

# Running Safety Drills

A Guide and Template



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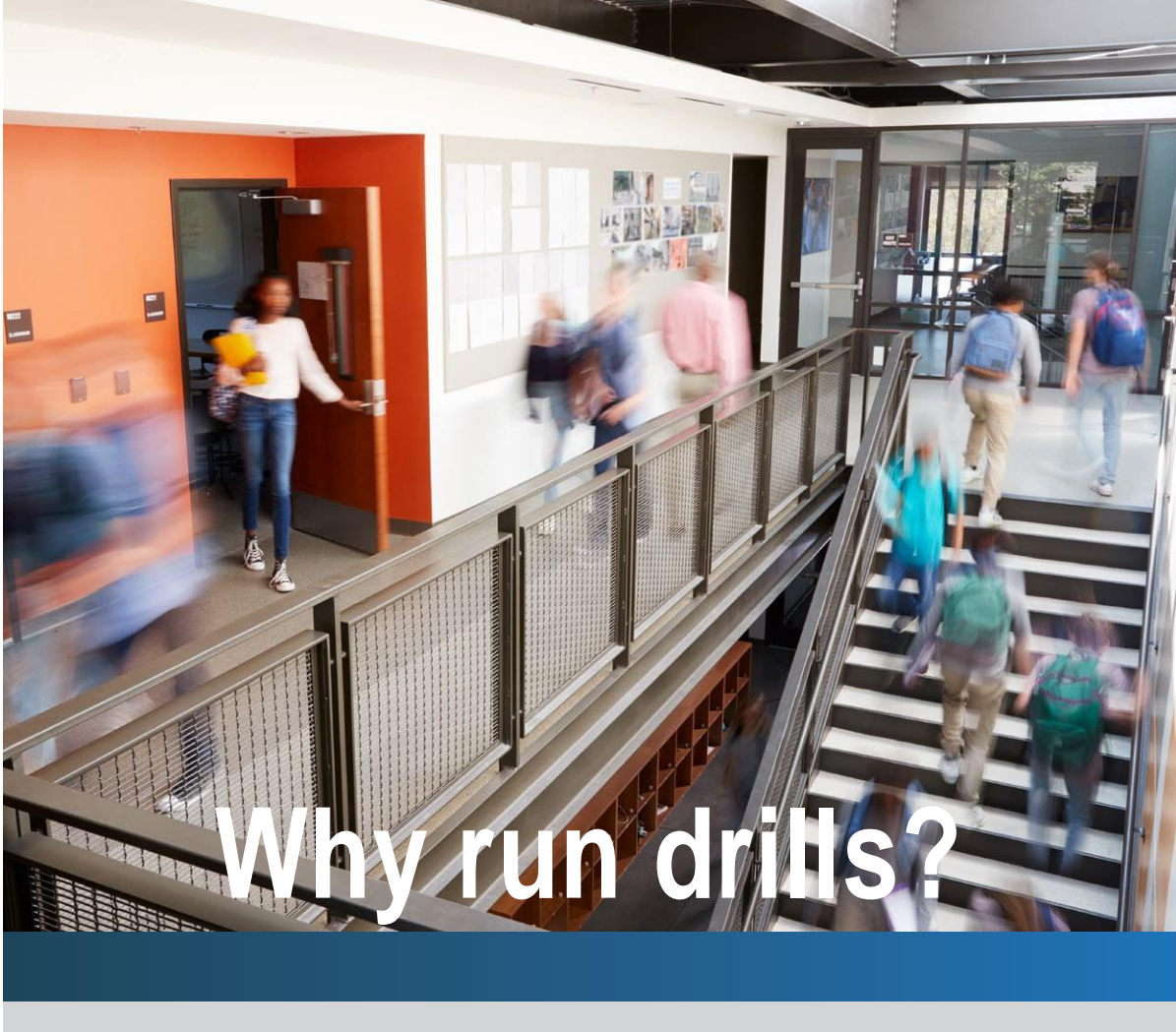
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**T**oday, you need to be prepared for anything and everything. Anyone who is responsible for the safety and well-being of your organization and community must know exactly what to do if disaster strikes.

If an incident occurs, anything can happen. That's why regular drills can help prepare your staff and community members, so they'll know the steps to take for staying safe during an incident no matter what.

To help protect your organization, take the following best practices and strategies to build your own customized plan to recognize threats, react appropriately, and remain secure.



# Laying the groundwork

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**S**uccessful safety drills can't happen without thorough planning and practice. In fact, there are several steps that need to occur before your team is ready to run a drill.

First and foremost, a command must be established. Decide who will be in charge of planning and executing the drill, as well as assigning someone to manage any issues that may arise, such as checking in on staff or helping confused visitors figure out where they should go.

It's also important to alert local authorities, such as police and fire departments, that you will be running a drill. This way they'll know that there isn't an actual emergency occurring that they would need to respond to. They may even be able to provide you with resources or guidance for executing a comprehensive safety drill.

