

# Emergency Preparedness



This course explains what's included in an emergency preparedness plan. It shows how the plan is organized and why it's important to consider new diseases that could spread. It also covers what colleagues need to do and the training they need to respond effectively to emergencies.

## WELCOME AND EXPECTATIONS

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### ☰ Introduction

## FOUNDATIONS OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANS

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### ☰ What's Required and How We Prepare

### ☰ Core Elements of an Emergency Preparedness Plan

## 1: RISK ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

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### ☰ Risk Assessment and Planning

### ☰ Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDs)

### ☰ Emergency Action Plans



**Strategies and Resources**

**2: COMMUNICATION PLAN**

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**Communication Plan Overview**

**3: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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**Policies and Procedures Overview**

**4: TRAINING AND TESTING**

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**Training and Testing Overview**

**EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

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**Employee Responsibilities**

**CONCLUSION**

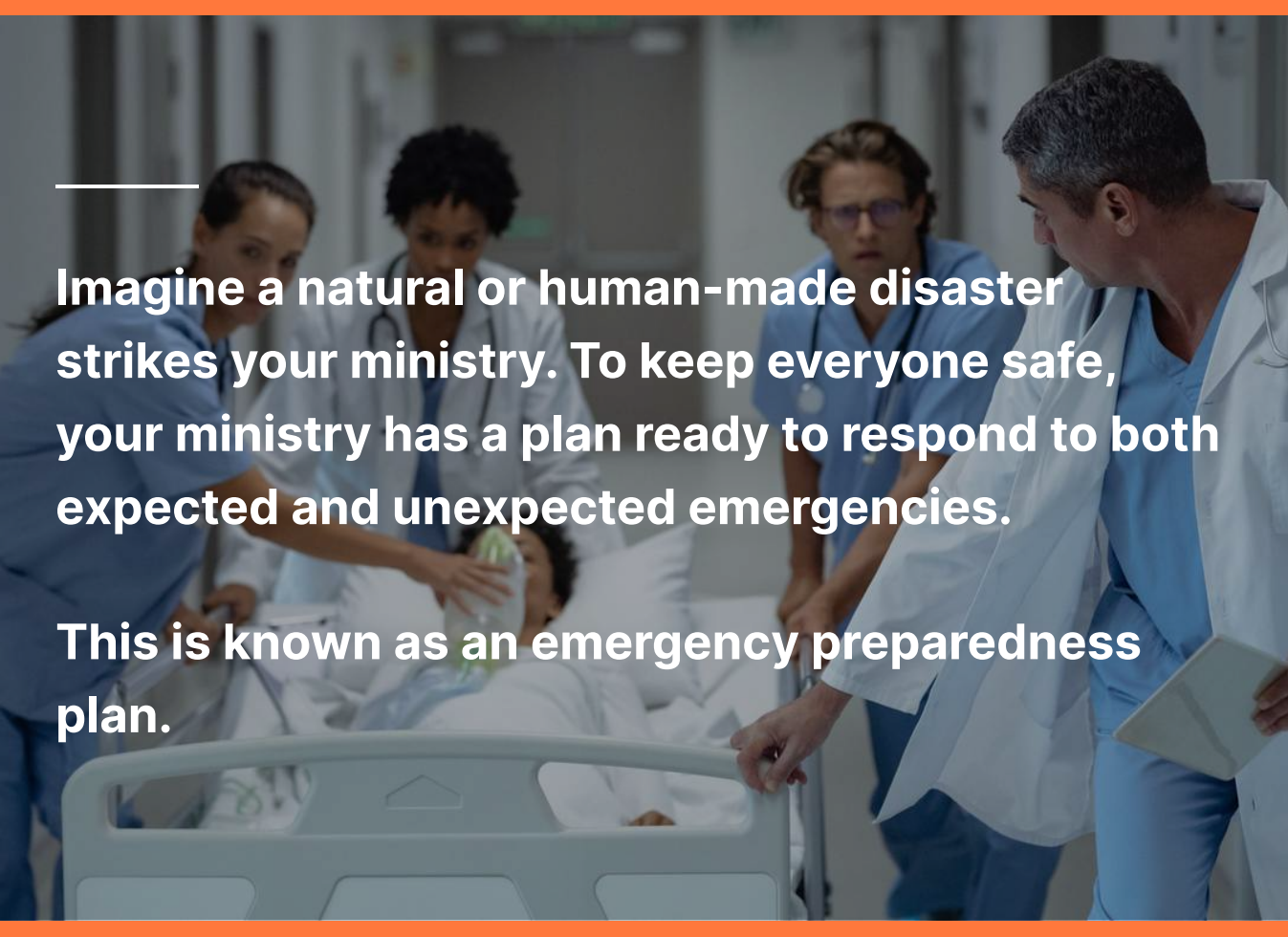
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**Wrap-up**

