

Emergency Evacuation for Persons on Campus with Disabilities

Although the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not require employers to have emergency evacuation plans, if organizations covered by the ADA opt to have such plans they are required to include people with disabilities. The University of Michigan includes faculty, staff, students and visitors in our evacuation plans for persons with disabilities.

Development of Emergency Evacuation Plans

The following information should facilitate either the completion of a separate section of your plan that addresses the evacuation of persons with disabilities, or the incorporation of these issues into your overall evacuation plan. If you have questions regarding any of the guidance provided, or have questions regarding other options, please contact the UM resources listed at the end of this section.

Building and facility managers must include the following elements when developing their evacuation plans:

1. Method for self-identification for persons with disabilities who need assistance during evacuation.
2. Description of the information that is retained regarding persons who self-identify.
3. Availability of the building/facility manager to identify and provide information on specific exit routes for persons with disabilities.
4. Availability and location of clearly identified "Locations for Rescue Assistance."
5. Emergency phone numbers for UM phones and cell phone communication.
6. Direction regarding whether accessibility lift systems or Limited Use Limited Application Systems (LULAS) have been approved for use by persons with disabilities during an emergency evacuation, if applicable.
7. Responsibilities of floor marshals, supervisors and building/facility managers regarding persons with disabilities during an emergency evacuation.
8. Responsibilities of persons with disabilities during an emergency evacuation.
9. Availability of the emergency evacuation plan in alternative format upon request.

In addition, guidance is provided in how to address the requests of persons with disabilities regarding the purchase and use of evacuation equipment (item B3), and requests to be carried out during an emergency evacuation (item B4).

A. Self-Identification

The best way to identify emergency evacuation needs for persons with disabilities is to ask individuals whether they may need assistance with their safe evacuation in case of an emergency. The Equal

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Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has issued guidance regarding what information employers are allowed to gather when developing an emergency evacuation plan. **According to the EEOC:**

- An employer may periodically ask all of its current employees if they will require assistance in an emergency. The employer must be clear that self-identification is voluntary and the purpose for the request is to provide information to assist in their safe evacuation in case of an emergency.
 - An employer may ask employees with known disabilities if they will require assistance in the event of an emergency. An employer should not assume, however, that everyone with an obvious disability will need assistance during an evacuation. For example, individuals who are blind may prefer to walk down stairs unassisted. People with disabilities are generally in the best position to assess their particular needs.
1. ***Annual Request to Staff:*** No less than twice/year, the Office of Institutional Equity's ADA Coordinator will announce to all University faculty, staff and students via email that Emergency Evacuation Procedures for Persons with Disabilities are available. The email will direct faculty, staff and students with disabilities, or others who may require assistance during an emergency evacuation, to identify themselves to their building/facility manager for more information. Department managers and supervisors will be directed to ask faculty and staff with known disabilities if they will require assistance in the event of an emergency. In addition, departments will be encouraged to collaborate with their building/facility manager in this process. This may be accomplished by having a representative from each of the departments, programs, etc., in a building send an email to all staff reminding them to contact the building/facility manager if they will need assistance during an emergency evacuation.
 2. ***Periodic Request to Students:*** The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) will announce at the beginning of each semester that students with disabilities should contact the facility managers in the buildings where they have classes for information and planning for their evacuation in case of an emergency.
 3. ***Information Retained:*** Building/facility managers will keep a list of persons who have self-identified for the purpose of assistance during emergency evacuation. This information will include name, office/room location, phone, type of assistance requested and/or where they are to be directed in case of emergency. If the individual with a disability has identified a buddy for assistance in an emergency, the name and phone number of that person should be included. This information is retained by the building facility/manager and is provided to emergency rescue personnel and the UM Department of Public Safety (DPS) in the case of an emergency evacuation. Facility managers are reminded to ask faculty, staff and students to identify whether they use a service animal that may also need evacuation. Emergency evacuation plans must also be provided in an alternate format to the faculty, staff or student if requested. Some examples of alternate formats are Braille, large-print text, and audio recording. Contact the ADA Coordinator at the Office of Institutional Equity or the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities for assistance in providing material in an alternate format.

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4. **Information Provided:** Upon request, facility managers are to provide specific information to persons with disabilities or others who may require assistance during emergency evacuation. This may include exit routes, communication options, Locations for Rescue Assistance, etc.
5. **Confidentiality:** The ADA requires that all medical information be kept confidential. However, first aid and safety personnel may be informed, when appropriate, if an individual with a disability might require emergency treatment or if any specific procedures are needed for emergency evacuation. The faculty, staff or student may voluntarily provide this information to the building/facility manager if they believe it will be relevant to emergency rescue personnel.

