BACKGROUND

Under WHS Legislation (Qld), Employers must have an emergency management plan that outlines the arrangements in place to deal with emergencies in the workplace.
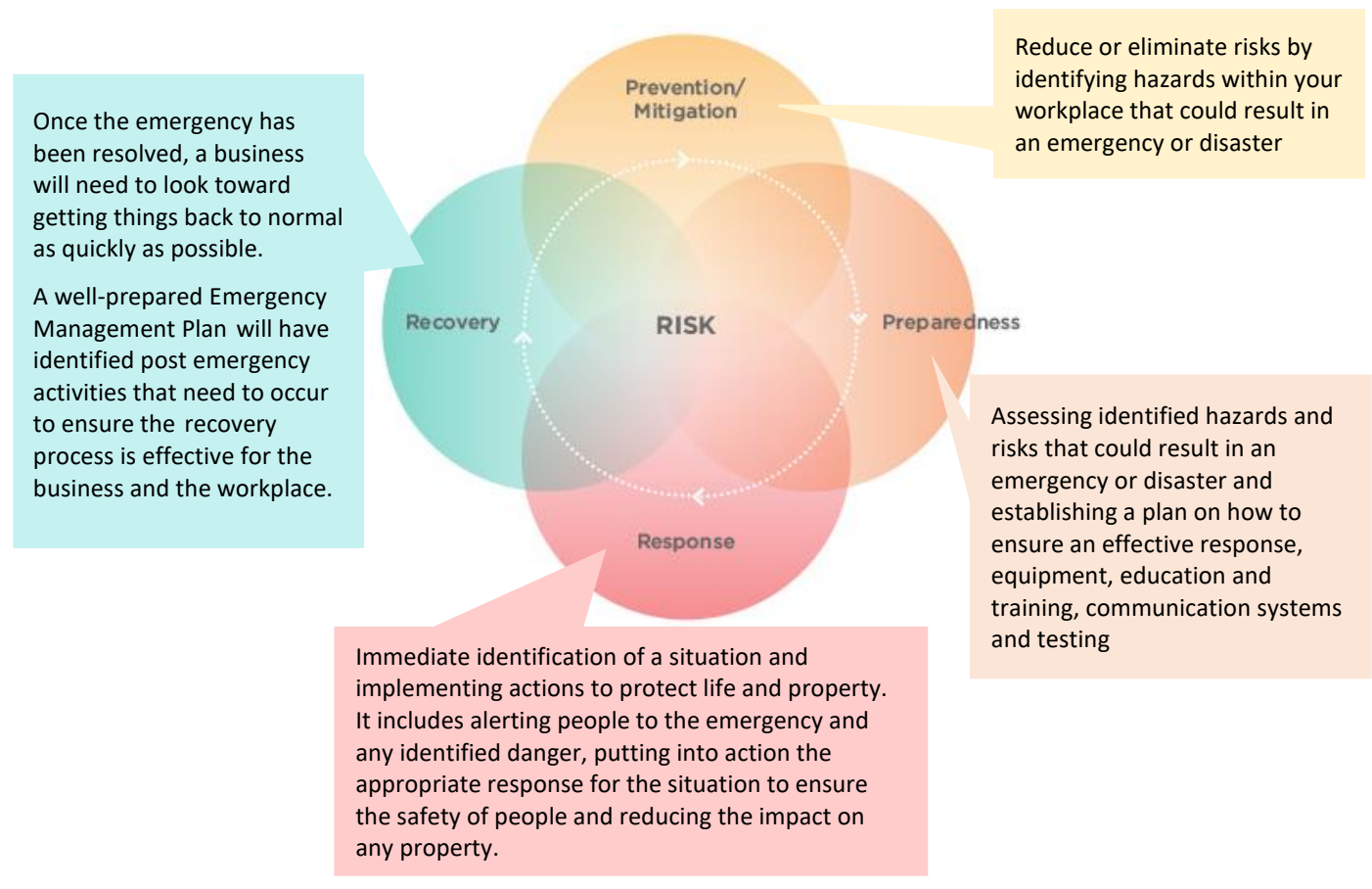
Emergency plans, or a summary of key elements of emergency plans, should be readily accessible by workers or on display in the workplace, for example on a notice board. [2]

DEFINITIONS

Emergency refers to an event that arises internally, or from external sources, which may adversely affect the occupants or visitors in a facility, and which requires an immediate response. [5]

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW [4]

There are four recognised phases of managing emergencies in the workplace:

Once the emergency has been resolved, a business will need to look toward getting things back to normal as quickly as possible.