# Introduction

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Imagine a natural or human-made disaster strikes your ministry. To keep everyone safe, your ministry has a plan ready to respond to both expected and unexpected emergencies.

This is known as an emergency preparedness plan.

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This course will help you understand what an emergency plan is and what to do if something unexpected happens. You'll also learn what colleagues should do during an emergency.

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## Course Overview

Key topics covered in this course include:

- Why emergency preparedness plans are important
  - Core elements of an emergency preparedness plan
  - Identifying and understanding risks and hazards
  - How plans are made for sharing information
  - Rules that help your team respond to emergencies
  - What training your team needs and how to practice the plan
  - What colleagues should do during an emergency
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# What's Required and How We Prepare


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## The Purpose Behind the Plan



An **emergency preparedness plan** helps ministries get ready for natural or human-made disasters. It also helps them work with emergency teams from the government and local communities.

Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Emergency Preparedness Rule, (2025, August 13). <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/health-safety-standards/quality-safety-oversight-emergency-preparedness/emergency-preparedness-rule>



**Why is this important?**  
**When there's a plan, everyone knows what to do. It helps teams stay calm, work together, and connect smoothly with outside emergency responders.**

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# Core Elements of an Emergency Preparedness Plan

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## The Four Elements of a Plan

A good emergency plan has four main parts. You'll see them listed below. Then, we'll take a closer look at each one.

- 1 Risk Assessment and Emergency Planning
- 2 Communication Plan
- 3 Policies and Procedures
- 4 Training and Testing

Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, (2024 December 30). Core EP Rule Elements. <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/health-safety-standards/quality-safety-oversight-emergency-preparedness/core-ep-rule-elements>

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# Risk Assessment and Planning

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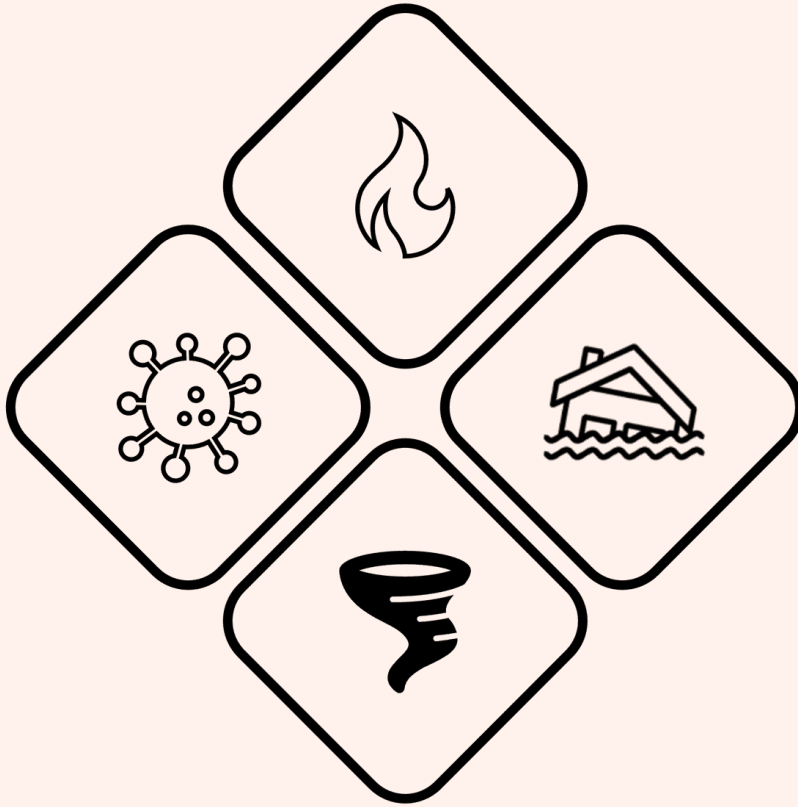
## Identifying Risks and Planning Ahead

