Evacuation Planning Training for Site Managers: Drills, Headcounts and Assistance

14 – 18 December 2026
Geneva

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Programme Summary

Evacuation planning for site managers is the subject of this one-week training course for managers at managerial level who run buildings, plants and venues, ending in an evacuation plan for one site. Many sites hold a paper plan, yet exits, headcounts and help for people who cannot move quickly are rarely tested together. The programme moves from hazards and triggers to routes and assembly points, then to wardens, assistance and communication, and finally to drills and a plan a senior team can adopt. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on evacuation planning for site managers to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Hospitals, hotels, factories, offices and event venues must move many people to safety within minutes, often with staff who have never rehearsed the task. A weak plan leaves blocked routes, uncounted occupants and visitors who are left behind. Managers who test plans against realistic conditions can shorten evacuation time, find gaps before an incident and give responders reliable information on arrival.

- Clearance Time: Falls as routes, triggers and warden coverage are tested against occupant numbers.
- Accounting Accuracy: Improves as headcount methods and visitor records are checked in drills.
- Assistance Coverage: Rises as help for people who need support is planned, assigned and rehearsed.

Principles and Evidence Base

- ISO 22315 Mass Evacuation Guidelines: Gives an international frame for planning large-scale evacuation, applied in Sessions 1 and 2 to triggers, routes and capacity.
- Emergency Action Plan Elements: Lists the parts of a workable plan such as alarms, routes, assembly points and roles, applied in Sessions 2 to 4 to plan design.
- Drill and Review Practice: Treats each exercise as evidence for improving the plan, applied in Sessions 4 and 5 to rehearsal and correction.

Intended Participants

- Site managers who own the evacuation plan for a building, plant or venue.
- Facilities and operations managers who maintain exits, alarms and signage.
- Health and safety managers who audit drills and train wardens.
- Security managers who control access and assembly points during an event.

Typical settings include healthcare, hospitality, manufacturing and event venues.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to diagnose evacuation hazards and set triggers for a chosen site.
2. Participants will be able to construct exit routes and assembly points matched to occupant numbers.
3. Participants will be able to assign warden and marshal roles with clear handovers.
4. Participants will be able to design assistance arrangements for people who need help to move.
5. Participants will be able to evaluate headcount methods and communication with responders.
6. Participants will be able to justify a drill programme and plan to a senior team.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Evacuation Planning, Hazards and Triggers

What events require people to leave, and who decides when?

- ISO 22315 Planning Overview
- Site Hazard and Occupancy Profile
- Evacuation Trigger Table
- Alarm and Alert Method Review
- Full, Partial and Shelter Decision Chart

Day 2: Routes, Capacity and Assembly Points

Can the people on site reach safety in time, and where do they gather?

- Exit Route Walkthrough Sheet
- Occupant Load and Flow Estimate
- Bottleneck and Blocked Route Scan
- Assembly Point Selection Grid
- Signage and Lighting Check

Day 3: Wardens, Assistance and Headcounts

Who guides people, who helps those who cannot move quickly, and how is everyone accounted for?

- Warden and Marshal Role Cards
- Personal Assistance Plan Template
- Visitor and Contractor Register
- Headcount Method Comparison
- Missing Person Escalation Rule

Day 4: Communication, Responders and Drills

How is the plan communicated, handed to responders and tested?

- Message Script Set
- Responder Handover Brief
- Drill Design Sheet
- Observer Scoring Form
- Drill Review and Correction Log

Day 5: Evacuation Plan for One Site

Do the earlier tools combine into one plan that a senior team can adopt?

- Applying the Session 1 Evacuation Trigger Table
- Testing the Session 2 Occupant Load and Flow Estimate
- Checking the Session 3 Headcount Method Comparison
- Rehearsing the Session 4 Responder Handover Brief
- Completing the Site Evacuation Plan

Methodology

The programme rests on simulation. Participants work in small teams on prepared floor plans for a hospital wing and a conference venue, running timed table-top walkthroughs with changing conditions such as a blocked exit or a missing visitor. Observers score decisions, and each round ends with a debrief that links findings to the plan.

- Suggested activity: A timed walkthrough in which one exit is closed halfway through.
- Suggested activity: A headcount exercise with visitors, contractors and late arrivals.
- Suggested activity: A responder handover given in two minutes and critiqued by peers.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes an evacuation plan for one site. It holds a trigger table, a route and capacity estimate, an assembly point choice, warden role cards, an assistance arrangement, a headcount method and a drill schedule. The plan is used at work to brief a senior team, train wardens and set the first drill.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is evacuation planning training suitable for managers without a safety background?

Yes. Evacuation planning for site managers assumes responsibility for a building, plant or venue, not a safety qualification. Methods are taught with templates and floor plans.

Which guidance does evacuation planning rest on?

Evacuation planning rests on the ISO 22315 mass evacuation guidelines, on the elements of an emergency action plan and on drill and review practice.

How is the evacuation plan from this training used at work?

You use the evacuation plan to brief a senior team, train wardens, brief responders on arrival and set the first drill for your site.

How does evacuation planning differ from fire safety management?

Evacuation planning concentrates on moving and accounting for people, assistance and drills, while fire safety management concentrates on preventing and controlling fire itself.