



CNA HealthPro

FAQs – Evacuation Plans

Q. What does OSHA require in terms of office fire safety and emergency plans?

A. The OSHA website has a section titled *Evacuation Plans and Procedures* that specifically addresses this question. It can be found at www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/evacuation/index.html

OSHA requires that every place of business in which “fire extinguishers are required or provided . . . and in which anyone will be evacuated during a fire or other emergency” to have an emergency action plan (EAP). Virtually all dental practices would be included in this requirement. The purpose of the plan is to specify the actions of employers and employees during emergencies in the workplace.

The emergency action plan must address a variety of issues, including

- emergency evacuation procedures and route assignments
- accounting for employees after office evacuation
- staff members’ planning, rescue and medical responsibilities
- reporting procedures for emergencies (such as dialing 911)
- how employees will be informed of the plan and trained to execute it

The emergency plan should also address the evacuation of sedated or otherwise vulnerable patients. There should be specific procedures for employees who remain behind to aid patients or perform other critical operations.

The first step in developing the plan is to identify hazards by performing a thorough evaluation of your office and building. Then, analyze and correct such problems as blocked exits and passageways, and ensure that exits are sufficiently wide to accommodate wheelchairs. All exits should be clearly marked. Doorways and passages that are not fire escapes should be so labeled to minimize confusion during an emergency evacuation.

A great deal of assistance is provided on the OSHA website to guide you through the necessary steps of assessing your risks and developing an emergency action plan.

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