

Building Evacuation (Individuals with Disability)

Procedures for Emergency Evacuation of Individuals with Disability from Building

Purpose

This program establishes procedures for emergency evacuation of persons with disability from residence halls and other occupied buildings. The guidelines set forth in this program are in compliance with NFPA 101 Life Safety Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Introduction

Washburn University policies and procedures require all persons in a facility to evacuate that facility any time the fire alarm system is activated or other emergency that requires building evacuation. Persons with disabilities may not be able to evacuate unassisted. Therefore, they should inform another person that assistance may be necessary during an evacuation.

"Buddy System" Option

Make use of a "Buddy System." During the first week of classes or employment, make several acquaintances with fellow students, residents, class members, faculty, or staff. Inform them of any special assistance that may be required in the event of a fire alarm (hearing the alarm, guidance during evacuation, etc.).

If conditions allow, the "Buddy" may choose to assist the person with disability during the evacuation of the building. Otherwise, when the fire alarm sounds, the "Buddy" will make sure of the location of the person with disability, then go outside and inform emergency personnel (i.e. Campus Police Officers, Topeka Fire Department) a person in a specific location needs assistance in leaving the building. Emergency personnel will then enter the building and evacuate that person.

Evacuation Options

Use of the "Buddy System" along with the following evacuation options will help to assure the prompt evacuation of any person with a disability.

Horizontal Evacuation

Move away from the area of imminent danger to a safe distance such as another wing, adjoining building, opposite end of corridor, or outside if on ground level.

Vertical (Stairway) Evacuation

Stairways can be used by those who are able to evacuate with or without assistance. Persons with sight disability may require the assistance of a sighted person. Persons who must use crutches or other devices as walking aids will need to use their own discretion, especially when several flights of stairs are concerned.

Stay in Place

Unless danger is imminent, remain in a room with an exterior window and a telephone, closing the door. Dial ext. 1153 to contact the Campus Police and Safety Department. Give your name, location and the reason you are calling. Phone lines normally remain in service during most building emergencies. If the phone lines do fail, you can signal from the window by waving a cloth, towel, sheet, or other object to attract attention.

Disability Guidelines

Prior planning and practicing of emergency evacuation routes are important in assuring a safe evacuation.

Mobility Impaired (Wheelchair)

Persons using wheelchairs should Stay in Place or utilize some type of Horizontal Evacuation with their "Buddy" when the alarm sounds. The evacuation "Buddy" should immediately proceed to the evacuation assembly point outside the building and advise the emergency personnel the location of the person with disability. If the person with disability is alone, he/she should dial ext.1153, or 670-1153, and advise the Campus Police of his/her location.

Mobility Impaired (Non-Wheelchair)

Persons with mobility impairments, who are able to walk independently, may be able to negotiate stairs in an emergency with minor assistance. If danger is imminent, the individual should wait until the heavy traffic has cleared before attempting the stairs. If there is no immediate danger (detectable smoke, fire, or unusual odor), the person with disability may choose to stay in the building, using the other options, until emergency personnel arrive.

Hearing Impaired

Most buildings on campus are equipped with fire alarm horn/strobes that sound the alarm and flash strobe lights. The strobe lights are for hearing impaired persons. Persons with hearing impairments may not notice or hear emergency alarms and will need to be alerted of emergency situations.

Visually Impaired

Most buildings on campus are equipped with fire alarm horn/strobes that sound the alarm and flash strobe lights. The horn is for the sight impaired persons. Most people with a visual impairment will be familiar with their immediate surroundings and frequently traveled routes. Since the emergency evacuation route could be different from the commonly traveled route, persons who are visually impaired may need assistance in evacuating a building. A "Buddy" should offer assistance to the individual with visual impairment and guide him/her through the evacuation route.

Residence Halls

Kuehne, Lincoln Hall and the Living Learning Center have designated rooms for persons with disabilities. These rooms are equipped with appropriate fire alarm horn/strobes. At the beginning of each semester, the Resident Assistants conduct meetings with their floors to discuss the "Buddy System" as well as other disability related issues. The Residential Living Office makes note of any disabled persons residing in the halls and provides this list to the Campus Police and Safety Department. In the event of a fire alarm, the Campus Police Officers respond to the disabled person(s) room to verify whether they were able to evacuate appropriately.

Students who may experience temporary disability should register with the Residential Living Office so they can be included in this procedure.

In situations of extreme emergency, the residence hall rooms in Lincoln Hall and The Living Learning Center do qualify as an area of refuge. This is due to the fact they: have a full sprinkler system; have two- way communication available (telephone); have fire rated doors, walls and ceilings; and all rooms have windows.

If this option is chosen, dial ext.1153 and advise the Campus Police of your situation. They will inform the Topeka Fire Department of your location.