



# memo:

**TO:** Executive Board  
Council Leaders  
L/M & Safety & Health Chairs  
Emergency Preparedness Training Participants

**DATE:** December 3, 2003

**SUBJ:** Emergency Preparedness Training Evaluation

As a result of the 9/11/01 attack on the World Trade Center in which 34 of our members lost their lives, I asked the PEF Health and Safety Department to develop and conduct a training program for our members on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Evacuation. The PEF Membership Benefits Program provided EOL for attendees of the program and that contribution is acknowledged and appreciated. The Health and Safety staff then presented the program in conjunction with the International Chemical Workers Union Center for Worker Health and Safety Training.

Following the completion of the program in April 2003, the Health and Safety Department developed a survey of training participants. A copy of the survey's final report is attached. The analysis demonstrates that the program was well received by over 250 PEF members; a significant portion of whom used the information to mobilize members to advocate for stronger emergency plans at their worksites. This report also provides some valuable insights on selecting leaders and members for participation in union sponsored activist training.

The training evaluation was the most comprehensive ever undertaken by the Health and Safety Department. I would encourage all PEF officials and interested members to review the report and especially its conclusions. It is rare that we are able to take the time to conduct such a thorough evaluation. This has been very beneficial in understanding the value of this health and safety initiative in improving our members working conditions and in building our strength through mobilization. I congratulate the Statewide Health & Safety Committee and department staff for their efforts and again thank the PEF Membership Benefits Program for their significant funding support.

Roger E. Benson

Attachment

cc: Roger Scales  
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# Evaluation of PEF Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Evacuation Training Program: a Survey of Training Participants

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PEF Occupational Health and Safety Department  
October 28, 2003

**Roger E. Benson, President**

**Jane Hallum, Secretary-Treasurer**

## **Introduction**

The Public Employees Federation (PEF) represents 53,000 professional, scientific and technical workers, most of whom work in state government agencies throughout New York. PEF is the second-largest state-employee union in New York State. PEF members are often in the frontlines when public health emergencies and other disasters occur. As public sector workers, they are both at high risk and responsible for assisting others during emergencies.

Thirty-four PEF members who worked in the World Trade Center died on September 11, 2001 and thousands evacuated neighboring buildings. These events caused a heightened awareness of the importance of emergency preparedness, response, and evacuation plans. In the aftermath of this disaster, PEF's Health and Safety Department reviewed emergency action plans for several locations around the state. Many were lacking adequate procedures to respond to an emergency. Under the direction of Union President Roger E. Benson, the Health and Safety Department developed a six-hour training program to educate members on the elements of emergency action plans in the workplace and related standards. A trainer from the International Chemical Workers Union Center for Worker Health & Safety Training helped conduct the programs.

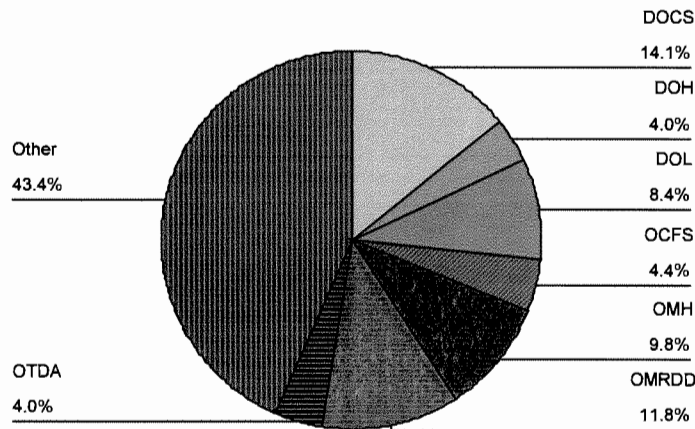
On December 6, 2001, a six-hour pilot training was conducted for PEF's Agency Health & Safety Committee Chairs. The program was very well received and led to improved emergency action plans in several agencies and worksites. The program was then extended statewide, with PEF's Membership Benefits Program providing funding for over 250 PEF members to receive EOL (Employee Organization Leave) in order to attend. Seven sessions were conducted throughout PEF's 12 regions. The program was designed to prepare attendees to take action in cooperation with their agency management to upgrade deficient emergency action plans or file PESH complaints where agency cooperation was not achieved.