The first step in building an emergency preparedness plan is to **identify what kinds of emergencies could impact your ministry.**

Ministries assess risks using an all-hazards approach. This means they consider all types of threats based on factors like location, number of beds, and their ability to respond during an emergency.

### Hazards

**Your ministry's emergency preparedness plan is shaped by the specific hazards in your area and those most likely to occur.** A hazard assessment helps identify risks and guides the development of a plan that is focused and effective.



## **Types of Hazards**

Here are some possible hazards that could affect your area:

*Click to view examples of each.*

## Natural disasters



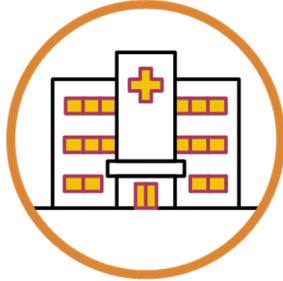
- Floods
- Tornadoes
- Hurricanes
- Earthquakes
- Wildfires

## Human-made disasters



- Cyberattacks
- Transportation accidents
- Industrial explosions
- Chemical spills
- Active shooter

## Facility disasters



- Fire
- Power and equipment failures
- Water main break
- Supply shortage
- Building damage

## Emerging infectious diseases (EIDs)



- Influenza
- COVID-19
- Ebola
- Zika
- Monkeypox

Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. State Operations Manual, Appendix Z - Emergency Preparedness for All Provider and Certified Supplier Types Interpretive Guidance. (2021 April 16). Page 6. [https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/som107ap\\_z\\_emergprep.pdf](https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/som107ap_z_emergprep.pdf)

# Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDs)

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## Planning for EIDs

EIDs are infections that have recently appeared or are spreading quickly and becoming more serious. Preparing for EIDs is an important part of any emergency preparedness plan, especially in health care settings.

Infectious diseases can disrupt operations and affect patient care. Your ministry aligns its emergency preparedness plan with local and state guidelines to stay ready for disruptions caused by an EID.

The plan also includes a process for evaluating your ministry's needs based on the specific type of EID. It addresses the following:

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Providing specific or specialty PPE when needed for the situation



## **Preventing Transmission**

Screening and testing staff, visitors, and patients when needed



### **Handling Admissions**

Managing patient transfers and discharges as needed



## Facility Changes

Making changes to the facility including:

- Adding barriers
- Creating more isolation rooms
- Enforcing social distancing
- Controlling how people move through the building



Source: Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (2021, April 16) State Operations Manual, Appendix Z - Emergency Preparedness for All Provider and Certified Supplier Types Interpretive Guidance. Page 19. [https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/som107ap\\_z\\_emergprep.pdf](https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/som107ap_z_emergprep.pdf)

# Emergency Action Plans

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The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) require health care providers to have an **Emergency Action Plan (EAP)** as part of their emergency preparedness efforts. The EAP explains how your ministry will protect colleagues and continue providing care during emergencies. It includes the use of equipment, procedures, training, and communication systems to help reduce risks. To carry out these actions effectively, specific roles are assigned to team members.



