

EVACUATION TOPICS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES



Faculty, staff, students and visitors who may have difficulty exiting during a building evacuation are encouraged to consider these options in advance of spending time at a University location to prepare for building emergencies and evacuations, including fire drills.

PLANNING

Individuals who have a mobility, visual, auditory, or other condition (temporary or permanent) that may make evacuation difficult are encouraged to:

- Consider evacuation options for each building you occupy and/or visit.
- Determine if an **Area of Refuge** or an **Evacuation Waiting Area** exists in a building you occupy and/or visit where you can safely remain in place during a building evacuation. Check [evacuation maps](#) posted in each building, or request a copy of the building's Fire Safety and Evacuation Plan from the [building coordinator](#) (UWNNetID required).
- **Identify a volunteer** who will be responsible to communicate with emergency services on your behalf during a building evacuation.
- **Document your evacuation plans** using the [Evacuation Plan for Individuals with Disabilities](#) form and provide it to the building coordinator or evacuation director who will inform evacuation wardens and retain it for reference.
- **Students:** The University's [Disability Resources for Students](#) (DRS) can prepare a letter for you to submit to your instructor regarding your accommodation needs. DRS may talk with your instructor about how accommodations can be implemented; however, DRS will not discuss or disclose your medical information or the nature of your disability unless you give them written permission to do so.

- **University personnel** should contact the University's [Disabilities Services Office](#) (DSO) to request accommodation. The DSO will not discuss the nature of your disability with your supervisor without your permission.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

When the building alarm system is activated or an emergency occurs requiring evacuation, you should evacuate if able to do so. If you are unable to exit the building, locate an **Area of Refuge** or designated **Evacuation Waiting Area** (if available), or stay in place. Call 9-1-1 to inform emergency services of your location.

If a volunteer assists you to reach an Area of Refuge or Evacuation Waiting Area, the volunteer should go to the Evacuation Assembly Point and report your location and status to emergency services.

Continued on the next page.

EVACUATION OPTIONS

Below are five evacuation options listed in order of safety:

- 1. Exit the building (safest option):** Use accessible routes to exit the building if the route appears safe. Note that the accessible route may not always be the nearest exit.
- 2. Move to a safer part of the building:** In large buildings and multi-wing complexes such as the Health Sciences Center, you may be able to safely evacuate to an unaffected wing or area where the alarm is not sounding.
- 3. Move to an Area of Refuge:** Areas of Refuge are equipped with two-way communications with the UW Police Department.
- 4. Use an assisted evacuation device:** An assisted evacuation device, such as a specially designed chair, can be used *by trained personnel* to evacuate people with mobility disabilities. These are not common.
- 5. Stay in place (least safe option):** It may be appropriate for an individual who is unable to exit the building to stay in place in the following areas:
 - **A building stairwell** that has a large landing; wait near the exit stairwell until everyone has evacuated the floor and traffic has cleared before entering the stairwell.
 - **Enclosed elevator lobbies**
 - **Fire-rated exit corridors**, especially when close to an exit.
 - **An enclosed room with an exterior window, a telephone, and a solid or fire-resistant door;** with this option, you may keep in contact with emergency services by dialing 9-1-1 and reporting your location directly. Emergency services will relay this location to on-site emergency personnel who will determine the need for evacuation.

Elevators can be unsafe to use in an emergency; in most buildings they are automatically recalled to the ground floor. Emergency personnel can override the elevator functions and use them to assist with evacuation.

ASSISTANCE

Assistance and more information are available from:

- EH&S [Building and Fire Safety](#) team (206.685-0341)
- University of Washington [Disability Services Office](#) (personnel).
- University of Washington [Disability Resources for Students](#)
- Contact the [building coordinator](#) (UW NetID required) for assistance with evacuation planning for a specific building.