B. Evacuation Assistance

1. **Floor Marshals:** One of the responsibilities of a floor marshal is to ensure occupants have evacuated the area. In cases where the floor marshal identifies a person with a disability, or someone who needs evacuation assistance, they should either direct or escort the person to a designated Location for Rescue Assistance or escort the person from the building. If the person is unable to evacuate with assistance, the floor marshal should immediately provide the name and location of the individual needing evacuation to emergency evacuation personnel and/or UM DPS. Floor marshals must always check designated Locations for Rescue Assistance, if safe to do so, before evacuating in order to provide complete and accurate information to emergency evacuation personnel and/or UM DPS regarding the location of persons who will need evacuation assistance.
2. **Buddy System:** Faculty, staff and students with disabilities are responsible for asking one or more reliable persons to provide limited assistance in case of an emergency, and provide them with information on how best to do so (guidance during evacuation, etc.). When the fire alarm sounds, if available, the "buddy" is to provide limited evacuation assistance to the faculty, staff or student. If the person is not able to evacuate with limited assistance (i.e. guidance, etc.), the buddy is to confirm the location of the person with the disability, and then immediately inform emergency personnel and/or UM DPS of their location. ***Emergency response personnel are responsible for the evacuation of persons with disabilities who need assistance and are unable to evacuate independently or safely with a buddy.***
3. **Equipment:** There is equipment available to assist with the emergency evacuation of persons with disabilities, especially persons with mobility impairments who cannot use the stairs. This requires the transfer of the person from their wheelchair to the evacuation equipment. This equipment also requires the assistance of two or more people who have been trained in transfer procedures and are familiar with the equipment. Although use of such equipment appears to be an attractive alternative to other options, actual experience with this equipment during emergency conditions has raised concerns. This has ranged from trained staff not being on-site during the evacuation, to concern on the part of the person with the disability that the transfer and evacuation do not feel safe. We do not advise that you incorporate the use of this type of equipment in the evacuation of persons with disabilities. ***Other alternatives must be considered, given the severe risk for injury to all parties when non-emergency rescue trained personnel attempt to evacuate a person with a disability using such equipment.***
4. **Carry Out:** Individuals with mobility impairments may request being carried out of the building in case of emergency. This presents a risk not only for the person with a disability, but also "good

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Samaritans" or buddies who have agreed to assist the individual. Executing this type of evacuation procedure requires training by emergency evacuation professionals. Some of the potential risks associated with this option are covered above under #3 "Equipment". ***Other alternatives must be considered, given the severe risk for injury to all parties when non-emergency rescue personnel attempt to carry a person with a disability down a stairway.***

C. Emergency Exits

Faculty, staff and students with disabilities are responsible for identifying at least two options for evacuation without using an elevator. The building/facility manager can assist with this task. Persons with disabilities who require assistance to safely evacuate are encouraged to contact the building/facility manager to review emergency procedures, identify exit routes, and provide information on their usual work or study location(s) in the building.

1. *Vertical exits*

Stairs: Stairways can be used by those who are able to evacuate with or without assistance. Persons with visual impairments are who are blind may require the assistance of a sighted person. Persons who must use crutches or other devices as walking aids will need to use their own discretion, especially where several flights of stairs are concerned.

Accessibility Lifts and LULAs: Accessibility lifts and LULAS are available in many University buildings. Generally, they provide vertical access between no more than four (4) floors. Most of the units installed at the University provide vertical access between levels (i.e., between a foyer and a first floor) or between two floors (i.e., a basement and a first floor). ***Incorporating the use of an accessibility lift or LULA for emergency evacuation must be approved by the Fire Marshal or Fire Inspector and must include consultation with the UM Elevator Shop.***

Elevators: Persons with disabilities who cannot use the stairs may be permitted to use the elevator to access safe locations (usually ground floors) during severe weather emergencies. Under no circumstances are elevators to be used in case of a fire emergency. ***Only professional emergency response personnel can make the decision to activate elevators and use them for emergency evacuation during a fire.***

2. ***Horizontal Exits.*** Some University buildings provide horizontal exits to a safe location into an adjoining building where one can then proceed to elevators, stairs or other evacuation routes. ***Horizontal exits should never be identified as an option without first receiving approval from the Fire Marshal, Fire Inspector or Plant Extension Architectural, Engineering and Construction Services that there is sufficient fire protection between buildings for them to be considered separate buildings.***

D. Designated Locations for Rescue Assistance

1. ***Designated Locations for Rescue Assistance:*** Locations for Rescue Assistance need to be identified by the building/facility manager on all floors where there is no exit at grade level. Whenever possible, these locations should be in approximately the same place on each floor, close to a stairwell. These designated locations allow for the swift evacuation of persons with disabilities by emergency personnel, as they do not have to locate a variety of offices or locations

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throughout the building. These locations should have a closing door, a phone for communication, and supplies that enable the person(s) to block smoke from entering under the door. If possible, they also should have a window so that evacuees can signal their location; however, the fire rating of the location is most important. The location must be clearly identified on emergency evacuation plans, so that faculty, staff, students, visitors and emergency personnel may easily locate them. Floor marshals should always check this designated area, if safe to do so, before evacuating in order to provide complete and accurate information to emergency evacuation personnel and/or UM DPS. *When planning emergency procedures, building/facility managers should consult with the Fire Marshal, Fire Inspector or Architectural, Engineering and Construction Services to confirm the suggested Location for Rescue Assistance is the best choice based on the building configuration and construction.*

2. **Stay in Place:** In circumstances where evacuation is not possible, and a Location of Rescue Assistance has not been identified, a person with a disability should stay in place and inform the floor marshal and at least two other evacuees of their location. This information is to be provided immediately to emergency rescue personnel.

