

# **EMERGENCY & DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE**

## **PLANNING AHEAD**

As we learned in the past few years, emergencies and natural disasters can occur anytime, anywhere. Hotels face numerous challenges to ensure the safety of their employees, their guests, and their property. Being prepared for such emergencies helps management and employees respond calmly and safely in these situations.

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

### Objectives

Safety of guests, employees & management  
Preservation of buildings, facilities & equipment  
Hotel reputation & business continuity

### Contact the AHLA

**Phone:** 1-888-436-6112

**Email:** [wehelphotels@ahla.ca](mailto:wehelphotels@ahla.ca)

## PLANNING AHEAD

1. Prepare and document emergency response plans for the most likely emergencies at your hotel.
  - a. Use the guide *Emergency response planning: an occupational health & safety tool kit for the hospitality industry* which is available through the [Emergency Response Planning for Hotels course](#) in tourismworks.ca.
  - b. NOTE: Your plans must reflect your specific property based on location, building structure, type of operation and staffing levels.
  - c. Types of emergencies to consider:
    - i. Site/location-based emergencies, e.g. proximity to railway line
    - ii. Biological/chemical/medical emergencies
    - iii. Workplace violence
    - iv. Extreme weather/natural disasters
  - d. Assess the risk and probability of each emergency to prioritize for your property. (Hint: if you are located in an area with a high risk of wildfires, this should be a top priority).
  - e. Consider seasonal factors. Your response to different emergencies may be different in the winter than in the summer.
2. Consider the “what-ifs” and your options to respond:
  - a. No power for an extended period of time – back-up generator for front office, kitchen, lighting
  - b. Limited or no water – options to reduce water consumption
  - c. Disrupted cell phone service – alternative communication methods
  - d. Main access roads closed – options to move people and/or supplies in/out of property
  - e. Extreme outdoor temperatures – alternative accommodations
  - f. What other circumstances could impact your property?
3. Maintain an up-to-date [contact list](#):
  - a. Management team
  - b. Emergency contacts
  - c. Insurance company
  - d. Power/water/natural gas
4. Determine your [planning and response teams](#):
  - a. Document the team’s roles and contact information (email, phone)
  - b. Identify a clear chain of command
  - c. Don’t rely on one person to be the only person who knows what to do
5. Prepare a [Crisis Communications Checklist](#) for internal and external communications:
  - a. Ensure communications with staff living off-site, in staff accommodation, as well as those working at the hotel
  - b. Consider alternative methods of communication – cell phone, electronic (apps or emails), in-person, signage, etc.
  - c. Designate a spokesperson for the property

6. Coordinate with local, provincial, and federal emergency response team(s) as appropriate for your location:
  - a. What disaster response plans are in place for your local community?
  - b. Who are your primary contacts?
  - c. What role could your hotel play in their emergency response planning, e.g. providing accommodation for first responders or displaced residents from another community?
  - d. Ensure you are on their communications list for timely notifications and alerts.
  
7. Plan for evacuation from property and from town:
  - a. Muster point(s)
  - b. Transportation, including staff without personal transportation
  - c. Procedures
  - d. Accountability
  - e. Alternative work site for reservations, etc.
  - f. Shared resources with other hotels in the area
  
8. Build relationships with your neighbours – hotels and other businesses – to share resources
  
9. Train your staff:
  - a. Communicate emergency response plans
  - b. Train your staff
  - c. [Conduct drills and simulations](#)
  - d. Update plans as required based on feedback from drills and training
  - e. Communicate with staff and then communicate again
  
10. Schedule regular property inspections:
  - a. Training and templates available through [Hotel Workplace Inspections](#) course in [tourismworks.ca](http://tourismworks.ca)

*NOTE: You must have an account on [tourismworks.ca](http://tourismworks.ca) to access the templates in the [ERP Channel](#). There may be a fee for the training courses on [tourismworks.ca](http://tourismworks.ca).*

**QUESTIONS? Call 1-888-436-6112 or email [wehelphotels@ahla.ca](mailto:wehelphotels@ahla.ca)**

## WILDFIRE PREVENTION & PREPARATION

1. Review recommendations on [FireSmart Alberta](#)
2. Review recommendations from your insurance company:
  - a. For example, review the [Wildfire Preparation document](#) from Western Financial Group
3. Reduce the risk of wildfire damage to your property:
  - a. Cut and water grass around property
  - b. Store firewood and propane tanks at least 100 metres away from any buildings
  - c. Thin trees from the buildings
  - d. Enclose the undersides of wood balconies, decks and crawl spaces with flame resistant materials (if applicable)
4. Encourage staff to prepare personally in event of a natural disaster:
  - a. Build a personal emergency kit with supplies for a minimum of 72 hours  
<https://www.alberta.ca/build-an-emergency-kit>
  - b. Follow [FireSmart Alberta](#) recommendations to prepare their home

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. TourismWorks Training Platform <http://tourismworks.ca>
2. Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association <http://ahla.ca>
3. Insurance Bureau of Canada <http://www.ibc.ca/ab/disaster/wildfires/>
4. Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo <https://www.rmwb.ca/en/fire-and-emergency-services/fire-prevention-and-safety.aspx>
5. FireSmart <https://www.alberta.ca/firesmart.aspx>
6. Government of Alberta <https://www.alberta.ca/government-emergency-plans>
7. Government of Alberta 211 <https://ab.211.ca/>
8. Alberta Health Services Wildfire <http://www.ahs.ca/wildfire>
9. Alberta Health Services Mental Health Help Line 24/7 at 1-877-303-2642
10. Business Development Bank of Canada <https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools>
11. Business Development Bank of Canada <https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/business-strategy-planning/manage-business/business-continuity-8-steps-building-plan>
12. Incident Command System Canada <https://www.icscanada.ca/>

## DISCLAIMER

*This information is provided as a guideline only.  
Users should customize this resource based their property's operations and the nature of the situation.*

*The Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) disclaims any liability with respect to  
the use of the information or reliance thereon contained in this document.*