

Emergency Action Plan (EAP) Toolkit



Toolkit to assist practitioners to develop Emergency Action Plans for basic swimming and water safety skills lessons in low resource settings.

Contents

Introduction.....	2
Developing an EAP.....	4
Emergency Action Plan Template.....	13
Glossary.....	14

Acknowledgements

This toolkit was created during a technical workshop held in Zanzibar in 2022, with representatives from the following organisations:

Aminur Rahman	Centre for Injury Prevention and Research - Bangladesh	Bangladesh
Shafkat Hossain	Centre for Injury Prevention and Research - Bangladesh	Bangladesh
Tom Mecrow	Royal National Lifeboat Institution	UK
James Bonney	Royal National Lifeboat Institution	UK
Jill Fortuin-Abrahams	National Sea Rescue Institute	South Africa
Jade Mogwasi	Lifesaving Botswana	Botswana
Justin Bakinga	Royal Life Saving Society Cameroon	Cameroon
George Makasare	Rashtriya Life Saving Society	India
Christopher Ochieng	Kenya Lifesaving Federation	Kenya
Samuel Thianga	Lifesaving Africa Rescuers	Kenya
Geh Thuan Tek	The Life Saving Society Malaysia	Malaysia
Luis Macamo	Marine Megafauna Foundation	Mozambique
Samith Thilina	Sri Lanka Life Saving	Sri Lanka
Aabid Hammour	Sudan Sea Scouts	Sudan
Khalid Rushaka	Arusha Swim Club	Tanzania
Adisak Suvanprakorn	Thai Life Saving Society	Thailand
Graham Buckley	Hue Help	Vietnam
David Meddings	World Health Organization	Switzerland
Muhammad Said	The Panje Project	Zanzibar
Haji Ali Haji	The Panje Project	Zanzibar
Abasi Makame	The Panje Project	Zanzibar
Khadija Sharif	The Panje Project	Zanzibar
Bakhtim Marshad	The Panje Project	Zanzibar
Mary Francis	Environmental Management and Economic Development Organization	Tanzania
Shayne Baker	Royal Life Saving Society Commonwealth	Australia
Ashley Jones	Swim England	UK

Introduction

This toolkit has been developed to help practitioners implementing basic swimming and water safety skill lessons for children in low resource settings to develop an Emergency Action Plan(s).

An Emergency Action Plan is a document that outlines the procedures that should be followed in the event that an emergency situation occurs.

Why is an EAP important?

The tool is designed to help practitioners to develop an Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

Standard Operating Procedures should be in place to ensure that swimming lessons are run safely and effectively. However, even with the best safety procedures in place, the risk of an emergency occurring cannot be completely removed.

It is essential that an Emergency Action Plan is in place to ensure:

1. Teachers and other staff are aware of their responsibilities if an emergency occurs
2. There are clear, easy to follow procedures in place.
3. The welfare of the children is prioritised, including any children directly involved in the emergency and others present.

The World Health Organization’s publication *Preventing Drowning: Practical guidance for the provision of day-care, basic swimming and water safety skills, and safe rescue a resuscitation training (2022)* recommends that organisations implementing basic swimming and water safety skills lessons perform site safety assessments.

Practical Guidance 7: Develop an emergency action plan that lays out the procedures to be followed in the event of any emergency during training (beyond standard operating procedures ensuring routine safe operation).

This toolkit is designed to help practitioners implement this best practice recommendation.

How to use this toolkit

There are two core sections in this toolkit:

Tool	Use
Developing an EAP Tool	This section is designed to guide you through the key areas to consider when developing an EAP. Each subsection has a series of questions for you to work through, along with supporting notes and further action points.
Emergency Action Plan Template	A template to help you write up your Emergency Action Plan.

Site Specific

An Emergency Action Plan should be specific to one particular site.

If you operate lessons across multiple sites, multiple EAPs should be produced. You can use this toolkit for each specific site that you operate at. You may find that there are similarities between sites that you work with and

therefore some of the processes in your EAPs may be the same or similar across different sites. However, it is important not to assume that what works at one site will work at another, even if they share a number of similarities.