In addition, the person who stays "in place" should be reminded to call DPS and provide their name, location and the nature of the emergency. When calling from a UM phone the number is 911. Cell phone users should be encouraged to store the direct dial number in their cell phones: 763-1131. The dispatcher will relay the information to on-scene emergency personnel.

E. Communication

1. **Occupancy After Regular Work Hours:** Any faculty, staff or student with a disability who will need assistance during an emergency evacuation and might occupy the building after regular work hours, or at other times when staff are not usually present, should be encouraged to notify DPS of their location, and provide the building, floor, room and time of their arrival and departure. This will allow emergency personnel to know their location in advance, as some emergencies may interfere with phone communications.
2. **Need for Assistance:** Faculty, staff and students with disabilities are responsible to ask for assistance in case of an emergency. This should include providing floor marshals or others with their location if they are unable to evacuate. If they choose to stay in place, they should attempt to call DPS to notify officers of their location, in addition to asking others who are evacuating to provide their location to emergency personnel immediately upon leaving the building.
3. **Notification/Alarms:** Review the types of alarms that are present in your facility. Make sure that floor marshals check all locations, including restrooms, to communicate the need to evacuate. This is especially important for persons in the building who may be deaf or have other hearing impairments.

F. Suggested Adaptive Procedures for Persons with Disabilities

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1. ***Mobility Impaired (Person(s) using a Wheelchair):*** Persons using wheelchairs should move to a designated Location for Rescue Assistance with their buddy or the floor marshal when an emergency alarm sounds. The buddy and/or the floor marshal should then proceed to the evacuation assembly point outside the building and inform emergency personnel of the location of the person who needs assistance. If the person who is not able to evacuate is alone, he/she should phone DPS. He/she should give their present location (office/room location, Location for Rescue Assistance, etc.) and the type of evacuation assistance they need. When calling from a UM phone the number is 911. Cell phone users should be encouraged to store the direct dial number in their cell phones: 763-1131. The dispatcher will relay the information to on-scene emergency personnel.
2. ***Mobility Impaired (Person(s) not using a Wheelchair):*** Persons with mobility impairments who are able to walk independently may be able to use stairs with some assistance. If danger is imminent, the individual should wait until heavy traffic has cleared before attempting the stairs.
3. ***Hearing Impaired:*** Some UM buildings are equipped with fire alarm strobes that flash strobe lights simultaneously with an audible alarm to alert persons with hearing impairments who may not notice or hear audible-only emergency alarms.
4. ***Visually Impaired:*** Some UM buildings are equipped with fire alarm horns. Most people with a visual impairment are familiar with their immediate surroundings and frequently-traveled routes. Since the emergency evacuation route is likely different from the commonly traveled route, persons who are visually impaired may need assistance during an emergency evacuation. The floor marshal, buddy or nearby faculty, staff or student should offer assistance to the individual with a visual impairment and guide him or her through the evacuation route.

G. Annual Review

The list of occupants who need assistance should be updated as building/facility managers are notified of changes. The Office of Institutional Equity will invite faculty, staff and students to self-identify their need for assistance during an emergency evacuation at least twice a year.

Resources

Department of Public Safety (DPS)

Fire Marshal & Fire Inspector

1239 Kipke Dr.

Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1010

(V) 734.763.3434

Occupational Safety & Environmental Health (OSEH)

University of Michigan

1239 Kipke Drive

Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1010

(V) 734.647.1143

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Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator
2072 Administrative Services
1009 Greene Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1432
(V) 734.763.0235
(TTY) 734.647.1388

Office of Services for Students with Disabilities
G-664 Haven Hall
505 South State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1045
(V) 734.763.3000
(TTY) 734.615.4461

Plant Extension
Architecture, Engineering, and Construction (AEC)
326 East Hoover Avenue,
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1002
(V) 734.764.3414

UM Risk Management
400 S. Fourth St.
Argus II Building
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
(V) 734.764.2200

UMH Facilities Projects
Design & Construction
300 North Ingalls Building, 5C06
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-0470
(V) 734.647.3311

UMHS Safety Management Services
University of Michigan Hospitals & Health Centers
300 N. Ingalls, 5B04
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-0470
(V) 734.764.4427