A well-prepared Emergency Management Plan will have identified post emergency activities that need to occur to ensure the recovery process is effective for the business and the workplace.

Reduce or eliminate risks by identifying hazards within your workplace that could result in an emergency or disaster

Assessing identified hazards and risks that could result in an emergency or disaster and establishing a plan on how to ensure an effective response, equipment, education and training, communication systems and testing

Immediate identification of a situation and implementing actions to protect life and property. It includes alerting people to the emergency and any identified danger, putting into action the appropriate response for the situation to ensure the safety of people and reducing the impact on any property.

TOOLBOX TIPS

- ✓ Print copies of this sheet for yourself and each of the workers
- ✓ Lead a discussion with your workers about the materials on this sheet at a location that is appropriate to the topic
- ✓ Be sure to give real life examples whenever possible.
- ✓ Ask your workers for their experiences
- ✓ Have each worker sign your sheet to confirm their attendance

- ✓ Conclude with a brief review of the main points or a summary based on the discussion
- ✓ File your sheet in your worker training records to document the training experience
- ✓ Fill in your operation name, location and the date on your sheet
- ✓ Be open to questions

This toolbox is background information ONLY. Be sure to customise your talk to your operation and facilities. The following tips are some helpful suggestions with getting the best out of your toolbox.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS (EMP) [5]

What should be in an EMP?

The emergency plan should be based on a practical assessment of hazards associated with the work activity or workplace, and the possible consequences of an emergency occurring as a result of those hazards. External hazards should also be considered in preparing an emergency plan, for example a chemical storage facility across the road.

Your emergency plan must cover emergency procedures, including an effective response to an emergency, evacuation procedures, notifying emergency service organisations at the earliest opportunity, medical treatment and assistance, effective communication between the person authorised to coordinate the emergency response and all people at the workplace, testing of the emergency procedures — including the frequency of testing, and information, training, and instruction to relevant workers in relation to implementing the emergency procedures.

What type of emergencies should be covered?

The types of emergencies to plan for may include fire, explosion, medical emergency (injuries / illness), rescues, incidents with hazardous chemicals, bomb threats, armed confrontations, and natural disasters. Special consideration may need to be provided for workers who travel for work, work alone or in remote locations.

EQUIPMENT AND SIGNAGE

Fire Protection and First Aid Equipment

Sites must have an adequate number of fire extinguishers and first aid kits suitable for the types of emergencies that could occur, inspected as required (six-monthly for fire extinguishers) and clearly signed for easy identification of their locations. Hose reels are required for sole-occupant buildings 500m2 or greater.[3]

Fire and Evacuation Diagram and Signage

Each site should have a Fire and Evacuation diagram illustrating the location of fire protection equipment, first aid kits, emergency exits and assembly area/s. Fire extinguishers and reels, first aid kits, emergency exits, and assembly area/s must be clearly signed and easily identifiable in the event of an emergency.

Emergency assembly areas shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, be sufficiently distant from the emergency for the protection of evacuees. More than one assembly area can be nominated, depending on the size, location, and setup of site.

ROLES AND TRAINING

First Aiders and Wardens

An adequate number of qualified first aiders and wardens should be nominated for site and be trained in the Emergency Plan.

All Workers

Workers must be trained in emergency procedures. Arrangements for information, training and instruction of workers must be set out in the emergency plan itself.

Training should include practising evacuations, identifying assembly points, location of emergency equipment, first aid arrangements and how to safely shut down machinery.

HELPFUL LINKS

Legislation Qld - WHS Regulation 2011

Legislation Qld - Building fire regulation 2008

Business Govt - Prepare your business for an emergency

Standards Aust - AS/NZS 3745:2010 Planning for emergencies in facilities

Evaculife - Background information on AS/NZS 3745:2010 Planning for emergencies in facilities

WHSQ - First aid and emergency plans

QFES Qld - Emergency forms and templates

Standards Aust - AS/NZS 5050:2010 Business continuity - managing disruption related risk

RESOURCES/REFERENCES

[1] Work Health and Safety Act, s.17; [2] WHS Regulation Qld 2011, s 42, 43; [3] Legislation Qld – Building Fire Regulation 2008; [4] Disaster Qld - Prevention Preparedness, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guideline; [5] AS/NZS 3745–2010 Planning for emergencies in facilities