

Planning for Fire Emergencies in Buildings

Most commercial buildings must have an Evacuation Procedure, unless the building requires an Evacuation Scheme. A full list of buildings that require an Evacuation Scheme is given in [Schedule 1 of the Fire Safety and Evacuation of Buildings Regulations 2006](#), but generally if your building is used for the employment of 10 or more persons, is used for accommodation for five or more persons, or is a place where 100 or more persons can gather for any purpose, then you will likely require an Evacuation Scheme.

As well as the Fire Safety and Evacuation from Buildings Regulations, the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 requires PCBU's to plan for reasonably foreseeable emergencies, and have plans in place for when they occur. Evacuation Procedures and Schemes cover this obligation.

EVACUATION PROCEDURE

An Evacuation Procedure is a plan that describes how occupants in the building will escape in event of a fire (or suspected fire). Evacuation Procedures should be in place for small businesses or organisations that don't meet the definition of a Relevant Building, and do not need to be approved by the Fire Service.

EVACUATION SCHEME

An Evacuation Scheme builds on the Procedure, and describes the measures that have been put in place to enable a safe and efficient evacuation of a building in the event of a fire (or suspected fire). An Evacuation Scheme is submitted to the Fire Service for approval, and includes information about:

- The Evacuation Procedure;
- Training (such as Fire Warden Training and Staff Inductions);
- Signs and Notices (such as Fire Action Notices and information about how to safely escape);
- Firefighting Equipment (including Extinguishers, Hose Reels, etc that are in the building);
- Places of Safety both inside and outside the building;
- Automatic Sprinkler Systems (if they are installed);
- Plans for Disabled Persons and how they can be assisted;
- How the alarm will be raised, and how the Fire Service will be called; and
- How the Evacuation Scheme will be maintained.

COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

If the owner of a Relevant Building fails to provide and maintain an Evacuation Scheme where one is required by legislation, an application may be made by the Fire Service for a Court Order that the building be closed until the requirements have been met.

WHAT ALL ABOUT PEOPLE WILL DO FOR YOU

All About People are experienced Fire Safety Specialists, with the development, application and maintenance of Evacuation Procedures and Schemes being a core activity of our business. Our team can:

- Prepare an Evacuation Management Plan for your building or site;
- Submit an Evacuation Scheme application to the Fire Service on your behalf;
- Deliver Fire Warden Training for your team which covers the requirements specified in the approved Evacuation Scheme, including notifying the Fire Service that a Training Program has been delivered; and
- Implement a schedule of six monthly Trial Evacuations for your building to maintain the approved Evacuation Scheme, including notifying the Fire Service when these occur and providing you with an Assessment Report.

Using All About People means you don't have to worry about making submissions, notifications or reports to the Fire Service – we do all of that for you.

SITE ASSESSMENT

If you would like advice on an Evacuation Procedure or Scheme, or want one of our Fire Safety Specialists to visit your site to make an assessment on keeping your people and property safe from fire, contact our office on 0800 023 789, or go to our website at www.allaboutpeople.co.nz to make an enquiry.