

Emergency Action Plan – City Hall

Policy

Emergencies and disasters are unpredictable and strike without warning. Failure of emergency preparation in advance may result in death and injury to personnel, loss or damage to facilities, property, equipment and the ability to serve the public. This policy has been developed to identify responsibilities and establish procedures that must be taken in the event an emergency situation arises.

This Emergency Action Plan (EAP) will address the following emergencies:

1. Fire
2. Medical Emergency
3. Tornados/Severe Thunder Storms
4. Bomb Threats
5. Earthquake
6. Acts or potential acts of Violence

In addition, this plan will address the procedures for evacuating the physically impaired, evacuation drills and responsibilities of Floor Wardens.

This plan shall be reviewed with effected employees when the plan is initiated, whenever an employee is hired, when the employee's responsibilities or designated actions under the plan change, or whenever the plan is changed.

Scope

This plan covers only those employees working in the City Hall Tower.

Floor Warden

In the event of one of the emergency situations highlighted below occurs, the Department Director will be designated as Floor Warden and will be responsible for directing the activities detailed in this plan. Duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Maintaining an awareness of the number of people working or doing business in your area.
2. Upon hearing the fire alarm system activated, direct occupants to the nearest available exit door.
3. Make necessary accommodations for persons with disabilities.
4. Check offices, storage rooms, conference rooms and restrooms for occupants **while you exit**.
5. After reaching the designated safe area, conduct a roll call or head count.
6. Provide fire personnel with any relevant information pertaining to the incident and occupants not accounted for.
7. Following the evacuation of the building during a fire or bomb threat, wait in the assigned safe area until receiving further instructions from fire or law enforcement personnel.

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Each Department Director shall select an alternate to fill the duties of floor warden in the event of their absence. If none of the floor warden's are present during an emergency, the employee with the highest pay grade within the department will assume floor warden duties.

Fire

In the event fire or smoke is discovered at City Hall, these procedures have been developed in order to protect the lives of employees, the general public as well as to minimize the extent of property damage. Our main concern is that all occupants safely evacuate the building to a safe refuge location. All employees should familiarize themselves with the evacuation floor plans posted inside corridors and/or their work area. The evacuation route plans identify the location of exits and the means of egress to use during an emergency to exit the building.

Anyone who discovers fire or smoke should immediately locate and pull the nearest fire alarm pull station to activate the buildings' fire alarm system. Fire alarm pull stations are generally located inside the main corridors, adjacent to exit doors and doors leading to enclosed stairwells. Whenever the fire alarm system is activated all employees and visitors must evacuate the building using the nearest exit to their location. To report a fire emergency, an employee can notify Decatur Fire and Rescue by dialing **911**. Whenever reporting a fire emergency (**Remain CALM**) and provide the following information to the communication operator: building address; general location of the fire or smoke within the building and any other information relevant to the situation.

Floor wardens must check their office space including restrooms, storage areas, meeting rooms, and work areas in and adjacent to their office space as quickly as possible to ensure that all occupants have evacuated. Whenever the floor wardens' safety may be jeopardized they must evacuate the building immediately. If an employee is with a member of the public, it is his/her responsibility to escort that person from the building using the designated evacuation route.

In the event the stairs or exit is blocked, employees should move to the windows on the West side of the building for evacuation by the fire department.

FIRE EXTINGUISHMENT

A fire can contain dangerous smoke, gases and heat, which may pose both a physical and health hazard to anyone attempting to extinguish it without proper personal protective equipment and training. Therefore under no circumstances should an employee attempt to extinguish a fire when:

1. They do not know what is burning;
2. They could jeopardize their own safety;
3. The fire could cut off their means to evacuate to safety;
4. They are not sure they have the proper type of extinguisher;
5. They have not received training in the proper use of extinguishers.

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Portable fire extinguishers are located throughout the building normally inside recessed cabinets. Employees should inspect their work area and make a mental note of extinguisher locations. Employees should not attempt to put out any fire that is not obviously containable. These extinguishers should be mainly used to clear a path along the exit route from the building.

EVACUATING TO SAFE AREAS

During a fire emergency everyone must evacuate from the building and report to their assigned safe area (Northwest corner of City Hall complex property), and remain there until the floor warden arrives to conduct a roll call. Whenever a floor warden discovers that someone is not accounted for, he or she must notify the Fire Incident Commander immediately. The Fire Incident Commander will determine when the building can be re-entered.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency notify Emergency Medical Services or paramedics by dialing **911**. Provide the dispatcher the address, exact location of the victim (floor and room number) and the nature of the illness or injury. The caller should advise the 911 dispatcher of the best entrance to use (Example: First Street side, etc.). The Floor warden or their designee should clear the elevator and hold it on the floor level where the emergency medical service personnel will enter the building. Any employee who renders first aid treatment must **always** use universal safety precautions where there is the potential of exposure to blood or body fluids.

