

Evacuation: Guidelines for People with Disabilities

In addition to the General Guidelines, individuals with disabilities may require additional assistance to ensure safety during an emergency.

For persons offering to provide assistance, in addition to asking whether help is needed, ask; what is the best way to help, whether anything would be harmful or unhelpful, and if the person has critical belongings (medication, etc.).

Additional considerations that may apply to individuals with disabilities:

Persons with Mobility Limitations

If a person with mobility limitation is unable to exit the building using the stairs follow the steps listed below:

- The person with mobility impairment should go to (or ask for assistance getting to) the nearest area of evacuation assistance.
 - Areas of evacuation assistance vary from building to building, therefore the person responsible for safe building evacuation must ensure that these areas are identified in building/department evacuation plans and that all persons working in the building/department are aware of their locations. (See, [Department Evacuation Planning](#))
- Close the door to the area of evacuation assistance to protect from fire and smoke exposure.
- Persons with mobility limitations should call 911 immediately upon entering the area of evacuation assistance to inform emergency personnel of their location. They should remain on the line with 911 until they are evacuated.

Persons providing assistance to a person with a mobility limitation should follow these guidelines:

- Ask if assistance is needed.
- Do not attempt to lift a person out of a wheelchair. Serious injury may occur from such attempts.
- If a person with mobility impairment is unable to use the stairs and elects to await evacuation by emergency personnel, escort them to an area of evacuation assistance.
- Assist the person in calling 911 if requested.
- Upon leaving the building notify emergency personnel on site of the location of the person awaiting evacuation or call 911.
-

Persons Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

Persons who are blind or have a visual impairment should anticipate exiting the building following the appropriate evacuation route.

- This route may be different from the most familiar path of travel.
- Persons who are blind or have a visual impairment should not hesitate to ask for assistance in evacuating the building.

- Persons with visual impairments may consider familiarizing themselves with the evacuation routes in the buildings they regularly occupy so that in the event of an emergency the path of travel is not wholly unfamiliar.

Persons who wish to provide assistance to a person who is blind or has a visual impairment should:

- Ask if assistance is needed. If so, offer an elbow and provide guidance along the evacuation route. This may be especially helpful if there is debris or a crowd. Do not grasp the arm of the person being assisted.
- Give oral instructions about the safest route or direction using directional terms and estimated distances.
- Explain where you are going and what you are doing while escorting the person out of the building.

Persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Have Other Communication Barriers

If a person appears to be unaware of the need for immediate evacuation or uncertain about what to do use the following guidelines:

- Stay calm. Get their attention by touch or eye contact. Ask if you can help.
- State the problem clearly and simply including the need to leave the building immediately. Gestures and pointing are helpful. Be prepared to write a brief statement or draw a simple picture if the person does not seem to understand your visual cues.
- Offer visual instructions to designate the safest route or direction by pointing toward exits or evacuation maps.
- Offer to escort them from the building.

Personal Planning for Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities or other special needs should develop an emergency evacuation strategy for buildings where they work or live as well as other buildings they enter. The following suggestions may be helpful.

- Determine in advance where you will plan to go and what you will do if you need to evacuate the building.
- Think about what you will be able to do and what assistance you may need before, during or after an emergency. Plan how you will succinctly explain to fellow evacuees or first responders that you need assistance, what assistance is needed and what would not be helpful. This may include creating laminated cards with phrases, pictures or pictograms in the event that your assistive communication equipment is not working.
- Set up “buddy arrangements” with colleagues, friends, supervisors, building managers or others as needed to assist in emergency evacuation.
- If you have a mobility impairment, ask department head about the location of designated areas of evacuation assistance for upper floors if elevators cannot be used for evacuation.

- Sign up for **UOAlert!** on [DuckWeb](#) to receive emergency text notification regarding campus-wide emergencies. (Login → Personal Information → Enter/Update Emergency Alert Phone(s))
- Ask your department or instructor to consult with Fire & Life Safety for help with evacuation planning by calling 541-346-2958. Additional support is available for students through the [Accessible Education Center](#) at 541-346-1155; and for employees through [Employee and Labor Relations](#) at 541-346-3159 and uoelr@uoregon.edu.