

Campus Evacuation Policy for People With Disabilities

In All Emergencies...

AFTER AN EVACUATION HAS BEEN ORDERED

- **Building Manager duties include directing and/or conducting building sweeps during evacuation to ensure all occupants are aware of the evacuation notice. This includes assistance to individuals with disabilities in evacuating the building or in reaching the designated rescue staging area(s).**
- Evacuate people with disabilities if possible.
- DO NOT use elevators unless authorized to do so by police or fire personnel. Elevators could fail during a fire or major earthquake.
- Check on people with special needs during an evacuation. A “buddy system,” where people with disabilities arrange for volunteers (co-workers/neighbors) to alert them and assist in an emergency, is a good method.
- Attempt a rescue evacuation ONLY if you have had rescue training or the person is in immediate danger and cannot wait for professional assistance.
- Always ASK someone with a disability how you can help BEFORE attempting any rescue technique or providing assistance. Ask how he or she can best be assisted or moved, and whether there are any special considerations or items that need to come with the person.

RESPONSES TO EMERGENCIES

Blindness or Visual Impairment

Bomb Threat, Earthquake, Fire, Hazardous Materials Releases, and Power Outages

- Give verbal instructions to advise about safest route or direction using compass directions, estimated distances and directional terms.
- DO NOT grasp a visually impaired person’s arm. Ask if he or she would like to hold onto your arm as you exit, especially if there is debris or a crowd.
- Give other verbal instructions or information as necessary.

Deafness or Hearing Loss

Bomb Threat, Earthquake, Fire, Hazardous Materials Releases, and Power Outages.

- Get the attention of a person with a hearing disability by touch and eye contact. Clearly state the problem. Gestures and pointing are helpful, but be prepared to write a brief statement if the person does not seem to understand.
- Offer visual instructions to advise of safest route or directions by pointing toward exits or evacuation maps.

Mobility Impaired

Bomb Threat, Earthquake, Fire, and Hazardous Materials Releases:

- It may be necessary to help clear the exit route of debris (if possible) so that the person with a disability can move to a safer area.
- If people with mobility impairments cannot exit, they should move to a safer area, e.g.
 - Most enclosed stairwells
 - An office with a door shut which is a good distance from the hazard (and away from falling debris in the case of earthquakes).

- Notify police or fire personnel immediately about any people remaining in the building and their locations.
- Police or fire personnel will decide whether people are safe where they are, and will evacuate them as necessary. The Fire Department may determine that it is safe to override the rule against using elevators.
- If people are in immediate danger and cannot be moved to a safer area to wait for assistance, it may be necessary to evacuate them using a carry technique or, if available, an evacuation chair.

Power Outages:

- If an outage occurs during the day and people with disabilities choose to wait in the building for electricity to be restored, they can move near a window where there is natural light and access to a working telephone. During regular building hours, Building Coordinators should be notified so they can advise emergency personnel.
- If people would like to leave and an evacuation has been ordered, or if the outage occurs at night, call Campus Safety at 554-4444 to request evacuation assistance from the Fire Department.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Evacuating a disabled or injured person yourself is the last resort. Consider your options and risks of injuring yourself and others in an evacuation attempt. Do not make an emergency situation worse.

Evacuation is difficult and uncomfortable for both the rescuers and people being assisted. Some people have conditions that can be aggravated or triggered if they are moved incorrectly. Remember that environmental conditions (smoke, debris, loss of electricity) will complicate evacuation efforts. The following guidelines are general and may not apply in every circumstance.

- Occupants should be invited to volunteer ahead of time to assist disabled people in an emergency. If volunteers are not available, designate someone to assist who is willing to accept the responsibility.
- Volunteers should obtain evacuation training for certain types of lifting techniques through the Disabled Resource Coordinator, Drahmman Advising and Learning Resources Center, Ext 4111.
- Two or more trained volunteers, if available, should conduct the evacuation.
- DO NOT evacuate disabled people in their wheelchairs. This is standard practice to ensure the safety of disabled people and volunteers. Wheelchairs will be evacuated later if possible.
- Always ASK disabled people how you can help BEFORE attempting any rescue technique or giving assistance. Ask how they can best be assisted or moved, and if there are any special considerations or items that need to come with them.
- Before attempting an evacuation, volunteers and the people being assisted should discuss how any lifting will be done and where they are going.
- Proper lifting techniques (e.g. bending at the knees, keeping the back straight, holding the person close before lifting, and using leg muscles to lift) should be used to avoid injury to rescuers' backs.

SUMMARY

Prepare occupants in your building ahead of time for emergency evacuations. Know your building occupants. Train staff, faculty, and students to be aware of the needs of the people with disabilities and to know how to offer assistance. Hold evacuation drills annually in which occupants participate, and evaluate drills to identify areas that need improvement. Plans must cover regular working hours, after hours, and weekends.

Everyone needs to take responsibility for preparing for emergencies. People with disabilities should consider what they would do and whether they need to take additional steps to prepare.