## **Training evaluation and outcome survey**

In July 2003, a 35-question survey (attached) was sent to all training participants. The main purposes of the survey were to: 1) evaluate the effectiveness of the training; 2) assess how many participants took action to improve emergency preparedness at the worksite following the training; and 3) identify future training needs related to Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Evacuation.

Who participated in the training?

Training participants' agencies



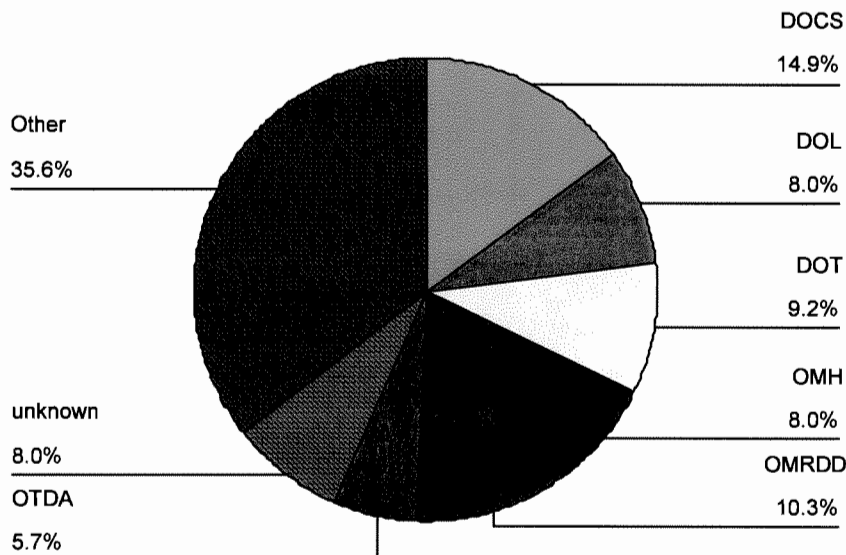
Two hundred and ninety-seven participants represented PEF members in 40 different agencies DOCS was the largest single agency represented, with 14.1% of the total.

Who responded to the survey?

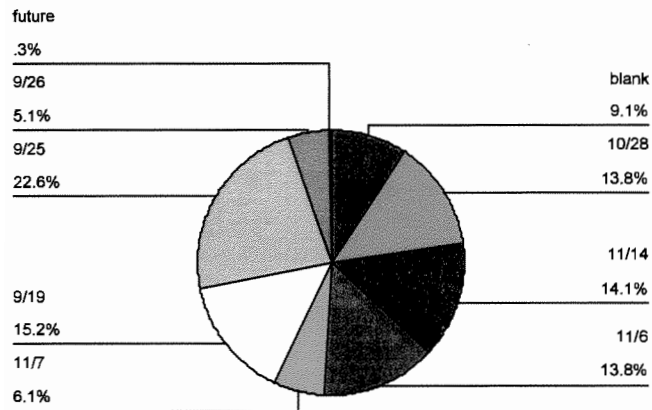
Between June and September, 87 surveys were returned, representing at least 22 agencies and more than 30,000 workers. Facility size ranged from 3 to 3,500 people. Another three were received too late for data entry. Response rates by agency were similar to participation rates, except that DOH members were underrepresented in response relative to their overall participation.

As shown in the charts below, training participants and survey respondents were similarly

