

CLIENT ALERT

Workplace Emergency Preparedness in Qatar: Key Safety Obligations for Employers and Employees

The Ministry of Interior (Mol) in Qatar has issued binding Safety Guidelines for Employees in Workplace Premises (For Dealing with Precautionary Alerts) (the Safety Guidelines) applicable to government, semi-government, and private organisations. Issued amid the phased return to workplace during ongoing regional hostilities, the Safety Guidelines standardise how employees and employers respond to precautionary alerts and emergencies. Non-compliance may result in legal action.

Below we highlight the core obligations for HR, HSE, facilities, and security teams. Employers must circulate the Safety Guidelines to employees and ensure their implementation.

Dealing with Official Alerts

Employees must treat all national emergency alerts issued via official channels as mandatory instructions. This means:

Employers should ensure internal communications are clearly presented as extensions of official instructions.

- Immediate compliance with instructions in national alerts.
- Relying solely on official sources for updates.
- A strict prohibition on spreading rumours or unverified information via any channel.
- Adhering to directions from authorities and internal safety teams without personal interpretation.

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Safe Conduct Inside Buildings

During precautionary alerts, employees should generally remain inside workplace premises unless otherwise instructed by competent authorities. Employees must:

- Remain inside the building when an alert is issued.

- Maintain calm and avoid causing anxiety amongst others.
- Avoid courtyards, outdoor areas, and rooftops.
- Stay clear of windows, glass facades, energy sources, and flammable materials.
- Limit non-essential movement between floors or buildings.

Movement and Evacuation Inside the Workplace

The Safety Guidelines emphasise proactive preparedness and real-time response:

- Employees should familiarise themselves with emergency exits, evacuation routes, and assembly points.
- Elevators must not be used during alerts; use stairways and emergency exits only.
- Avoid pushing, rushing, or overcrowding when moving to safe areas.
- Keep corridors and emergency exits clear of obstacles at all times.

Employers should maintain clear routes, visible signage, regular drills, and staff training.

Response to Explosions or Sudden Incidents

In the event of an explosion or sudden incident:

- If outside when an explosion occurs, move immediately to the nearest safe area inside.
- Remain in designated safe areas until authorities officially confirm the danger has passed.

Employers should designate safe areas in advance and ensure employees know the locations.

Handling Suspicious Objects and Hazards

The MoI adopts a zero-tolerance approach to employees interacting with suspicious items:

- Report any suspicious object or unusual observation immediately via approved channels.
- Do not approach or touch metallic objects, shrapnel, or unidentified items.

Employers should publicise internal reporting channels, train employees to recognise suspicious items, and ensure only authorised personnel handle such risks.

Institutional Discipline and Information Control

The Safety Guidelines link physical security with information discipline:

- Employees must not photograph incidents or security procedures, nor share such material on social media.
- Employees must know emergency numbers and procedures for contacting safety supervisors.
- Full cooperation with safety officers and compliance with their instructions is mandatory.

Employers should ensure policies on mobile phone use, photography, and social media align with these requirements.

Organisational Responsibilities and Enforcement

Security and Safety Departments of all employers have explicit responsibilities under the Safety Guidelines. They must:

- Circulate the MoI Safety Guidelines to all employees and ensure understanding.
- Monitor implementation during day-to-day operations and live alerts.
- Confirm ongoing readiness of emergency exits, evacuation routes, assembly points, and response mechanisms.

The MoI has confirmed it will take “necessary legal actions” against violations. Non-compliance carries operational, safety, and legal consequences for individuals and employers.

Next Steps for Employers in Qatar

Employers operating in Qatar should consider:

- Reviewing and updating internal emergency, and communication procedures to align with the MoI framework.
- Conducting training and drills on safe conduct, evacuation routes, and assembly points.
- Ensuring security departments have clear mandates to monitor compliance.
- Revising workplace policies on photography and social media during incidents to reflect the Safety Guidelines' prohibitions.

This publication is for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Specific legal advice should be obtained in relation to particular circumstances, , and the latest instructions of the MoI and other competent authorities must be followed.

How can we help?

For queries or further information on the above alert please feel free to contact the below key contact.

Key contact:



Katrina Wilson

Of Counsel,

Employment & Incentives

K.Wilson@tamimi.com

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