An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is located in the lobby of the Police Department.

Tornado / Severe Thunderstorm

Tornadoes and severe thunderstorms can occur suddenly, and result in loss of life and severe property damage. It is important for employees to be prepared in the event of a severe weather occurrence. Therefore, all employees are charged with notifying the Floor Warden whenever they are alerted to the potential for severe weather.

DEFINITIONS

Tornado Watch - conditions are favorable for a tornado. Be prepared to take shelter. Stay tuned to radio and television stations for additional information.

Tornado Warning - tornado has been sighted in the area or is indicated by radar. Take shelter immediately.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch - weather conditions are such that a severe thunderstorm is likely to develop.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning - a severe thunderstorm has been sighted or indicated by weather radar.

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When obvious local weather conditions warrant or the weather service issues tornado or severe thunderstorm watches, the Floor Warden will follow the procedures listed below.

TORNADO WATCH, SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WATCH and WARNING

Floor Wardens must inform key staff members of the weather alert, but take no further action at the present time. Floor Wardens must continue to monitor local weather forecasts for changing developments in weather conditions.

In the case where a severe thunderstorm is confirmed or is reported to be immediately approaching Decatur, the Floor Warden will direct employees and members of the general public to stay away from windows. If conditions warrant, the Floor Warden will have employees and members of the general public proceed to an interior room or hallway and remain in this area until the severe thunderstorm has passed or the Floor Warden determines that conditions have sufficiently improved.

It is strongly recommended that all computers and other electrical appliances be turned off and where possible unplugged.

TORNADO WARNING

Floor wardens must direct employees and other visitors to designated safe areas within the building. The primary safe area is the basement of City Hall. Safe areas have also been designated on each floor and are depicted on the evacuation floor plan. Doors to offices along corridors with exterior windows and walls must be closed during the evacuation process. If employees cannot reach the designated safe areas before a tornado strikes, they should seek refuge in the following locations.

- Small interior rooms without windows.
- Hallways away from doors and windows.
- Rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick or block with no windows and with a heavy concrete floor or roof systems overhead.
- Protected areas away from doors and windows, such as bathrooms.

All personnel should sit, kneel or crouch on the floor with their backs against the wall and cover their heads with a coat, or arms and hands. Everyone must remain in the safe areas until the severe weather has left the immediate area or an all clear has been issued.

Earthquakes

The possibility of an earthquake is a reality, given Decatur's proximity to the New Madrid fault. Given the unpredictable nature of these events, both in terms of severity and duration, a limited selection of actions are available if one were to occur.

In the event of an earthquake, employees should seek shelter under a sturdy object located away from windows such as a desk or up against and in an internal doorway.

Employees should remain calm and not attempt to exit City Hall until the event subsides. Once the event subsides, employees should, if possible, exit the building through the nearest and safest route.

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Bomb Threat

In recent years the use and threatened use of explosives in our society have increased at an alarming rate. The realization that no one is immune from this form of attack necessitates that the City prepare its employees to respond effectively to this type of threat in the workplace. Any employee through a number of channels, e.g., telephone, voice mail, email or suspicious parcel, could receive a bomb threat. If you receive a bomb threat, **remain calm** and gather as much information as you can.

RECEIVING A BOMB THREAT BY TELEPHONE

When a bomb threat is received by telephone, the person receiving the call should take notes using a bomb threat checklist (Appendix A) in order to gain as much information as possible. Relevant information may include the following:

- All information about the device itself, including set time, type, description, location.
- Reason for making the call (angry with City, extortion, etc.).
- Any information about the caller (apparent age, voice characteristics, speech, language, accents, manners, use of unusual terms).
- Any information of the location of the caller (inside or outside a building, background noises, etc.).

After receiving the call, the person receiving the threat is to contact the Floor Warden and alert them of the threat and continue filling out the bomb threat checklist in detail. The Floor Warden will contact 911 and determine course of action to be taken based on Police recommendation. Possible courses of actions include:

- Immediate full scale evacuation.
- Evacuate specific area and search.
- Initiate search, but do not evacuate.
- Inform other floors, but do not search or evacuate, until instructed.
- Search and then conduct evacuation immediately prior to target time.