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## Why is this important?

Having emergency plans in place helps everyone (including you) know their role and ensures a coordinated response both inside your ministry and with outside agencies.



# Strategies and Resources

## Risk Assessment and Planning

Once hazards are identified, strategies are developed for handling each one, such as:

- Staffing needs
- Extra patient care
- Evacuation plans

Colleagues are a key part of emergency response. The emergency preparedness plan outlines roles and responsibilities in key areas such as:



### STAFF COVERAGE

Identifies services and backup colleagues for key roles



### PLAN ACTIVATION

Names who activates the plan and their backup



### COORDINATION

Works with local, tribal, state, and federal officials



### ALARM SYSTEM

Installs and maintains a colleague alarm signal



### PLAN REVIEW

Reviews and updates the emergency plan every two years

## Knowledge Check

Check your understanding before you move on.

During a power outage, the backup generator at your facility stops working. Who should be contacted to start the emergency plan?

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- The local utility company
- The nearest public safety office
- The person responsible for emergency plan activation or their backup
- The news media

**SUBMIT**

# Communication Plan Overview

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## Key Parts of a Communication Plan

According to CMS guidelines, the **Communication Plan** section of an emergency preparedness plan must include several key parts to help coordination and safety during emergencies:

### Coordinating Emergency Communication —

A plan for contacting colleagues and patients' doctors, developed in collaboration with public health and emergency agencies. The plan is reviewed or updated at least every two years to ensure it complies with all laws.

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### Incident Response Team —

A team with colleagues from all departments in the ministry to help respond to emergencies.



## Care Coordination —

Handles care inside the ministry and works with other providers, public health departments, and emergency systems to make sure patients get the help they need.

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## Internal Contacts —

A list of names or job titles of people colleagues can contact for questions about the plan or their roles.



**External Contacts** —

Includes names and contact details for people and organizations involved in the plan at local, tribal, state, and federal levels. This can include colleagues, volunteers, and emergency preparedness workers.



# Policies and Procedures Overview

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Policies and procedures are developed and put into practice based on the emergency and communication plans. They are reviewed or updated every two years.

These policies and procedures include:

*Click each tab to learn more.*

**EMERGENCY  
REPORTING AND  
EVACUATION**

**SURVIVAL AND  
SHELTER-IN-PLACE  
PLANNING**

**INFRASTRUCTURE  
AND SYSTEMS  
SUPPORT**

**INFORMATION  
ACCESS AND  
STAFFING**

- How to report a fire or other emergency
- General building evacuation steps
- What colleagues who stay behind to manage critical operations should do
- How to account for all colleagues after evacuation
- Roles for colleagues involved in rescue or medical duties

| EMERGENCY REPORTING AND EVACUATION   | SURVIVAL AND SHELTER-IN-PLACE PLANNING | INFRASTRUCTURE AND SYSTEMS SUPPORT | INFORMATION ACCESS AND STAFFING |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <p><b>Identifies essential items needed for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survival</li> <li>• Evacuation</li> <li>• Sheltering in place</li> <li>• Tracking patients and colleagues in inpatient facilities</li> </ul> |  |                                    |                                 |

| EMERGENCY REPORTING AND EVACUATION   | SURVIVAL AND SHELTER-IN-PLACE PLANNING | INFRASTRUCTURE AND SYSTEMS SUPPORT | INFORMATION ACCESS AND STAFFING |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <p><b>Makes sure backup power is available for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Fire alarms</li> <li>• Temperature control</li> <li>• Waste disposal</li> </ul> |  |                                    |                                 |

| EMERGENCY REPORTING AND EVACUATION                 | SURVIVAL AND SHELTER-IN-PLACE PLANNING | INFRASTRUCTURE AND SYSTEMS SUPPORT | INFORMATION ACCESS AND STAFFING |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <p><b>Implements alternate ways to access:</b></p> |  |                                    |                                 |

