



University
of Windsor

Appendix B:

Guidelines for Assisting Persons in Evacuation

This document is available in an alternate format, upon request.

Developed by the Office of Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility

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GENERAL GUIDELINES

When planning emergency procedures for persons requiring assistance in evacuation, the following points should be considered:

- Assign office, class, and event locations, if possible, in most accessible locations.
- Ensure egress routes and areas of refuge are always clear and properly marked.
- Participate in and help identify gaps in evacuation plans during practice drills.
- Respect that the person with the disability may be the best authority on how to be evacuated.
- Provide adequate notice that a potential danger exists and that evacuation should begin.
- Offer assistance but let the person explain what help is needed.
- Carrying a person is not advisable except in the most extreme of circumstances.
- Be aware that a service animal's sense of direction may become confused during an emergency.
- Do not abandon the person after exiting a building. Lead to a safe place with others.

For further information, please contact the Office of Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR ASSISTING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The following are some specific suggestions that may provide additional assistance for specific disabilities:

Assisting Persons who Use Wheelchairs

- If the person is unable to speak clearly, look for a sign on the chair with printed instructions.
- Only in situations of extreme danger should untrained people attempt to carry a person in a wheelchair.
- Prior to moving the person, check for life-support equipment.
- Be aware that wheelchairs have parts not designed to handle the stress of lifting.

- If you and/or others cannot safely carry a person up/down stairs, don't. Instead:
 - Position the person in the safest place possible according to the emergency.
 - Alert emergency personnel of person's location.

Assisting Persons with Mobility Limitations - Non Wheelchair Users

- Do not interfere with person's movement.
- Clear displaced and fallen obstacles from egress routes.
- If the stairs are crowded, you may act as a buffer.

Assisting Persons with Limited Communication

- Look for an instruction card on the person.
- During an evacuation, give clear instructions.
- Maintain eye contact with the individual to insure all directions are heard and understood.

Assisting Deaf or Hard of Hearing Persons

- Provide the person with a flashlight from their preparedness kit so they can signal their location and to help with lip reading in the dark.
- Get attention of the person before speaking, and look at them when speaking.
- Use facial expressions and hand gestures to communicate.
- Speak using short sentences.
- Use written notes to indicate emergency and instructions, for example, "Fire! Go out rear door now!"
- Check to be sure you are understood.
- Be patient, the person may have difficulty understanding the urgency of your message.
- Be aware that the person may not be able to hear oral commands issued by authorities.
- When out of danger, offer to make phone calls if a TTY (tele-typewriter phone) is not available

Assisting Persons who are Blind or have Low Vision

- In the planning phase:
 - Offer emergency information in an accessible format.
 - Provide orientation to building evacuation routes and pull alarm locations.
- During an emergency, announce your presence when entering the person's area.
- Offer your elbow; do not grab their arm or hand.
- Communicate through the evacuation by describing in advance physical barriers or action to be taken such as, "Take two steps down."

Assisting Persons with Psychological Disabilities

- Make sure exits and safe areas are clearly marked prior to an emergency.
- Understand that the person may have difficulties in concentrating, handling stress, and initiating personal contact.
- Help reduce stress during an emergency by:
 - Offering to escort the person through the evacuation.
 - Giving clear and simple instructions.

Assisting Persons with Learning Disabilities

- During the planning phase:
 - Offer to provide information in alternative formats.
 - Provide adequate signage with simple symbols and review with them for understanding.
- When developing printed emergency materials, review to insure easy "readability."
- During an evacuation, be patient, giving instructions slowly and clearly.
- Offer to accompany them as their sense of direction may be limited.
- Encourage the person to practice their evacuation route(s) regularly.

Assisting Persons with a Developmental Disability

- Be aware that they may be unable to understand the emergency and could become disoriented or confused about the proper way to react.
- During an evacuation, give instructions slowly and clearly.
- Prior to an emergency, make sure designated emergency routes are marked with signage that communicates with color and symbols rather than words.
- Encourage the person to practice their evacuation route(s) regularly.

Assisting Persons with Medical Conditions

- Medical conditions include, for example, pregnancy, respiratory or cardiac problems.
- Offer assistance walking down stairs.
- Find ways to reduce stress, exertion, and exposure to dust or smoke.
- Remind the person to bring medication or inhalers.
- Allow rest periods during evacuation if possible.

Assisting Owners of Service Animals

- Do not pet or offer food or water without the permission of the owner.
- Plan for the service animal to be evacuated with the owner.
- In the event that you are asked to handle the service animal while assisting the individual, hold the leash and not the harness if present.