Implementing the Emergency Action Plan

Once the Emergency Action Plan has been produced, it should be tested as far as is reasonably practical. This could involve running training sessions that simulate the emergency situations outlined in the document to ensure that the procedures in place are realistic and understood by all involved. Such testing may help identify any potential weaknesses in your plan so that appropriate revisions can be made.

The Emergency Action Plan should form an integral part of both initial and ongoing staff and volunteer training.

DRAFT

Developing an EAP Tool

This section of the toolkit covers the key areas to consider while developing an Emergency Action Plan. You may wish to work through these questions with the key members of your team responsible for planning and implementing basic swimming and water safety skills lessons.

For each of the key areas in this section there are a number of guiding questions for you to consider to help you develop an EAP, along with accompanying notes and suggested action points.

You should aim to answer all of the questions in this section. This can be done collaboratively, involving teachers, project management and other stakeholders in the project with local knowledge.

1. Site Considerations

Sites should be carefully evaluated to ensure that they are accessible, emergency communication is possible and there is a clear evacuation procedure.

Question	Notes	Further Action
<p>Where is your site located?</p> <p><i>Is it a well known site? Do local people go there?</i></p>	<p>Clearly identifying the location of the site is important so that colleagues and emergency response personnel know where to go in the event of an emergency.</p> <p>This could be shown on a map, alongside a description based on well known local landmarks.</p>	<p>Ensure the location is clearly identified and is recorded in a way that can be easily understood.</p>
<p>What is your nearest local landmark?</p>	<p>Identifying a well known local landmark helps others to establish the location of the training site.</p>	<p>Identify nearby local landmarks.</p>
<p>What kind of site is it?</p>	<p>For example, beach, pool, pond etc. The type of site may affect the kinds of hazards and risks applicable to your action plan.</p>	<p>Record the site type.</p>
<p>How accessible is the site?</p> <p><i>What is the quality of the roads like leading up to the site?</i></p> <p><i>What kind of transportation can access the site?</i></p>	<p>The quality of the roads or paths leading up to the site may mean you need to consider the type of transportation used in an emergency.</p> <p>It may also influence the decision on the location of your evacuation point.</p>	<p>Assess the accessibility of the site for emergency assets.</p>
<p>Where is your nearest evacuation point?</p>	<p>An evacuation point is a location to take a patient or group of students that removes them from any immediate risks.</p>	<p>Identify where the nearest evacuation point is.</p>

	The evacuation point should be accessible by emergency transportation.	
What communication methods are available to use in an emergency?	<p>The type of communication methods available may impact on the ability of the instructors to escalate in an emergency.</p> <p>For example, in areas where mobile phone signal is not available instructors may have to travel to local villages to access communications.</p>	Consider conducting a test of mobile phone signal quality in and around the training site
What other activities are taking place in the area?	<p>There may be other commercial or community activities in the area. This may have an impact on the ease of conducting first aid in an emergency, and on the ability of further emergency services to access the patient.</p> <p>It may also be worth considering whether other activity organisers have an emergency action plan in place, which may help to inform yours.</p>	<p>Research the use of the training area at different times of day. Certain areas may get crowded.</p> <p>Consider convening those organising commercial or community activities to see what (if any) plans they have in place for emergencies.</p>

NOTE:

An EAP should be location specific. If you operate lessons in multiple locations, you should develop multiple EAPs.

2. Stakeholder Considerations

Consider who needs to be consulted on the EAP and made aware of any responsibilities they may have in it. This may include individuals or organisations who are not directly involved in implementing the swimming lessons.

Question	Notes	Further Action
Who needs to be aware of the EAP?	<p>Which stakeholders need to have seen the EAP and understood their role in it.</p> <p>For example, schools may have their own EAP that will need to be enacted. Local community responders or caregivers may need to be aware of their roles. All programme delivery staff should have good understanding of the EAP.</p>	Carefully consider all the stakeholders and determine who needs to be aware of it.
	Which stakeholders should have a role in shaping the EAP?	Consider which stakeholders should have a role in developing the EAP.