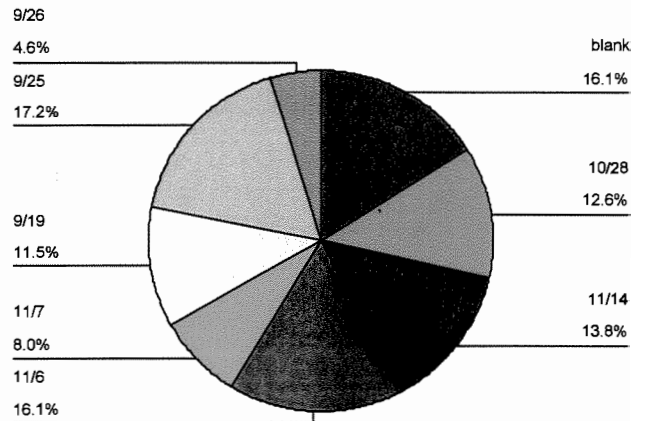
Survey responders agencies



Percent trained by date of participation



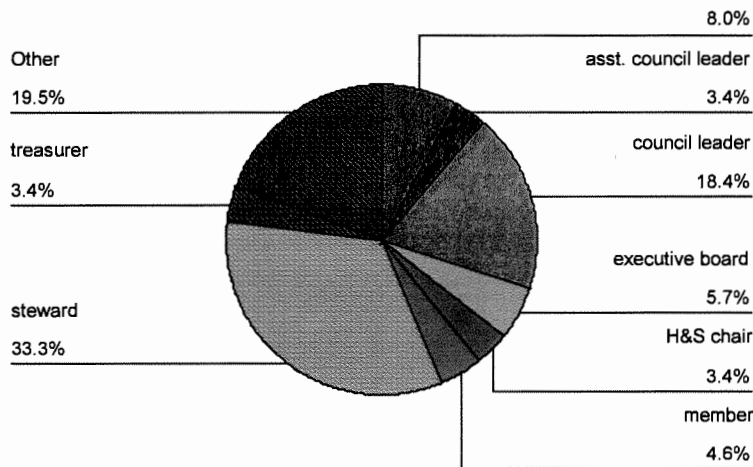
Survey respondents by date of participation



distributed across the training dates.

One third of the respondents described themselves as union stewards. Other positions included council leaders, executive board members, agency and local health and safety chairs, and rank and file members. Fourteen reported more than one union position, and ten respondents were not union members.

Union Position of Respondents



Fifty-six percent of respondents reported serving on a health and safety committee, 36% locally, 3% agency-level only, and 15% on both. Some committee members did not indicate which type of committee they served on; as a result, these percentages do not equal the total responding.

Who is involved in emergency action program development and monitoring?

Respondents described their experiences in evaluating and revising worksite emergency action plans. A total of 364 co-workers were involved in this process. Half of the respondents had at least 3 co-workers helping them. Twenty-two percent said that no one helped them, one respondent said 100 people were involved, and 19.5% did not answer this question.

Three-quarters of respondents discussed the issue with union leaders, 82% discussed it with co-workers, and 80% discussed it with management. Table 1 shows that meetings were the most common approach to raising issues with management, followed by written requests. Two respondents filed PESH complaints and two filed grievances. Additional methods for approaching management included discussing the topic informally, requesting management to attend training, and advising management of specific related needs, for example an additional fire warden.

Table 1: How management was approached:

Type of contact	Number	Percent of group
Meetings	54	62.1
Written request	15	17.2
Grievance	2	2.3
PESH complaint	2	2.3
Contact PEF	6	6.9
Other	9	10.3

Successful initiatives

An impressive 59.8% of all respondents said that management did in fact respond adequately to their requests. More to the point, 52 of the 69 people who discussed their Emergency Action Plan concerns with management obtained favorable results for a success rate of 75%. Those who approached management in meetings were 8 times as likely to report a good response as those who did not. Those who submitted written requests were not more or less successful than those who did not.

Internal organizing had a positive impact. The odds of getting a positive response from management were 3 times higher for those who discussed the issue with their co-workers than those who did not, and 3.4 times higher for those who raised the issue with union leadership. People who reported any co-worker support were twice as likely as likely to get a positive response from management as those acting on their own. Those who reported three or more co-workers assisting them were almost four times as likely to succeed as those with less or no reported support.

Table 2: Does your work setting have an Emergency Action Plan?

	Frequency	Percent
blank	2	2.3
Don't know	6	6.9
No	6	6.9
Yes	73	83.9
Total	87	100.0

Eighty-four percent of respondents' workplaces have some sort of an Emergency Action Plan. Plans varied greatly in scope: 6.9% of the plans covered the whole agency, 56.3% were

building specific, and 20.7% were limited to the floor or office. The remaining 16.1% did not answer this question.

Almost 77% of the respondents who reported that there was an Emergency Action Plan at their workplace saw or received a copy. Of the 60 respondents (69% of the total) who had requested a copy, 9 (15%) did not receive or see a copy of the Emergency Action Plan. The refusing facilities/offices were from DOH, DOT, ENCON, OCFS, OMH, OMRDD, and Parole.