- Private medical records
- Information about current patients

**Outlines emergency staffing using:**

- Volunteers
- State and federal health care workers

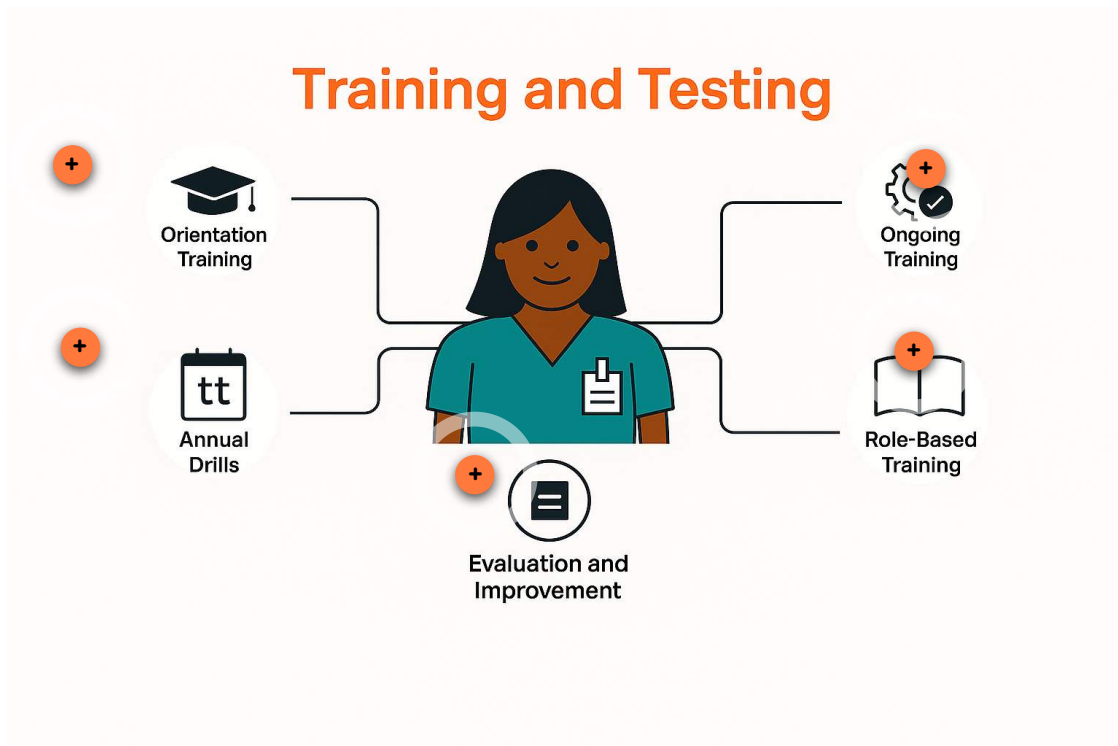


# Training and Testing Overview

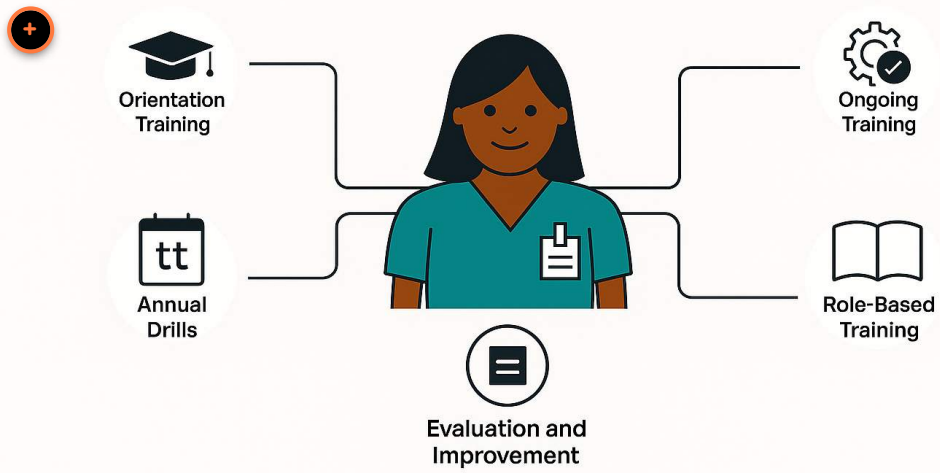
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Your ministry ensures that all colleagues are ready to respond during emergencies by providing structured training and regular testing.

