UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

Environmental Health and Safety

Emergency Evacuation Guidelines For Individuals with Disabilities

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Environmental Health and Safety

Emergency Evacuation Guidelines for Individuals with Disabilities

I. General

All individuals with disabilities at the University of Northern Colorado must be prepared in the event of an emergency. Prior planning of emergency evacuation procedures and practicing evacuation routes are important to ensure a safe evacuation during an emergency.

II. Usable Circulation Path

Circulation paths are unobstructed ways of travel that a person with a disability can travel unassisted through to a public way or an area of refuge. Circulation paths are usually indicated by an Exit sign with directional arrows placed above exit doors near the ceiling. In addition, the entryway of the building may display a simple floor plan that shows the building's usable circulation paths.

III. Area of Refuge

An area of refuge is a location in a building designed to serve as a temporary designated safe area from the effects of a fire or other emergencies when evacuation may not be safe or possible. Occupants can wait there until rescued by emergency personnel. The locations of the areas of refuge on campus can be found on the Environmental Health and Safety Department website.

IV. Responsibilities

<u>Faculty, Staff, and Students</u>

- Develop a personal evacuation plan.
- Discuss with Residence Hall staff, faculty, the Disability Resource Center, and/or employer your abilities and needs as an individual with a disability in regards to evacuation.
- Be familiar with the Areas of Refuge locations and emergency procedures in campus buildings.

Environmental Health and Safety

- Provide emergency personnel with the locations and maps of areas of refuge.
- Place “Area of Refuge” signs at identified locations and coordinate other improvements.
- Provide emergency information next to the phone in each area of refuge.

Disability Resource Center

- Provide educational emergency information and area of refuge location material.

V. Specific Disabilities

It is strongly recommended that individuals with disabilities establish a system that assures a safe evacuation or, if safe evacuation is not possible, move to an area of refuge. The following are some general evacuation guidelines for individuals with specific types of disabilities:

Mobility Disability

When an evacuation alarm is activated, individuals with mobility disabilities who are unable to evacuate the building on their own should move to an area of refuge, call 9-1-1, and wait for assistance from emergency personnel. Emergency personnel are trained to go to Areas of Refuge to assist people with disabilities.

UNC faculty, staff, or students shall not carry chairs or individuals with disabilities.

Individuals who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (HOH)

Most University buildings are equipped with a fire detection system that simultaneously sounds an audible alarm and visual strobe lights. This system is intended to alert people with hearing loss. These individuals shall evacuate the building during emergencies.

Individuals who are Blind/Low Vision

Individuals who are blind or have low vision and are generally familiar with their immediate surroundings and frequently traveled routes can, with the assistance of others evacuate the building. Although these individuals may be familiar with the surroundings and traveled routes, they will also need to have a plan of assistance in order to familiarize themselves with evacuation routes and the location of the areas of refuge.

Individuals who are Deaf/HOH and are blind or have low vision

Individuals who are either blind/low vision or deaf/HOH may need to be alerted to emergencies. These individuals need to have a plan of assistance in order to familiarize themselves with evacuation routes and the location of the areas of refuge.

Individuals with Other Disabilities or Temporary Injury/Illness

Any persons with other disabilities or temporary injuries or illnesses should familiarize themselves with evacuation routes. Most University buildings are equipped with simple floor plans of the building indicating the location of an area of refuge and routes to usable circulation paths. Depending on individual needs, individuals should familiarize themselves with evacuation routes and/or develop a plan of assistance in the event of an evacuation.