The plan for the drill itself will vary based on each organization and its needs. As you think about your organization, its layout, the needs and activities of your staff, and other factors, ask yourself the following questions:

- *During an emergency, which areas are safe, and which are particularly vulnerable?*
- *Depending on the event, would it be safer to remove people from the building, or have them stay in place?*
- *What will indicate if the drill was a success? Is it staff following directions? Evacuating the building quickly and calmly? Decide what matters the most to you, and be sure to emphasize the importance of it to your stakeholders.*
- *How much time do you have to react to an actual incident? Will there be enough time for staff to get into place? What can you do to improve your response time?*





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*Tabletop drills are a good first step to take so teams know exactly what to do when they lead staff members during full-scale drills.*

A good way to enforce these roles and provide practice in a noninvasive setting is to **hold practice tabletop drills**. These can be conducted with less resources and during non-office hours, which make them a great resource. Tabletop drills are a good first step to take so teams know exactly what to do when they lead staff during full-scale drills. It will also help your team identify issues that could arise, such as figuring out the best path for evacuating team members with disabilities or special needs.

When you're ready to run organization-wide drills, practice at different times of day. This way, staff will know what to do if an incident occurs while they're in a conference room, in the hallways or stairways, in the elevator, or in their office.

Be sure to alert your staff ahead of time about when the drill will occur. This will ensure that they don't mistake it for a real emergency. It also gives them time to adjust their lesson plans so the drill doesn't disrupt anything important, such as large meetings or presentations.

Finally, pay attention to what goes right — and what goes wrong — during a drill. Even if the drill was a success, you should still give it another run-through on a later date to ensure that your triumph is consistent. Pinpointing mistakes can also be valuable to you. Errors illustrate where your team needs more practice, or highlights where there may be misinformation or miscommunication among your staff. The best time to address these pain points is immediately after a drill. After all, correcting these problems will be tricky to do during an actual emergency. Your future self will thank you for identifying these weak points and working to fix them soon after they are brought to your attention.

# Communication:

## The Key to Successful Safety Drills

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Staying in contact with your team before, during and after a safety drill is vital. After all, communication is invaluable while trying to direct many people during both drills and actual events. In either case, staff members need to know what the incident is and where it is located. They also need to stay informed with continual, real-time updates. While using your organization's public address (PA) system can be helpful

in some instances (such as informing staff in lockdown that the drill has ended and they are free to resume their day), it doesn't provide the same segmented and specialized communication that is necessary during the entire drill. For example, if there was an intruder, you wouldn't want them to hear the announcement over the PA system.

Another consideration is deciding who will call 9-1-1 about the emergency, and how to inform others that first responders have been notified. After all, multiple calls to 9-1-1 about the same incident can be more harmful than helpful if it impedes call takers who are trying to alert the appropriate authorities.

A simple way to address all of these communication factors is to establish a way for staff members to notify all your staff and 9-1-1 at once. Today, we see this is most commonly done through a smartphone app. This technology can be set up so that staff and local safety officials are simultaneously notified about any emergencies. They can also be used to directly communicate with staff and provide information and instructions during an emergency or a drill.



*A simple way to address to all communication factors is to establish a way for staff members to notify all your staff and 9-1-1 at once*

# Plan Ahead for Safety Drill Perfection

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**E**ach state may have its own laws, regulations or requirements for safety drills. When it comes to deciding which drills to run, consult and adhere to your region's requirements.

Regardless of your state's unique procedures and demands, it's a good idea to plot out exactly what will happen during drills, and who will be in charge of each task. Fill out the following templates to help you determine how you will run drills, who will be in charge, and what you would like accomplish with each exercise. Be sure to include specific information, such as contact information for local authorities who need to be notified, so that you can use this sheet as a reference guide as the drill actually occurs.

## Drill Templates



**Fire**



**Active Shooter**



**Medical**



**Inclement Weather**



**Customizable**



# FIRE DRILL

Drill Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Team Members:**

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Local Authorities to Alert:**

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Goal of Drill:**

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**Steps for Drill Execution:**

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**Notes:**





# ACTIVE SHOOTER DRILL

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Drill Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Team Members:**

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| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Local Authorities to Alert:**

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|-------|-------|
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| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Goal of Drill:**

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**Steps for Drill Execution:**

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**Notes:**



# MEDICAL EMERGENCY DRILL

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Drill Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Team Members:**

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| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Local Authorities to Alert:**

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|-------|-------|
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| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Goal of Drill:**

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**Steps for Drill Execution:**

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**Notes:**



# INCLEMENT WEATHER DRILL

Drill Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Team Members:**

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|-------|-------|
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| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Local Authorities to Alert:**

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|-------|-------|
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| _____ | _____ |

**Goal of Drill:**

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**Steps for Drill Execution:**

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**Notes:**



Drill Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Team Members:**

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Local Authorities to Alert:**

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|-------|-------|
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| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Goal of Drill:**

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**Steps for Drill Execution:**

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**Notes:**