Click each plus sign (+) below to learn more.



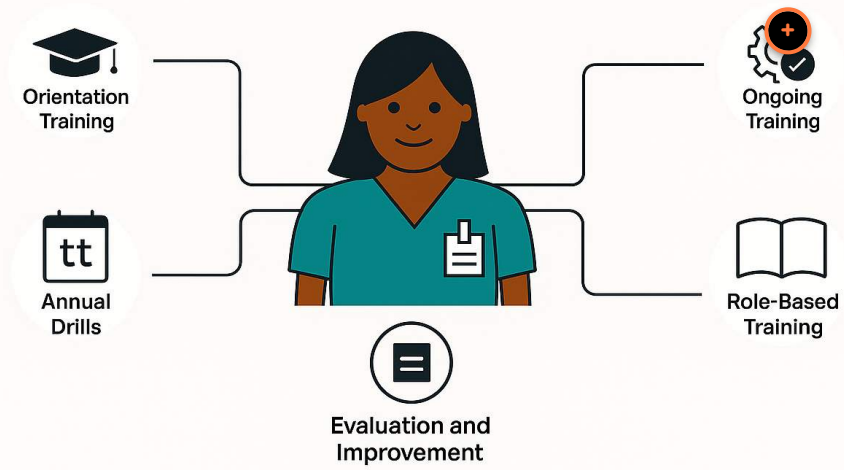
# Training and Testing



## Orientation Training

New colleagues receive emergency preparedness training during orientation or shortly after they begin working.

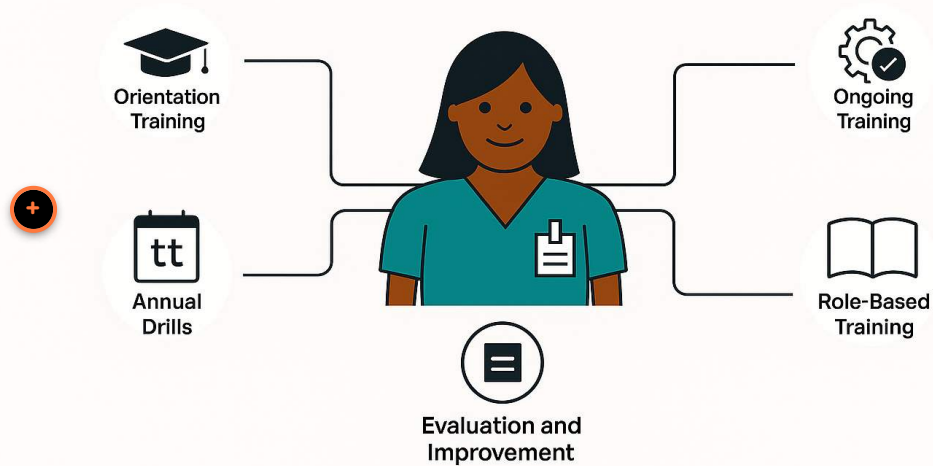
# Training and Testing



## Ongoing Training

All colleagues receive refresher training at least every two years, or whenever major updates are made to the plan.

