



## Evacuation

There are three options for what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation.

1. **Exit the Building** – if you are able to get out of the building that is always the best course of action. If you are on the ground floor or can navigate the stairs with assistance, leave the building.
2. **Areas of Rescue Assistance** – These areas usually located in stairwells behind fire doors. If you are unable to evacuate the building, go with an assistant to the Area of Rescue Assistance and wait there for the fire department. Your assistant should exit the building and immediately alert emergency personnel to your location.
3. **Stay in Place** – If there is no imminent danger and if you are in a room with an exterior window, a telephone or cell phone, and a fire-resistant or solid door you can remain in place and call 911 to alert them to your position. Emergency services will relay your position to the on-site emergency personnel.
  - If you remain in place, follow the instructions on the back for if you suspect a fire outside your door.



## If You Suspect a Fire Outside Your Door



- Open window a few inches for fresh air, only if necessary
- Notify emergency personnel of your location by telephone or by hanging something out the window



This brochure can be made available in alternate formats for persons with disabilities. Contact EH&S with any requests at least 10 working days in advance.

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# EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



Environmental Health & Safety



**EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

start something **big**



## Evacuation Planning

It is especially important for persons with disabilities to plan ahead for emergency evacuations.

- **Be familiar with the buildings you use, know where the emergency exits and areas of rescue assistance are located.**
- Contact the Building Captain or Floor Manager for assistance designing an evacuation plan.
- Sit down with your professor or supervisor to review the evacuation plan, make sure they know how they can best support you.
- Identify classmates or coworkers who are willing to serve as assistants during an evacuation.
- Be prepared to explain how a person can support you during an evacuation. If you are unable to communicate your needs verbally, use written information.
- Remember that elevators cannot be used during emergency evacuations.

## Evacuation Plans

**If you are unable to evacuate the building,** determine one or two locations you will use in the event of an emergency. If your building has an area of rescue assistance, plan to go there. If your building doesn't have an area of rescue assistance, locate rooms that are close to stairs where you could remain in the event of an emergency. Make sure several people know the locations you will use and are prepared to alert emergency responders to your location and presence in the building.

**If you need evacuation assistance,** identify persons who will be able to help you. Make sure everyone is aware of what will need to happen in order to get you safely out of the building in the event of an emergency.

## Guidelines for Disabilities

### Wheelchair Users

Persons using wheelchairs should move to an **Area of Rescue Assistance** with their assistants when the alarm sounds. The evacuation assistants should then proceed to evacuate the building and alert emergency responders of the wheelchair user's location. If no evacuation assistants are available, the wheelchair user should call 911 to alert them to his/her present location.

If the Area of Refuge is in a stairway, wheelchair users are advised if possible, to wait until the heavy traffic has passed before entering the stairway. Many stair landings are small and safely remaining in one while people are evacuating will be difficult.

Only in situations of extreme danger should untrained people attempt to move a

wheelchair user down stairs. Moving a wheelchair down stairs is never safe.

### Non-wheelchair Mobility Needs

Persons with mobility needs who are able to walk without a wheelchair may be able to exit in an emergency with minor assistance. If danger is imminent, the individual should wait till heavy traffic has cleared and then exit with the assistance of their evacuation assistant(s). If there is no immediate danger (detectable smoke, fire, or unusual odor), the person with mobility needs may choose to remain in the Area of Refuge until emergency personnel arrive and determine if evacuation is necessary.

### Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Most buildings on campus have been equipped with fire alarm strobe lights but there are still a few buildings without them. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may not hear audio emergency alarms and will need to be alerted to emergency situations. Emergency instructions can be given by writing a short explicit note to evacuate.

### Blind or Low Vision

Most people who are blind or low vision will be familiar with their immediate surroundings and frequently traveled routes. Because emergency evacuation routes are likely different than their normal one, persons who are visually impaired may need assistance in evacuating. The assistant should offer his or her elbow to the individual with a visual disability and guide them through the evacuation route. During the evacuation the assistant should communicate as necessary to assure safe evacuation.