. 24 hours
   D. 12 hours

5. __________ are the recommended places to shelter from a tornado.
   A. Buildings with flat, wide-span roofs
   B. Near doors and windows
   C. Underground areas
   D. Auditoriums

6. You should be prepared to evacuate __________ water levels rise and potentially cut off evacuation routes.
   A. After
   B. As soon as
   C. Before
   D. 24 hours after

7. __________ drive through flooded areas.
   A. Do not
   B. Always
   C. Quickly
   D. During an emergency

8. When preparing your household for natural disasters, put together a __________ to make sure you have the necessary items and supplies in case of an emergency.
   A. Disaster supplies kit
   B. Work permit
   C. Job safety analysis
   D. Lockout/tagout procedure

9. Store your disaster supplies kit items in airtight plastic bags and keep your kit in one or two containers that are __________.
   A. Difficult to open
   B. Easy to carry
   C. Easy to drop
   D. Difficult to find

10. Replace expired items in your disaster supplies kit __________ and re-think your needs every year and update your kit.
    A. As needed
    B. Every month
    C. Every 6 months
    D. Once a year
Instructors: The following key shows the answers for the Emergency Preparedness: Natural Disasters safety meeting quiz.

1. A
2. C
3. D
4. A
5. C
6. C
7. A
8. A
9. B
10. A
Student Instructions: Print and sign your name. Also, provide your date of birth or the last four digits of your social security number.

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