# Training and Testing

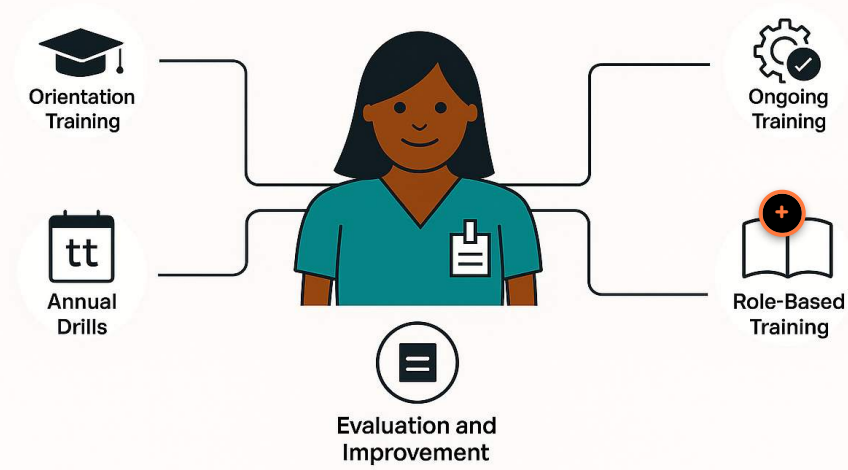


## Annual Drills

The ministry tests the emergency preparedness plan each year through exercises that may include:

- Community-based mock disaster events
- Facility-specific drills when community participation isn't possible

# Training and Testing

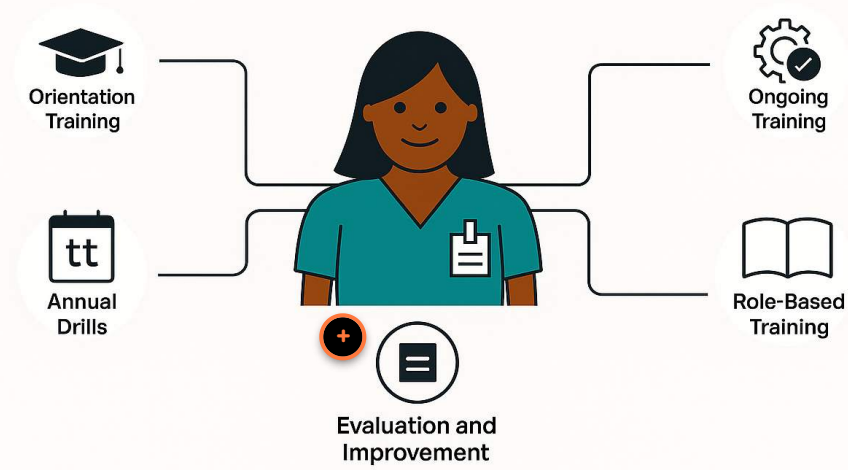


## Role-Based Training

Colleagues receive training based on their emergency roles, including:

- Sheltering in place
- Evacuation procedures
- Managing patient care (triage, transfers, discharges)
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

# Training and Testing



## Evaluation and Improvement

After each drill or emergency, ministries take steps to learn and improve the program.

- Drill results are reviewed to find strengths and areas for improvement.
  - The emergency plan is updated based on findings.
  - Lessons learned from past drills or real emergencies are added to future training sessions.
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# Employee Responsibilities

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During an emergency, your ministry may need to adjust its normal operations. Extra colleagues may be needed, and some services may be temporarily unavailable.

As a result, colleagues may be given different roles or tasks to ensure work is done.



Your ministry prepares for emergencies by:

- Training colleagues on the specific roles they will perform during an emergency
- Conducting exercises or drills to help colleagues practice how to respond

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Take a moment to review your  
emergency preparedness plan.

Not sure what your role is? Your leader can  
help clarify it.

# Wrap-up

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## Course Summary

In this course we covered key information you need to know about emergency preparedness.

These topics were covered in the course:

- Why emergency preparedness plans are important
- How to find and understand risks and hazards
- How plans are made for sharing information
- Rules that help your team respond to emergencies
- What training your team needs and how to practice the plan
- What colleagues should do during an emergency

## References

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<https://www.osha.gov/emergency-preparedness>