

A comprehensive list of precautions and safeguards that, if stringently followed, could save several lives.

Overview

An emergency exit in a structure is a special exit for emergencies such as fires. The combined use of regular and special exits allows faster evacuation, while it also provides an alternative if the route to the regular exit is blocked by fire, etc.

A fire emergency evacuation plan (FEPP) is a written document which includes the action to be taken by all the staff of the occupancy in the event of fire and the arrangements for calling the fire brigade. If a fire warden's scheme is in force then, on hearing the alarm, people should proceed to pre-determined positions to assist members of the public and staff to leave the building by the nearest safe route.



Case Study

Fourteen people, including thirteen patrons and one staff member died and many were injured in a fire at a restaurant located at top floor of six storied building in Kamala Mills compound in the Lower Parel area of Mumbai on December 29, 2017.

"One above" Restaurant had a very narrow entry, so as soon as the place caught fire, in their bid to escape and to avoid intense heat, few went to the washroom, where most of the dead bodies were recovered. One of the prime cause of deaths was suffocation.

Components of Emergency Plan:

Properties in the hospitality sector should have emergency response plan in place:

- Fire evacuation strategy
- Action on discovering a fire
- Action on hearing the fire alarm
- Calling the fire brigade
- Power/process isolation
- Identification of key escape routes
- Fire wardens/marshals
- Places of assembly and roll call
- Firefighting equipment
- Training required
- Personal emergency evacuation plan



General Tips

- All present should be able to turn their back on a fire and leave the building safely, progressing through areas of decreasing fire risk.
- Every effort should be made not to have dining areas from which evacuation is only available in one direction.
- In those cases, where there is no direct access to the outside or an adjacent fire-resisting compartment, the routes from all areas to the place of safety should be as short as possible and be protected from the remainder of the premises.
- The doors listed below should offer at least 30 minutes fire resistance and be fitted with self-closers, or withhold-open devices with smoke.
- Escape routes from all areas should be of suitable width to allow the maximum number of persons likely to be present to reach a place of safety in about three minutes.
- The final exit doors should open easily, immediately and, wherever practicable, “in the direction of escape”, i.e. outwards into a place of safety outside the building.
- All fire exit routes should be clearly marked. Signs should also be displayed, as necessary, indicating fire doors that should be kept shut and any lift that should not be used in the event of fire.
- All fire protection equipment should be serviced and maintained in accordance with the relevant national standards by competent engineers.

Safety Tips for person trapped:

- Always familiarize yourself with “where you are” and be sure to know how to reach the nearest exit.
- Smoke is blinding and will bank down in the rooms and hallways. By always being aware of your surroundings, your knowledge of the nearest exits and having a plan will greatly increase your ability to deal with sudden emergencies.
- Drop to hands and knees and crawl towards the nearest exit.
- Stay low, smoke will rise to ceiling level first.
- Hold your breath as much as possible.
- Breathe through your nose.
- Use a filter such as a shirt, wet towel or handkerchief.
- If trapped in a room, close all doors between you and the fire. Wet and place cloth material around or under the door to help prevent smoke from entering the room.



Facts

The National Crime Records Bureau Data indicates that a total of 113,961 people lost their lives due to Fire Accidents from 2010 to 2014. This is an average of 62 deaths a day. Maharashtra alone accounted for 24,293 deaths or 21.3% of all the deaths due to fire accidents.

Liberty Videocon General Insurance Company Limited

10th Floor, Tower A, Peninsula Business Park, Ganpatrao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400 013
Phone: +91 22 6700 1313 Fax: +91 22 6700 1606 Email: LiVSafe@libertyvideocon.com

www.libertyvideocon.com

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