

## 4.3.5 Contingency preparedness and response

### 4.3.5.1 Emergency or disaster plans

While the OHSMS focuses on prevention of illness, injury and damage to plant or the environment, it needs to be recognized that some unplanned incidents could happen. With a well-planned and managed OHSMS such events should be rare. It is therefore, necessary for the organization to plan for such contingencies in advance and to periodically test these plans to allow an adequate response to occur during the actual contingency.

These could involve significant events such as fire, explosion or natural disasters that threaten the viability of the organization. Emergency plans and procedures need to be developed and periodically tested. They should be reviewed by the appropriate service provider, e.g. fire brigade, police and the like. For large installations, the emergency plans should coordinate with municipal or State disaster planning.

#### Practical help: Emergency or disaster plans

Emergency plans can include—

- (a) installation or availability of suitable warning and alarm systems, tested at regular intervals;
- (b) emergency organization and responsibilities;
- (c) a list of key personnel;
- (d) details of emergency services (e.g. fire brigade, spill clean-up services)
- (e) an internal and external communication plan;
- (f) training plans and testing for effectiveness;
- (g) emergency rescue equipment available and maintained in good working order; and
- (h) summary of information useful for emergency services.

### 4.3.5.2 Incidents involving employees

These could be anything from minor to fatal injuries affecting employees, contractors and others on site. The organization should have appropriate procedures to mitigate the effects of such incidents on those directly suffering injury. These procedures can include:

- (a) Establishment of appropriate first aid facilities that are matched to the site hazards and availability of further assistance.

Sites remote from medical assistance should have first aid appropriate to stabilize any injury until transported to such medical assistance.

- (b) Processes to rehabilitate injured employees by providing for appropriate rehabilitation as soon as practicable after the injury occurs, so that recovery from the injury is expedited.

Rehabilitation may be a requirement of State workers' compensation legislation.

#### 4.3.5.3 Critical incident recovery plan (CIRP)

Organizations should institute a CIRP as part of their emergency/disaster plans to aid in employee and plant recovery as soon as possible after the cessation of the event. The CIRP assists employees who are not injured but who have for example, witnessed an incident, cope with the trauma as well as minimizing the time required for the organization to return to normal operations. Situations where a CIRP is useful include the aftermath of a workplace fatality, armed hold-up or external physical threat. Employees who are not physically affected may still suffer psychological effects that need to be resolved through defusing, debriefing and counselling.

Only suitably qualified counsellors should be used to assist persons affected by a traumatic event. These may be contracted from specialist organizations or retained as part of the emergency plan.

##### Practical help: Critical incident recovery plan (CIRP)

The CIRP should cover:

- (a) Responsibilities, including coordination and initiation.
- (b) Defusing, where those involved in the trauma can discuss the event immediately afterwards in a confidential atmosphere.
- (c) Debriefing, designed to assist employees and others use their own abilities to overcome emotional effects of serious incidents.
- (d) Counselling, where further therapy may be required on an ongoing basis. Assistance may also have to be provided to the families of affected personnel.
- (e) Legal and insurance requirements, e.g. interference without loss adjuster approval can invalidate the insurance policy.

## 4.4 Measurement and evaluation

### Principle 4 Measurement and evaluation

An organization should measure, monitor and evaluate its OHS performance, and take preventive and corrective action.

#### 4.4.1 General

Measuring, monitoring and evaluating are key activities which ensure that the organization is performing in accordance with its OHS policy, objectives and targets as well as initial and ongoing