

Section 9

THE GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING AN EVACUATION PLAN FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

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GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING AN EVACUATION PLAN FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Introduction

For people with disabilities, the problems of evacuating a building during an emergency are a major concern. Many people with mobility impairments cannot use stairs and people with hearing and vision impairments cannot receive emergency notification and directions unless they are provided in both audible and visual forms. In addition, people with learning, emotional, or cognitive disabilities may need to have safety and emergency procedures taught in language/terms they understand. Because all schools may, at one time or another, have staff, students or visitors who need evacuation assistance, all schools must have an evacuation plan for individuals with disabilities.

Buildings with Inaccessible Exits for Individuals with Disabilities

For multi-story buildings and single-story buildings with exits not at grade, or ground level, emergency exits usually are provided at stairways. In a fire and/or smoke emergency situation when the fire alarm has been activated, the elevators will automatically descend to the ground level floor and lock with the doors remaining in the open position. This makes the stairway the only path available to leave a multi-story building.

In an emergency situation that is not due to a fire or smoke condition, but does require the evacuation of the building, and the fire alarms have not been activated, the elevators should be used to expedite the evacuation of individuals with disabilities.

In newer buildings stairways are designed to provide a safe means of isolating building occupants from smoke and fire. Upon entering the stairway, people are more protected from heat and smoke until they reach the ground floor and safety. However, in many older buildings, stairways are open and provide no protection from smoke and fire. Protected exit stairways may or may not have additional floor space where people can stand or park a wheelchair on the landing while they await assistance. If people using wheelchairs attempt to remain on small landings, they may restrict the path down the stairs for other people as well as jeopardize their own safety.

For buildings with inaccessible exits, site administrators must establish Evacuation Staging

Areas Definitions

Buddy - An adult assigned to assist an individual in exiting the building or getting to an Evacuation Staging Area. For example, buddies may be assigned to individuals with visual impairments or learning, emotional or cognitive disabilities. When a student is taken to the Evacuation Staging Area, the “Buddy” must remain with the student until the Evacuation Staging Area Supervisor arrives.

Evacuation Staging Area – An area, close to an exit, where people who are unable to use stairs may remain temporarily to await further instructions or assistance from rescue personnel in evacuating the building. It should be noted that for the purpose of this document and other DPS emergency procedural documents the term “Rescue Assistance Staging Area” is the same as an “Evacuation Staging Area”.

Evacuation Staging Area Supervisor - A staff member assigned to be present and supervise an Evacuation Staging Area during a building evacuation. The supervisor is responsible for supervision, control and assistance within the Evacuation Staging Area. The supervisor is responsible for reporting the

names of occupants of the Evacuation Staging Area to the principal or designee using the established means of two-way communication (see Communication in Step Two). The Evacuation Staging Area Supervisor must remain with the student(s) until relieved by the Fire Department personnel who will transport the individual with disabilities out of the building.

Vestibule - The area located at an exit between the outside and inside sets of doors.

Step-By-Step Guidelines

The following step-by-step guidelines are intended to help site administrators with the process of developing an evacuation plan for individuals with disabilities.

Step One – Develop a List of Individuals Needing Evacuation Assistance

Develop a list of individuals (including those temporarily disabled by injury, ie. a broken leg) who will need assistance in evacuating the building in the event of an emergency. This list must include:

- Students, staff, volunteers, and visitors.
- Buddies and their backups assigned to assist these individuals in emergencies.
- The daily schedule of students and staff with disabilities.
- Evacuation Staging Area supervisors and their assigned areas.

The list must be posted at the Fire Alarm Panel and updated daily to include visitors and to note that day's absences. This list will assist your local fire company when they respond to an emergency. **See Appendix A** for a copy of the form to be placed in the main office.

Staff must remain cognizant that students will participate in a variety of activities during the school day, week in different areas of the building. The plan must anticipate and address the various scenarios. For example, while students might be assigned to a center program classroom that is on the ground level of the building, the plan should anticipate that even students with profound disabilities can and will participate in activities in other parts of the building (music, library, physical education, inclusion, etc.).

Step Two – Establish Evacuation Staging Areas

- Assess your building for exits that have stairs or steps either inside or outside the building that would prevent an individual with a mobility impairment from exiting to a safe distance from the building (i.e., inaccessible exits).
- Establish Evacuation Staging Areas in all buildings with inaccessible exits for individuals with disabilities. See the definitions listed above and the criteria below for help in establishing Evacuation Staging Areas. When you have determined the locations of your Evacuation Staging Areas, install temporary signage to test your plan (see Step Four).

Location – An Evacuation Staging Area needs to be as close to an exit as possible. The area must not encroach on the required exit path out of the building. Consider locations in the following order:

1. A portion of a landing within an enclosed stairway.
2. A vestibule located at an exit enclosure and constructed to fire-resistive standards.
3. A room or area (e.g., a classroom) that is adjacent to an exit stairway.

