

Fire safety, evacuation procedures and evacuation schemes



Do I need an evacuation procedure or scheme?

Buildings that the public can enter, or that are workplaces, must have an evacuation procedure in place to ensure the safe, prompt and efficient evacuation of everybody in the building, in case of a fire or other emergency. As part of an evacuation procedure, signs must be in place, indicating to people what they should do in an emergency.

In some cases, your building may require a Fire and Emergency approved evacuation scheme which requires more detail, in addition to your evacuation procedure.

You might need an evacuation scheme if:

- You employ 10 or more people
- Your building can hold more than 100 people
- If you provide accommodation for six or more people (this excludes individual homes)
- If you store hazardous substances
- If you provide specialist care.

Find out whether your building requires an approved evacuation scheme, and information about how to apply for one at <https://onlineservices.fire.org.nz/>

Developing your evacuation procedure

You must consider the layout of your building, its use and the people in it. For example, if people sleep in your building, in order for your procedures to be safe you need to consider how occupants will be alerted to a fire, such as being alerted by smoke alarms sounding. You must also be able to ensure that everyone can safely evacuate the building, including those people who may require assistance. There are independent evacuation consultants available who can help you with this that can be found online via the [Fire Protection Association NZ](#).

What happens if i do not have an evacuation procedure or approved evacuation scheme?

Not having an evacuation procedure in place for your building, or an approved evacuation scheme if required, can result in:

- Your occupants not being able to safely evacuate in the event of a fire.
- Your business' ability to trade being affected.
- Your business' ability to obtain a permit or licence from a licensing regime, such as a liquor licence, being jeopardised.
- A legal penalty or offence.

What else do I need to do?

All building owners also have a responsibility to ensure their building is safe in the event of a fire. This includes:

- Ensuring stairwells, passageways and exits from your buildings are free from obstacles and unlocked in case they are required in an emergency
- Maintaining appliances and managing open flames
- Taking care when packing or unpacking goods with flammable material
- Carefully storing certain materials and waste
- Ensuring that fire-fighting equipment is properly maintained.

Make sure to review your evacuation procedures, employee training and signage regularly to help ensure they are still effective.

For further information and support, visit www.fireandemergency.nz/business-and-landlords/