Did you request to see or have a copy of an  
Emergency Action Plan?  
(among all respondents)

	Frequency	Percent
No	27	31.0
Yes	60	69.0
Total	87	100.0

Did you request to see or have a copy of the  
Emergency Action Plan?  
(Among those with a plan)

	Frequency	Percent
No	19	26.0
Yes	54	74.0
Total	73	100.0

Did you see or receive a copy?  
(Among all respondents)

	Frequency	Percent
No	30	34.5
Yes	57	65.5
Total	87	100.0

Did you see or receive a copy?  
(Among those with an Emergency Action  
Plan)

	Frequency	Percent
No	17	23.3
Yes	56	76.7
Total	73	100.0

#### Are the Emergency Action Plans adequate?

Sixty percent of respondents had evaluated the plans since the training (see table 2 below). Two-thirds of respondents used the PEF Emergency Action Plan Checklist, 35% used the 10-point Checklist for Emergency Preparedness, about one quarter used the OSHA Compliance Checklist, and 11% used some other checklist. Overall, 40% of respondents used the PEF Checklist, 21% used the 10-point Checklist, and 14% used the OSHA checklist. However, a further 45% of respondents did not answer this question. Checklists were used seventy-one different times, as some respondents reported completing more than one.

Forty percent (35 out of 87) of the total number of plans are considered adequate according to at least one checklist, and 13% (11 out of 87) are somewhat adequate. Most surprisingly, only 2% of all Emergency Action Plans were described as inadequate. The PEF and the 10-point checklists produced a similar amount of adequate ratings. The OSHA checklist either rated the Emergency Action Plans more positively or was used on better Emergency Action Plans with 75% of those evaluated being considered adequate.

Table 3: How Emergency Action Plans were evaluated

Emergency Action Plan checklist used	# times used to evaluate Emergency Action Plan	% of all evaluating Emergency Action Plans who used this checklist	% of all respondents who used this checklist	Emergency Action Plans rated adequate using this checklist
PEF	35	67%	40%	62% (22/35)
OSHA	12	23%	14%	75% (9/12)
10 POINT	18	35%	21%	61% (11/18)
Other	6	11%	7%	50% (3/6)
Total used	52	100%	100%	67% (35/52)

About one-quarter of the plans have been revised since the PEF trainings took place. More than 70% did not indicate when revision had occurred, so perhaps the number is greater. Thirty-three percent of the plans are currently being revised, and the status of an additional 25% is not indicated. Some workplaces are extra vigilant: 11 of the 36 plans considered adequate are being revised. However, almost half (six of the 13) of the plans rated not or somewhat adequate are not being revised. This suggests that some facilities are much more aggressive about updating the plan, even when it is good, and others are not taking care of business.

Respondents' judgement on the adequacy of Emergency Action Plans appears to be subjective and variable. For example, the plans sent by respondents included:

- ◆ A flyer from one employer purporting to present the facility's Emergency Management Plan that does not explain how offices or individuals should respond in emergencies except for telling them to go on a website or make a phone call.
- ◆ A building evacuation plan that does not mention under what circumstances evacuations are to take place, discuss other emergencies or mention all-clear procedures.
- ◆ A comprehensive 60-page Emergency Action Plan.

#### Did the training help in evaluating, developing or revising the Emergency Action Plan?

Overall, the training sessions were rated as helpful: Fifty (57.5%) of the respondents said that the training helped them in revising or developing an Emergency Action Plan, and one respondent said it helped somewhat. The rest of the answers were blank. However, only 28 of the 87 Emergency Action Plans are currently being revised. Thirty-one of the respondents who did not indicate if the training helped them are either not revising their Emergency Action Plans or did not report on the status of revisions at their workplace.

Almost one-quarter (23%) reported that either the training or their Emergency Action Plan did not cover all the emergency situations they were concerned about such as emergency provisions for terrorism, hostage situations, severe weather, utility breakdowns and respiratory diseases. Control of public access to the facilities, as well as the need to protect clients, inmates or visitors was also cited. Because of the question wording, it is not possible to determine whether the limitation was in the Emergency Action Plan or the training.

Respondents listed several emergency plan limitations such as an inadequately designated point of assembly during an evacuation, and a lack of a trained leadership for carrying out evacuations and responding to emergencies within affected agencies. Others felt that special settings such as corrections or parks were not adequately addressed in the training.

Success of the training can be evaluated by determining if participants were able to do what they needed after the training. 61% said they did what they had planned. However, the situation of the health and safety activist is clearly a key variable in the successful action equation: Respondents who were members of a safety committee were almost four times as likely to report having carried out their intended plans as those who were not (Table 4).

Table 4: Odds of success for safety committee members compared to those not on a committee: 3.8 (p=.017)			
	Did not carry out plans	Carried out plans	
Not on safety committee	13	17	30
On safety committee	7	35	42
Total	20	52	72

What led to success or failure?

