

Virtual Program
On
Safe Diwali: Fire & Health Preparedness
Mode: Online
Dates: 30 October 2026

1. Background:

Festivals and large-scale celebrations are an integral part of Gujarat's social and cultural life. They strengthen community bonds, sustain cultural traditions and support local economies. However, the same celebrations, often involving high crowd density, temporary structures, use of fire and fireworks, extended outdoor activity and large-scale food preparation, can give rise to a range of fire, health and safety risks. These include:

- **Fire incidents and burns** arising from fireworks, diyas, candles, cooking fires, electrical short circuits and other ignition sources.
- **Firework-related injuries**, including burns, blast injuries, eye injuries and other trauma.
- **Unsafe handling and storage of fireworks and combustible materials**, increasing the likelihood of accidental fires.
- **Delayed evacuation or inappropriate response to fire incidents**, particularly where people are unfamiliar with emergency exits, fire extinguishers or basic fire-safety procedures.
- **Minor and major trauma** resulting from falls, road incidents, crowd surges, stampede-like situations and structural failures.
- **Respiratory distress and smoke exposure**, particularly among persons with asthma, COPD or cardiac conditions.
- **Heat exhaustion, heat stroke and dehydration** during extended outdoor gatherings.
- **Food- and water-borne illnesses**, including gastroenteritis and food poisoning.
- **Crowd-related emergencies**, including crush injuries, panic, separation of children and sudden medical collapse.
- **Other medical emergencies**, including cardiac events, seizures, allergic reactions and other conditions requiring immediate attention.

Children, older persons, pregnant women, persons with disabilities and persons with pre-existing medical conditions are disproportionately affected. They may be less able to recognize danger, move away from it or communicate their needs, and they often require specific and sometimes immediate assistance.

The first minutes after an incident are often decisive. Prompt first response by trained bystanders, volunteers and organizers can reduce injury severity, prevent complications and save lives before professional medical services arrive. Equally important is the ability to

recognise warning signs, distinguish cases that can be managed on site from those requiring urgent referral, and activate emergency services and coordinate with local health facilities.

There is therefore a need to strengthen awareness among stakeholders regarding fire prevention and basic fire response, safe celebration practices, recognition of common medical emergencies, appropriate first-response measures, warning signs requiring urgent medical attention, and emergency referral and coordination mechanisms.

2. Why is there a need?

Gujarat's major festivals and public celebrations attract large crowds and may involve fire, fireworks, crowd-related incidents, injuries, heat exposure and medical emergencies. Since many of these risks are foreseeable, preparedness and first-response measures can be planned and strengthened in advance.

During crowded events, access to professional emergency services may be delayed due to congestion, distance or restricted access. Trained volunteers and organisers are often the first to respond, making basic knowledge of fire safety, first aid, emergency communication and referral particularly important.

Children, older persons, pregnant women and persons with disabilities may require additional assistance during emergencies. Strengthening the capacity of organisers, volunteers and local stakeholders can support safer, more inclusive celebrations and better coordination with fire, police, health services and emergency response systems.

Aim: To strengthen awareness and practical preparedness for fire prevention, emergency response and management of common medical emergencies and injuries during festivals and public celebrations.

3. Objective of the Program:

By the end of the programme, participants will be able to:

1. **Identify key risks:** Identify common fire, health and safety risks associated with festivals and public celebrations, including burns, injuries, smoke exposure, heat-related illness, food- and water-borne illnesses and crowd-related incidents.
2. **Recognise emergencies and warning signs:** Recognise common warning signs and symptoms requiring immediate first response, medical attention or referral, with particular consideration for children, older persons, pregnant women and persons with disabilities.
3. **Apply basic first-response measures:** Describe appropriate first-response measures for burns, wounds, bleeding, fractures, heat-related illness, smoke and respiratory emergencies, and cardiac emergencies.
4. **Promote safe practices:** Differentiate between appropriate first-aid and fire-safety practices and common unsafe or harmful practices, including misconceptions related to the management of burns and other emergencies.
5. **Strengthen preparedness and coordination:** Describe key preparedness measures at the household, community and event levels, including emergency

communication, evacuation, activation of 108 emergency services, and coordination with health facilities, police, fire services and local authorities.

4. Target Participants & Department:

The programme is relevant to all departments and agencies involved in planning, permitting, managing or responding to festivals and public gatherings. These include the Home, Revenue, Health and Family Welfare, Urban Development and Urban Housing, Panchayat, Rural Housing and Rural Development, Women and Child Development, Tourism and Tribal Development Departments, and the Gujarat Pollution Control Board.

5. Expected Outcomes

- Identify common fire and safety risks associated with Diwali celebrations, including fireworks, electrical sources, open flames and crowded settings.
- Understand essential fire prevention and response measures, including safe handling of fireworks, initial fire response, evacuation procedures and emergency communication.
- Recognise common festival-related medical emergencies, including burns, injuries, bleeding, smoke exposure, heat-related illness and other health emergencies.
- Identify unsafe fire-safety and first-aid practices and avoid common misconceptions that may worsen injuries or emergencies.
- Strengthen overall emergency preparedness, including awareness of emergency services, referral arrangements and coordination with fire, health and other relevant authorities.