<p>Who might need to input into the development of the EAP?</p>	<p>For example, emergency services who will be able to provide information on their availability, capacity and response times. Local community responders and caregivers may provide information on other activities taking place in and around the site.</p>	
--	---	--

3. Training Considerations

All staff need to be trained to be able to meet their responsibilities under the EAP. This will typically involve first aid and water rescue training. Staff should also be trained in the EAP itself.

Question	Notes	Further Action
<p>Who needs to be trained?</p> <p>What do they need to be trained in?</p>	<p>To deliver different elements of the EAP, certain staff members may be required to undertake training courses and obtain certifications. For example, in water rescue, first aid, incident management etc. There may be minimum legal requirements for training for specific roles to consider.</p> <p>A training needs analysis should be conducted to identify any gaps between current and required staff knowledge or skills.</p> <p>Training may need to be tailored to your specific environment and equipment.</p>	<p>Conduct a training needs analysis to identify what training is required. This may include formal certified courses (for example, lifeguard courses) as well as site specific and in house training.</p>
<p>How regularly do they need to be trained?</p>	<p>Regular assessment of training skills should take place, ensuring skills are kept up to date (in line with certification requirements).</p>	<p>Record how frequently training needs to be conducted to ensure ongoing competency.</p>
<p>How regularly should training be conducted on the EAP?</p>	<p>Organisations should periodically simulate activation of the EAP to ensure staff and external agencies are aware of their roles. This should be undertaken on at least an annual basis, or when new staff are hired.</p>	<p>Record how frequently training needs to be conducted on the EAP.</p>

NOTE:

Carefully assess training needs for all people who will have a role in the EAP. Training should be consistent across the team to ensure the same knowledge and techniques are learnt. Formal training courses may often need to be supplemented with in house / site specific training.

4. Emergency Asset Considerations

It is important to understand what emergency assets are available, how they can be contacted, and what the expected response times would be.

Question	Notes	Further Action
<p>Where is the nearest health facility?</p> <p><i>What kind of medical service does it provide?</i></p> <p><i>How long does it take to get there?</i></p> <p><i>How can you contact them?</i></p>	<p>The type of health facility and the distance and time to the health facility. This may influence your decision on where to transport a patient based on the type of medical emergency.</p> <p>It may also impact your decision on the level of first aid training that should be given to instructors, staff and possible local community responders.</p> <p>For example, a major injury may require teachers to have advanced first aid skills if the health facility is far away, or necessary skills are not available at the health facility.</p>	<p>Produce a map of local health facilities, and check what services they provide (e.g. trauma management). Also check their response capabilities (e.g. ambulance, AED etc).</p> <p>Audit existing first aid skills of instructors to check their ability to provide necessary first aid.</p>
<p>What emergency response assets are available?</p>	<p>A response asset is a useful thing or person, able to assist in an emergency. Examples include a community first responder or an ambulance with suitable equipment.</p> <p>When developing your EAP, consider:</p> <p><i>How do you contact them?</i></p> <p><i>What kind of response can they provide?</i></p> <p><i>Time to respond?</i></p> <p><i>Ability of asset to access the site?</i></p>	<p>Record which emergency assets are available, how to contact them, their estimated response times and when they should be contacted.</p>

NOTE:

Emergency Assets may vary considerably across different locations. They may include professional medical services as well as community first responders or volunteer organisations.

5. Financial Considerations

In some locations, there may be a cost involved in using emergency services. It is important to consider if there are any financial implications involved in your planning and who is responsible for these costs.

Question	Notes	Further Action
<p>Who will cover the costs in the event of a medical emergency?</p> <p><i>What medical insurance is available and what does it cover?</i></p> <p><i>Who is liable and what is their willingness and ability to pay?</i></p>	<p>If relevant, check which medical situations and facilities are covered by your insurance.</p> <p>This may influence where the patient is taken in the event of an emergency.</p> <p>If no insurance is available, then consider who is liable and their willingness and ability to pay.</p>	<p>Identify if there are financial implications for emergency care if required.</p> <p>If financial implications are present, identify which services should be utilised, who will make payment and how payment will be delayed.</p>

NOTE:

If emergency services and medical care facilities charge for services, it is essential to identify who will pay and how payment will be made. Failure to plan could result in delayed treatment.