Participants were asked to describe what helped or limited them in improving their Emergency Action Plans, and why they were unable to carry out the plans they had made during training. The most common single problem was not enough time (9), followed by management resistance (7). In contrast, 7 felt that management support was a critical asset. The training did provide people with knowledge, confidence and materials to address their needs, but at least two felt they did not have enough information. Ten felt that the Emergency Action Plan itself made the difference: five said it was nonexistent or not made available, five felt that it was adequate and effective, and a few cited conflicts with union leadership or co-workers. Finally, a variety of organizational issues such as lack of equipment, confusion about authority, limited coordination and workplace demands made it hard for many to carry out their plans.

When asked what they intended to do next, most had a plan, illustrating the need for continued action even following successes. Thirty-two plan to regularly review or revise their Emergency Action Plans. Two will develop Emergency Action Plans where they do not exist. Seven plan to mobilize or educate co-workers, and four plan to pressure management. Seven indicate the importance of the role of the union as an organization in achieving improvements; they intend to get additional union leadership support, join a committee or run for office. Practice

and drilling were the focus for another 7. Finally, 7 made a nonspecific commitment to keep moving forward.

Only 34 (40%) indicated additional assistance, training, or resources they would need to carry out their plans. Of those, 14 wanted additional training, either for all workers in their facility or refresher trainings for those with Emergency Action Plan responsibilities. Five wanted technical support from PEF, and three thought management support and resources were needed. Others wanted improved coordination between different unions and between agencies, more technical resources such as Web pages, and contract language.

### Conclusion

- ◆ About 30% of the training participants responded to the survey. Respondents represented a comprehensive cross-section of PEF membership from 22 agencies that employ at least 30,000 workers. Almost all held an active union position, and more than half served on their local or agency health and safety committees.
- ◆ The great majority of workplaces had some kind of Emergency Action Plan. Most respondents who requested to see one were able to do so. This suggests that overall, state agencies have a degree of compliance with the requirement for Emergency Action Plans.
- ◆ The survey demonstrated that the majority of respondents took action following training by doing outreach to union members and leaders and approaching management to investigate and solve issues.
- ◆ Almost three-quarters of participants who involved management received favorable results. Successful action was enhanced by safety committee participation, reaching out to co-workers, and involving union leadership.
- ◆ It is likely that the survey responders (30%) were more active than non-responders. We don't know how active the non-responders were following training.
- ◆ In an effort to contain the length of the survey, it did not evaluate whether Emergency Action Plans are being implemented effectively. Anecdotally, we know this is a problem. One respondent reported that her workplace had no fire alarms or fire extinguishers, suggesting that any plan, however good, needs to be continuously evaluated and improved.
- ◆ Because this was the first survey of its kind within PEF, it is difficult to compare the results with other action-oriented training. However, it may be used for this purpose in the future.
- ◆ Recommendations for members:
  - ◆ Success is most likely when workers act together. Safety committee membership provides a critical forum for getting results.
  - ◆ The action plans developed during the training should still be carried out. The time for acting has not passed. All members should be reminded that they have a right to see the Emergency Action Plan, and to insist that it be revised, if inadequate, or developed, if nonexistent. The 40% of respondents who did not evaluate their plans, and those who did

not respond to the survey, should use the checklists provided to make sure the plans that exist are adequate.

- ◆ If problems with Emergency Action Plans cannot be resolved through labor/ management cooperation, complaints should be filed with the NYS Department of Labor Public Employee Safety & Health Program. Local leaders, Field Staff, and the PEF Health and Safety Department can assist in processing these complaints.

- ◆ Recommendations for union leadership:

When local leaders select training participants, they should consider whether those chosen are likely to carry out the activities and involve others. It is likely that some portion of the training participants were not committed to carrying out the recommended actions following training. The method recommended below for recording and following up on action plans should involve local union leadership, whether or not they attend the training. They are in the best position to make sure that effective health and safety action takes place. Active local, union leadership involvement is especially important when several unions or agencies are covered by the same or linked Emergency Action Plans.