Size of Area – An Evacuation Staging Area must be large enough to accommodate at least two mobility

impaired individuals and their assistants without blocking doors or stairs that other occupants would be using to exit the building. Evaluate the number and distribution of individuals needing evacuation assistance in your building to determine whether a larger area is needed. A space about 30" by 48" is needed for one wheelchair. Evacuation Staging Areas cannot be used for storage, even of lightweight movable items.

Number of Areas – Designate at least two (2) Evacuation Staging Areas on each upper floor of the building. Additional Evacuation Staging Areas may be needed on ground and upper floors near inaccessible exits depending on the size and layout of the building.

Signage – Two types of signage are required: (1) Signage that directs building occupants to the Evacuation Staging Areas; and (2) Signage that identifies the designated Evacuation Staging Area.

Communication – A method of two-way communication shall be provided in each Evacuation Staging Area. Telephones, two-way radios, cell phones and other communication systems may be considered.

When an Evacuation Staging Area is not needed – When individuals with disabilities are able to evacuate the building directly outside to a safe designated area.

Step Three – Draft Your Evacuation Plan

When you have determined the location of your Evacuation Staging Areas, draft your Evacuation Plan for Individuals with Disabilities (see Appendix B for a sample plan). The Plan must include the following:

- A copy of the list of Individuals Needing Evacuation Assistance (see Step One).
- Instructions for placing the list in the main office and updating it.
- Floor plans indicating the location of Evacuation Staging Areas.
- Assignment of staff members as Evacuation Staging Area Supervisors (see Definitions).
- Assignment of buddies (see Definitions) to individuals needing assistance exiting the building or getting to an Evacuation Staging Area.
- Fire Drill/Building Evacuation Procedures.

Step Four - Test Your Evacuation Plan

- Contact your local Fire Department to review your Draft Evacuation Plan and Evacuation Staging Areas. Coordination with the local fire companies is necessary to ensure the safe evacuation of individuals with disabilities. Make revisions as necessary within the existing format of the Sample Plan in Appendix B.
- Post temporary signage to test your Evacuation Plan. Make copies of the signs in and tape them to the walls in the appropriate locations (see section on Signage under Criteria for Evacuation Staging Areas).
- Follow the site Fire Exit Drill Procedure to test your evacuation plan for individuals with disabilities. The local fire companies should be present at these practice drills. Notify the Risk Management office if there are any questions or issues that arise during the testing. Please document all testing for future reference. The monthly fire drills may be used for the testing of this evacuation plan.

Step Five - Finalize Your Evacuation Plan

- Revise your Draft Evacuation Plan, if necessary, and incorporate your finalized Evacuation Plan for Individuals with Disabilities into your school's Emergency Procedures and Plans. Send an electronic copy and one signed copy to your district office.
- Revise the Evacuation Plan Maps for your building(s) to show routes to Evacuation Staging Areas.

Step Six – Emergency Procedures Training and Fire Drills

The principal or site administrator is responsible for ensuring that staff, students and volunteers are trained in the emergency evacuation procedures. Specifically, individuals with disabilities must be trained in the emergency evacuation procedures which accommodate their specific disability. These procedures must be practiced. Use the sample form in Appendix C for student and parent acknowledgement of the emergency evacuation plan.

Procedures for evacuating individuals with disabilities shall be incorporated into regular fire drills and practiced with each fire drill. For schools with individuals needing evacuation assistance, the local fire companies should be present for at least one fire drill per year. It is important that fire department personnel participate in the practice evacuation of individuals needing assistance. Contact the local fire companies in advance to schedule these drills.

Step Seven – Annual Review of the Evacuation Plan

Before the beginning of each school year, schools are required to review, revise if necessary and submit an electronic copy along with one signed copy of their evacuation Plan for individuals with disabilities to their district office. These plans will be reviewed and approved by the local fire department jurisdiction annually.

- Revise the list of individuals who will need assistance in evacuating the building in the event of an emergency and post the up-to-date copy in the main office (see Step One).
- Revise the Evacuation Plan (see Steps Three, Four and Five) and notify District Office of any changes.
- Incorporate the revised Evacuation Plan for Individuals with Disabilities into the Emergency Procedures and Plans for the school.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF INDIVIDUALS NEEDING EVACUATION ASSISTANCE

APPENDIX B

EVACUATION PLAN FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

List of Individuals Needing Evacuation Assistance

A list of all individuals needing evacuation assistance, including those temporarily disabled by injury, **shall be placed in the main office**. The list shall include the following:

- Students, staff, volunteers and visitors
- Daily schedule of these individuals
- Names of buddies, if any, assigned to assist these individuals
- Names of Evacuation Staging Area Supervisors and their assigned locations

Evacuation Staging Areas

The locations of Evacuation Staging Areas are indicated on the attached floor plans and are as follows:

Emergency Evacuation Staging Area(s)

(Within the building, 2 per floor, min.)