Once the order to evacuate is given and/or the alarm system is activated because of a bomb threat, employees should collect their personal belongings (coat, purse, briefcases, etc.) and evacuate the building. After evacuating the building, people will congregate at the Northwest corner of the City Hall Complex. Head counts of all those who should be in the pre-designated location will be coordinated by the Floor Warden. Employees will remain in this area pending further instructions from the Floor Warden or Police Incident Commander.

No one except police approved personnel will be allowed into the building until the building is declared safe to enter.

RECEIVING A SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE OR MAIL

- Do not handle or open any suspicious envelope or package.
- Leave the immediate area and notify your Floor Warden.
- Do not allow anyone to enter the immediate area where the item is located.
- Notify the named recipient and ask if he or she was expecting it from the listed sender or from an unidentified source.
- If the contents of the package or source cannot be identified, contact the Decatur Police Department by dialing 911.
- Do not evacuate the building until advised by law enforcement personnel.

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Acts or Potential Acts of Violence

Employees are strongly discouraged from working alone at any time. Employees working alone after normal business hours should take all necessary precautions to make sure they are safe (lock **all doors and turn on interior lights**).

Exterior doors are to remain locked and accessible only with a key between 5pm and 7am unless a public meeting is to be held in the building. Elevators are to be locked-out between the hours of 5pm and 7am unless a public meeting is to be held in the building. Any employee finding the building to be unlocked during non-business hours shall report the finding to the officer on duty at the police desk. The Desk Officer shall summon another officer to investigate why the building was unlocked and then take appropriate action to eliminate future occurrences.

When leaving the building at night try to **stay in a lighted area**, such as the parking lot and walk with your keys in your hands. These can be used for quick access to your car or as a weapon against an attacker.

In case of an attack make yourself as noticeable as possible. Make a lot of noise because there may be people around or at nearby residences. To further protect employees, silent push button alarm systems that will immediately contact the Police Department have been installed on each floor.

If an employee perceives that a violent act may occur or is witness to a violent incident, the employee will attempt to evade the situation and immediately dial 911 or activate the silent alarm. If an employee cannot evade the situation, they will, as circumstances permit, attempt to make contact with a fellow employee by either telephone or directly talking to that employee and stating: **Your 5:30 appointment has canceled!**

If an employee notices that a person other than a sworn police officer enters City Hall carrying a concealed deadly weapon and the person is not violent, or does not reasonably appear that they will become violent, the employee will **contact the Police Department** and request that an officer be sent to the area to confront the individual. Per state law, the person carrying a concealed deadly weapon will either be escorted from the building, or if the person does not wish to leave but is willing to relinquish the weapon until exiting the building, they shall give it to the Police Officer who will transfer the weapon to the Police Department where it can be picked-up at a later time.

If an employee receives a threat over the phone, every effort should be made to gather as much information as possible concerning the caller (name, address, why the threat is being made). The Police Department should immediately be notified of such an occurrence. If the Police indicate that the threat should be taken seriously, the Floor Warden will be notified and will advise all other employees or take any other appropriate steps suggested by the Police Department.

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Physically Impaired Evacuation Procedures

If a physically challenged person is in immediate danger, they should be moved to a safe location. In a fire emergency do not use elevators, unless authorized to do so by police or fire personnel.

- Always ask someone with a disability how you can help before attempting any rescue technique or giving assistance. Ask how they can best be assisted or moved, and whether there are any special considerations or items that need to come with the person.
- Do not grasp a visually impaired person's arm. Ask if they would like to hold your arm as you exit. Give verbal instructions or information.
- Proper lifting techniques (e.g., bending the knees, keeping the back straight, holding the person close before lifting, and using leg muscles to lift) should be used to avoid injury to rescuers' backs. Be careful on stairs and rest at landings if necessary.

Drills

The success of an actual emergency evacuation depends upon the cooperation and preparedness of the building occupants before an actual emergency occurs. To protect the health and welfare of our employees and the general public, planned emergency evacuation drills (fire and tornado) will be held semi-annually to familiarize employees with their duties and responsibilities in the event of an emergency.

Evacuation drills will be scheduled events, and Department Directors, managers, and supervisors will be notified prior to the scheduled date and time.

It is recommended that each Department Director designate one employee to remain inside their respective work area to handle incoming calls **DURING THE EVACUATION DRILL ONLY**.

It is very important that all occupants evacuate the building as quickly and orderly as possible during practice drills and actual emergencies.

Reference:

- ◆ Emergency Action Flipchart