- ◆ Recommendations for future training:

- ◆ Given the overall positive evaluations provided immediately following the training sessions, it makes sense to continue with the action oriented, participatory approach that was used by the PEF Health & Safety Department. It is probable that those who took action after the training were also more likely to fill out the survey. However, it is clear that the course was generally very well received and that people made extensive use of the materials and checklists provided. The knowledge and skills transmitted provided many with the confidence to face management and firmly request improvements in workplace safety.
- ◆ Responsive planning during training is recommended. A significant number found that the training did not prepare them to deal with specific emergencies. The one-day length of the program limited the ability to address every type of emergency in each type of PEF represented worksite. However, in response to these concerns, since the program ended, the PEF Health & Safety Department has already conducted agency specific training in Parole and OASAS, and is in the process of developing statewide training in DOCS.
- ◆ It is important to plan the training and the training evaluation process with follow-up in mind. To that end, the PEF Health & Safety Department promoted the training as an opportunity “to prepare attendees to take action in cooperation with their agency management in upgrading deficient emergency plans or filing complaints where agency cooperation is not possible.” A space was added on the training application form asking participants, “Briefly explain why you want to attend and how you will use the information at your worksite/ agency.” Following training, the evaluation forms had participants answer three questions: 1) What are the key issues/concerns around emergency preparedness at your worksite? 2) Who will you talk to about addressing these

concerns from labor and management? and 3) What other actions might you take to address the key issues identified above?

- ◆ The survey provided an opportunity to compare what participants had planned to do at the time they completed the training evaluation form with what they actually did. However, the evaluation form asked open-ended questions, making a comparison impractical. In the future, asking people to state three steps they will take on return to the office will provide more useful information. Additionally, having participants put this information on a postcard would allow for follow-up by the Health and Safety Department. For example, it could be mailed to participants at a later date, as a reminder of what they planned to do. Planned actions could then be more easily entered into a survey database. These plans could also be shared with local union leadership to make sure adequate support is provided.

PEF Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Evacuation Training  
Survey

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Union position: \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many people work in your building(s)? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Are you a safety committee member? Yes/No Are you on: \_\_\_ Local committee \_\_\_ Agencywide

**Worker involvement**

6. Did you discuss the Emergency Action Plan issue with union leaders? Yes/No
7. Did you discuss the Emergency Action Plan issue with coworkers? Yes/No
8. How many coworkers are working on this issue with you? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Please describe any comments, concerns or problems you have about coworker involvement:

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**Management involvement**

10. Did you discuss the Emergency Action Plan issue with management? Yes/No
11. If yes, how (check all that apply and describe):

- In meetings:
- Written request
- Grievance or other internal complaint
- PESH complaint
- Contact PEF Health and Safety Department
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Did management respond adequately to your requests? Yes/No
13. What did they do? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Workplace Emergency Action Plan**

14. Does your work setting have an Emergency Action Plan? Yes/No/Don't know
15. Did you request a copy or ask to see it? Yes/No
16. Have you received a copy or had a chance to read it? Yes/No
17. Is it: \_\_\_ For your office or floor only \_\_\_ Building or facility-wide \_\_\_ Agencywide
18. If you don't have a formal Emergency Action Plan, describe what emergency procedures are in place eg tenant safety, fire plan etc. \_\_\_\_\_
19. When was the Emergency Action Plan last revised? Date if available: \_\_\_\_\_

20. Did you evaluate the plan? Yes/No

21. If you did not evaluate the plan, please explain why: \_\_\_\_\_

22. If you did evaluate the plan, which of the following checklists did you use? (Mark all that apply)

PEF Emergency Action (Evacuation) Plan Checklist

OSHA Compliance Checklist

Ten-point Checklist for Emergency Preparedness

Other (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

23. Was the plan adequate according to this checklist? Yes/Somewhat/No

24. Is anyone in your workplace working on developing or revising the Emergency Action Plan? Yes/No

25. If yes, please describe what is being done: \_\_\_\_\_

26. If you evaluated or developed an Emergency Action Plan, did the training help you? Yes/Somewhat/No

27. Please describe how the training helped or did not help you improve the Emergency Action Plan:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

28. Is there any other emergency situation that was not covered in your training or emergency plan that you could encounter at work that should be covered? Yes/No

29. If yes, please describe what other emergencies you might encounter:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

30. What helped or limited you in the process of accessing or improving your Emergency Action Plan?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Planning for the next steps**

31. When evaluating the training PEF provided, you stated who you would contact and what steps you would take. Did you carry out the plans you made during the training session? Yes/No

32. If no, why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

33. What do you intend to do about the Emergency Action Plan in the future?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

34. What additional assistance, training or resources will you need to carry out this plan?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Comments

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your contribution to health and safety!**