Ground Floor Locations:

Location 1: _____

Location 2: _____

Second Floor Locations:

Location 1: _____

Location 2: _____

Evacuation Staging Area Supervisors

A different staff member shall be assigned to supervise each Evacuation Staging Area. Evacuation Staging Area Supervisors and their assigned locations are included on the List of Individuals Needing Evacuation Assistance (copy attached to this plan). The supervisor shall be responsible for supervision, control and assistance within the Evacuation Staging Area. The supervisor shall report the names of occupants of the Evacuation Staging Area to the principal or designee outside the building by [school's designated means of two-way communication].

Evacuation Staging Area Supervisors shall vacate the building only when all of the following conditions are met:

- No students are present in the Evacuation Staging Area
- All students with disabilities are accounted for, and determined none will be coming to the room.
- The principal or designee has authorized the Evacuation Staging Area Supervisor to evacuate the room.
- Safe exit is possible.

Evacuation Staging Area Supervisors

Ground Floor:

Name _____ Position _____

Name _____ Position _____

Name _____ Position _____

Second Floor:

Name _____ Position _____

Name _____ Position _____

Name _____ Position _____

Assignment of Buddies

Adults shall be assigned as buddies to individuals who need assistance in exiting the building or getting to an Evacuation Staging Area. Assigned buddies are included on the List of Individuals Needing Evacuation Assistance (copy attached to this plan).

Building Evacuation and Fire Drill Procedures

At the sounding of the alarm, all students with disabilities who are able to do so without assistance shall evacuate the building to a safe designated area. Students who are unable to evacuate the building shall report to the nearest accessible Evacuation Staging Area. Students with buddies who are able to evacuate the building with assistance shall evacuate the building to a safe designated area. Buddies shall remain with the students until they are in a safe designated area. Students who need assistance getting to an Evacuation Staging Area shall be accompanied by their buddies to the nearest Evacuation Staging Area.

The principal or designee shall take this plan (including the up-to-date List of Individuals Needing Evacuation Assistance and floor plans showing location of Evacuation Staging Areas) outside the building to meet the Fire Department. The Evacuation Staging Area Supervisors shall report the names of the occupants of the Evacuation Staging Areas to the principal or designee, who will report this information to the Fire Department. The principal or designee shall provide the Fire Department with the names of individuals needing evacuation assistance who are not yet accounted for.

APPENDIX C

STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

[NAME OF SCHOOL]

STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

I have been briefed/instructed/informed of the emergency evacuation procedures at [name of school].

In an emergency evacuation or fire drill, I will [evacuate the building to the safe designated area] [proceed to the nearest accessible Evacuation Staging Area].

Once I have reported to the safe designated area outside [or once I have reported to the Evacuation Staging Area], I will follow the teacher's [Evacuation Staging Area Supervisor's] instructions.

I, _____, have read this notification and have demonstrated an understanding of the procedures in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Student's Signature

Date

Principal or Designee

Date

Parent or Guardian

Date

Parent or Guardian

Date

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT EVACUATION PROCEDURE: SPECIAL NEEDS

The following evacuation plan is designed specifically for _____. In the event of an emergency that triggers an evacuation of the facility, _____ will be assisted by either the primary person identified below or, in that person’s absence or inability to assist, the back-up person. _____ will be assisted to _____ area if safe to do so, or _____ if the first area is unsafe. There _____ will either be evacuated through use of _____ or will wait for First Responders to arrive. The person assisting will stay with the student until that student has exited the building safely or they are requested to return to their normal activities. This plan will be adjusted as necessary throughout the year.

Name of Student:		School:	
Date Procedure Completed:		Procedure Revision Dates:	
Site Special Needs Safety Coordinator		Site Principal	
Type of Evacuation Equipment:		Location of Evacuation Equipment:	
TIME	ROOM	PRIMARY PERSON	BACKUP PERSON
Start Time to End Time			
Primary Evacuation Route:			
Secondary Evacuation Route:			
Start Time to End Time			
Primary Evacuation Route:			
Secondary Evacuation Route:			
Start Time to End Time			
Primary Evacuation Route:			
Secondary Evacuation Route:			

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT EVACUATION PROCEDURE: SPECIAL NEEDS

Start Time to End Time			
Primary Evacuation Route:			
Secondary Evacuation Route:			
Start Time to End Time			
Primary Evacuation Route:			
Secondary Evacuation Route:			
Start Time to End Time			
Primary Evacuation Route:			
Secondary Evacuation Route:			
Start Time to End Time			
Primary Evacuation Route:			
Secondary Evacuation Route:			
After School			
Primary Evacuation Route:			
Secondary Evacuation Route:			

The Parents/Guardians have received a copy of this plan on _____
 Site Administrator's Signature: _____
 Parent's Signature: _____