6. Communications Plan

Having a clear communication procedure in place is essential. This includes communication between team members to activate the EAP, as well as communication with emergency assets and other stakeholders.

Question	Notes	Further Action
How is the EAP activated?	This should be a standard process to let those within the immediate vicinity know that an incident is occurring. For example, three whistle blasts or pushing an emergency alarm which triggers lights and/or sounds.	Test EAP activation procedures to make sure they are suitable.
<p>What is the escalation process?</p> <p>At what point do people need to be notified?</p>	<p>Organisations should consider who needs to be notified that the EAP has been put in place, and the order and timing in which this occurs.</p> <p>This may vary depending on the severity of an incident, and the EAP of other organisations that you're working with.</p>	Consider simulating the escalation process through a role play exercise to establish an efficient and effective sequence of steps
Who else needs to be notified?	There may be other people who should be informed that an incident has taken place but are not critical to the implementation of the EAP itself, for example caregivers or friends.	Create a list of who needs to be notified if the EAP is activated, where their contact information can be found, when they should be contacted and who should contact them.

Contact details should be held, along with the method of contacting them (noting local data protection and storage requirements).

7. Possible Emergency Scenarios

A range of emergency scenarios may occur during a swimming programme. It's worthwhile to complete the following exercise to establish how to respond to each scenario within your specific context.

This list is not exhaustive so please think about other possible scenarios too.

Possible Scenarios

Participant Drowning	with either a fatal or non-fatal outcome
Medical Emergency	an injury or illness, such as an asthma attack, epileptic seizure or black out, serious bleed
Missing Participant	being unable to locate a participant in the water or around the training site
Disorderly Behaviour	a participant or member of the public engaged in reckless aggressive conduct-posing an immediate risk to students
Safeguarding or Welfare incident	An incident that causes harm to a participant, potentially involving or indicating abuse or neglect
Natural Events	for example, a major storm, lightning, earthquake, flash flood
Security Threats	for example, terrorist / criminal activity
Other Threats	a fire or structural failure which may pose a risk to those involved in training

For each scenario, consider:

1. Who is likely to be the first person to respond?	For example: Swimming teachers
2. How do they initiate the emergency action plan?	For example: Blow a whistle, call a manager.
3. What specific action will that person take?	For example: rescue someone from the water
4. What human resources and equipment need to be available?	For example: First aid kit, rescue equipment, lifeguard
	For example: Lifeguard or other teacher, who knows protocols for evacuation
	For example: Caregivers, school
	For example: If injured, recommend seeking further medical treatment. Consider the need for reporting to the police, insurance providers, and/or health and safety offices

5. **Who takes care of the students? Are there provisions to keep them safe and warm or evacuate if possible?**
6. **Who needs to be notified?**
7. **What happens next?**

NOTE:

It is important to ensure that you carefully consider the resources and personnel that are available when answering these questions and ensure that your answers are realistic.

8. Incident report review and debrief

After an incident has occurred, a written incident report should be completed so that a record of the incident is kept. It is also important to debrief all involved in the incident.

Question	Notes	Further Action
Who completes the incident report form?	Once an incident has been resolved, a single person should be nominated to complete an incident report form that captures details of the incident. This should be reviewed and signed by all involved in the incident.	Assign a person / role to complete the incident report form.
What is the process for reviewing the incident report form once it's been completed?	Once an incident has been resolved, it is important to learn from any activation of the EAP, so that changes can be made for future incidents. This could include both individual and multi-stakeholder debrief sessions.	Create a clear process for reviewing the incident report form and ensure a person is assigned responsibility to complete the review.
Are there any mandatory health and safety reporting requirements?	Some countries have legislation that requires an incident to be reported to the government. You should check to see if there are any mandatory reporting requirements, and ensure your processes take this into account.	Check the legal requirements, and ensure any legal requirements are incorporated into your EAP.

9. Welfare Considerations

An emergency incident can have a significant psychological and physical impact on a person, whether they have been directly involved, or as an onlooker.

