

	Environmental Health and Safety Manual	
	Policy Number: EH&S 2-4	
Title: Emergency Evacuation for Persons with Physical Disabilities		
Effective Date: 1/98	Revision:	Number of Pages: 3

**PURPOSE:** To provide guidelines for the emergency evacuation of faculty, staff, students, and visitors with physical disabilities from buildings.

**POLICY:** University policy requires building occupants to evacuate in the event of a fire alarm activation or during any other emergency that requires evacuation. Pre-planning is the key to ensure that persons with physical disabilities are provided with the knowledge and assistance required to evacuate a building. A safe alternative for those who can not evacuate is to seek refuge in designated safe areas until emergency assistance is available.

**SCOPE:** University wide.

#### DEFINITIONS:

**Emergency:** An unforeseen event (i.e. fire, major utility failure, bomb scare, toxic chemical release, and natural disasters) that may pose a hazard to the building occupants.

**Physical Disability:** A temporary or permanent impairment that might prevent the safe, orderly, or prompt exit from a building during an emergency.

**Safe Area of Refuge:** A staging area that provides relative safety to its occupants while potential emergencies are assessed, decisions are made, and mitigating activities are begun.

#### PROCEDURES:

##### I. Pre-Planning for Emergency Evacuation

All individuals should develop their own plans for safe evacuation from any building that they frequent.

- A. Identify exit features such as primary and secondary routes out of the area to an exit or a fire rated stairwell that leads to an exit.
- B. Note communication devices in the area to identify your location during an evacuation.
  1. Telephones- To call Public Safety (x333.)
  2. Call boxes- Provides direct connection to Public Safety.
  3. Fire alarm pull stations- Sends location signal to Public Safety.

4. Pictorial symbols- Provides an additional means for signaling your location.
- C. Establish the Buddy System for assistance with emergency evacuation.
1. Seek out primary and alternate volunteers (buddies) who would assist during an emergency.
  2. Discuss with the buddies:
    - a. Type of assistance necessary.
    - b. Specific evacuation routes and safe areas of refuge.
    - c. Safest method for assisting the individual during an emergency.
  1. Duties of the buddy include:
    - a. Initiate phone call to Public Safety (x333) to communicate the location and any special needs of the individual with the physical disability.
    - b. Provide assistance to the individual with the physical disability in evacuating the building or relocating to a safe area of refuge.
    - c. Summon additional assistance from others if necessary.
    - d. Once assistance has been provided, buddy should evacuate and summon appropriate assistance to effect full evacuation of the individual with the physical disability if necessary.
    - e. Communicate the situation with the individual with the physical disability after the emergency has passed.
- D. Identify Safe Areas of Refuge
1. If the individual with the physical disability can not fully evacuate the building then he/she should go to a safe area of refuge. Safe areas of refuge (in order of preference) include:
    - a. Horizontal exit to another building connected by a bridge or corridor.
    - b. A stair landing in a fire rated stairwell which is an enclosed stairwell made of fire resistant material, fire rated doors, and leads to an exit out of the building
    - c. A room of refuge that has an exterior window, telephone, fire-rated door, and no inherently dangerous materials/processes in the room.
  2. Once in a safe area of refuge the individual or buddy should:
    - a. Close door.
    - b. If there is smoke or fire, try to seal the area/room by padding the doorway and cracks with cloth
    - c. If conditions permit, open an exterior window and wave a length of colorful cloth out of the window to draw attention to the location.

**II. Evacuation During Emergencies**

A. Individuals

1. When an emergency has been declared, everyone in affected area must evacuate. The only exceptions are personnel who have been identified to maintain critical or essential operations.
2. Do not use elevators unless directed by emergency response personnel.
3. Close all windows and doors as you exit.
4. Implement the buddy system and go to your nearest exit or safe area of refuge.
5. If exiting the building, go to your designated meeting area for the head count.

A. Building Fire Wardens

1. Facilitate evacuation of their area.
2. Survey the assigned areas, assess the situation, close doors behind them, and exit.
3. Report to emergency responders to describe what actions have been taken and conditions exist.

A. Emergency Responders (University Fire Marshals, Public Safety)

1. Assess the situation to determine cause of alarm and gain control of the situation.
2. Contact Fire Department if needed.
3. Survey the floors, known safe areas of refuge, and fire rated stairwells directly impacted by emergency.
4. Facilitate the full evacuation of persons remaining in the building if necessary.

**II. General Information**

- A. Individuals who need assistance in developing an evacuation plan or buddy system are encouraged to contact Environmental Health and Safety, their own department, Campus Residences, and/or Disabled Student Services.
- B. Environmental Health and Safety will maintain a registry of information provided on a voluntary basis for individuals who anticipate needing assistance in evacuation. The registry will include: name, department, primary location/room, disability, and specific evacuation plans.
- C. Public Safety, which serves as the command center during emergencies, will provide information from the registry to emergency responders during an evacuation.

**INQUIRIES/REQUESTS:** Environmental Health and Safety

<b>TITLE: Emergency Evacuation for Persons with Physical Disabilities</b>	<b>POLICY: 2-4</b>
---	--------------------

110 Suffolk Hall  
Zip 6200  
Main Office: 632-6410  
Fax: 632-9683

**RELATED POLICIES:** Emergency Evacuation Policy 2-1, Environmental Health and Safety Manual

**RELATED DOCUMENTS:** 29 CFR 1910.38 *Employee Emergency Action Plans and Fire Prevention Plans*