Question	Notes	Further Action
What resources are available to ensure the welfare of staff and participants after the incident?	Organisations should consider how they support staff, participants and volunteers following an incident. This could be through providing professional support, and/or providing a safe environment for listening and discussion. The support process that is required may vary depending on the people affected. Children, for example, may need different support to adults.	Develop a process for offering support to people after an incident. Look into the availability of any professional services (e.g. counselling services).

NOTE:

An emergency incident can have a significant psychological impact. People affected may include those directly involved in the incident, witnesses, or friends and family. Both adults and children can be affected, and different people can be affected in different ways.

10. Refill and Maintenance

After any equipment is used, it should be checked to ensure it is still fit for use. Any consumables (such as bandages) should also be replenished.

Question	Notes	Further Action
Who is going to ensure that rescue and first aid equipment is replenished and fit for use?	An incident may require use of first aid and rescue equipment. It's important that these items are replenished and/or serviced as quickly as possible in case another incident occurs. There should be one person with responsibility for checking this has been done.	Identify the appropriate person responsible for checking and replenishing first aid supplies and rescue equipment after the EAP has been activated.

11. Review

The EAP should be regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

Question	Notes	Further Action
How regularly does the EAP need to be reviewed?	An EAP should be reviewed at least on an annual basis, or more regularly if there have been any significant changes within the organisation or the environment where activities are taking place. For example, recruitment of new staff, expansion of project activities into a new area, or a change in the availability of emergency response assets. The EAP	Identify and record when the EAP should be reviewed and who is responsible to conduct the review.

should also be reviewed after an incident takes place.

NOTE:

Both internal and external factors can change over time and impact how an EAP will work.

DRAFT

Emergency Action Plan Template

After you have worked through questions in the previous section, you should write up the EAP in a clear and structured format.

This template can be used to help you structure your Emergency Action Plan in a logical format. You may wish to use the sections below as headings.

Section	Contents	Relevant Toolkit Notes
Introduction	Site Location	Section 1
Responsibilities	Responsibilities of staff	Section 2
Training	Training required for different roles	Section 3
Emergency Assets	Location and contact of Emergency Resources	Section 4
Evacuation	Evacuation location and procedure	Section 1
Financial Considerations	Payment procedures (if relevant)	Section 5
Activating the EAP	How the EAP is activated	Section 6
Emergency Situations	How to respond to different specific emergency situations in detail	Section 7
Post Incident	Incident debrief and reporting Staff and Participant Welfare Equipment checks and restocking	Section 8 Section 9 Section 10
Review	When the EAP should be reviewed.	Section 11

NOTE:

Once your EAP is completed, it is important to test it as far as is reasonably practical. This can help identify any areas that may require revision.

Glossary

Debrief	A meeting conducted after an incident with programme managers and personnel involved to review the incident and check the wellbeing of all involved.
Escalation Process	When the severity of an incident requires that other people or resources are required or required to be notified.
Emergency Action Plan (EAP)	A written procedure that outlines actions that will be taken in the event of an emergency situation.
Emergency Situation / Incident	Any situation that has caused harm or had the potential to cause harm (a near miss).
Emergency Asset	A resource that can provide assistance in an emergency, including professional emergency services (e.g. ambulance, fire service) or community responders.
Incident Report	A written report that should be completed after an emergency situation occurs to record what happened and how it was responded to.
In house / site specific training	Training that is tailored to a specific location or context. For example, an individual with a lifeguard qualification may undergo additional training to gain knowledge about a specific location, equipment or activity.
Medical Insurance	Insurance that covers all or part of health care costs.
Site	A specific location that has been selected to operate basic swimming and water safety lessons – such as a swimming pool, beach, or pond.
Stakeholder	An organisation or individual with an interest or concern in the project – for example, parents of children taking part in swimming lessons.
Standard Operating Plan (SOP) / Normal Operating Plan (NOP)	A written document that outlines the normal procedures that must be in the place – for example, how a site is set up, the teacher to student ratio and teacher qualifications.
Training Needs Analysis	An assessment of the training that individuals or organisations must undertake in order to be able to competently perform a role or task.

