

3. **Hearing Impaired:** Buildings on campus are equipped with fire alarm strobe lights. If a person with hearing impairments does not see a strobe light, they will need to be alerted of emergency situations. Emergency instructions can be given by writing a short explicit note to evacuate.
4. **Visually Impaired:** Most people with a visual impairment will be 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 in evacuating. The assistant should offer their elbow to the individual with a visual impairment and guide them through the evacuation route. During the evacuation, the assistant should communicate as necessary to assure safe evacuation.

### Designated Areas of Refuge/Rescue

The Cayan Library building has an “area of rescue” on the second floor identified by signs near the elevator, at the stairwell door, and in the stairwell. The area of rescue alarm, when activated, shows up on both the building panel in the library’s front foyer, and the University Police panel.

Kunsela Hall has (3) three “Areas of Refuge”.

- Second floor stairwell landing at the East end of “B wing” corridor across from B234
- Second floor stairwell landing near Room A229 and Restrooms
- Second floor stairwell landing at the end of the Business Office Suite near room A246

In an emergency, a person in the area of refuge/rescue should press once to activate the device. A red light will come on and the person will be able to talk and listen for instructions. You will have direct communications with University Police dispatch.

**Remember, when staying in place or using any of the areas of refuge/rescue, tell someone to inform the first emergency responder they encounter where you are located.**

**Prior planning and practicing of emergency evacuation routes are important in ensuring a safe evacuation.**

For additional information contact the Director of Environmental Health and Safety, 315-792-7101 or ext. 7101, or the Disabilities Services Counselor, 315-792-7170 or ext. 7170.

### Acknowledgements:

- Emergency Evacuation Preparedness: Taking Responsibility for Your Safety: A Guide for People with Disabilities and other Activity Limitations. Center for Disability Issues and the Health Professions, 2002. Kailes, June Isaacson. Published and distributed by Center for Disability Issues and the Health Professions, Western University of Health Sciences, 309 E. Second Street, Pomona, CA 91766-1854, Voice: (909) 469-5380, TTY: (909) 469-5520, Fax: (909) 469-5407, Email: [evac@westernu.edu](mailto:evac@westernu.edu). - [https://und.edu/affirmative-action/\\_files/docs/emergencyevacuation.pdf](https://und.edu/affirmative-action/_files/docs/emergencyevacuation.pdf)

### Additional Resources:

- Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs (FEMA) [www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1445-20490-6732/fema\\_476.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1445-20490-6732/fema_476.pdf)
- Disaster Mitigation for Persons with Disabilities (Center for an Accessible Society) [www.accessiblesociety.org/topics/independentliving/disasterprep.htm](http://www.accessiblesociety.org/topics/independentliving/disasterprep.htm)
- Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities (National Organization on Disability) [www.disastersrus.org/MyDisasters/disability/epips-1disability.pdf](http://www.disastersrus.org/MyDisasters/disability/epips-1disability.pdf)
- Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities (American Red Cross) [www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/disabilities](http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/disabilities)
- New York State Fire Code [www.dos.ny.gov/dcea/code\\_council.html](http://www.dos.ny.gov/dcea/code_council.html)



# Emergency Evacuation of Persons with Disabilities



While an “emergency” by its very definition is an unforeseen event, it also usually requires immediate action. Developing an evacuation plan that addresses identifying exits, designates areas of refuge/rescue and assembly point (where all evacuees will meet once they have evacuated the building), and provides additional assistance to persons with disabilities, gives everyone a plan of action which shortens their response time and enables them to help themselves and others. All persons, including those with disabilities, must prepare for emergencies ahead of time.

An evacuation plan must start with this basic premise: Everyone must try to evacuate through the nearest, safe exit. At least two emergency passageways must be identified in each building. Each passageway must either lead to an exit or safely lead to a designated area of refuge/rescue.

After identifying the exits, a recommendation is that each person with a disability ask a co-worker, friend, faculty member or fellow student to provide assistance if an emergency develops. This “evacuation assistant” should be informed about the disabilities and how they can best help.

Persons with disabilities have four basic evacuation options:

1. **Horizontal evacuation:** Using building exits to gain access to outside ground level, or moving away from the area of imminent danger to a safe distance (e.g. another wing or opposite end of corridor).
2. **Stairway (vertical) evacuation:** Using stairwells to reach ground level exits from the building.
3. **Staying in Place:** Unless danger is imminent, remaining in a room with an exterior window, a telephone and closing the door may be your best option. Ask someone to alert the first arriving emergency responder or University Police of your location. With this approach, the person

may keep in contact with University Police by dialing 315-792-7111 or extension 7111 and reporting their location directly to University Police. The police will then immediately relay this location to on-site emergency personnel, who will determine the necessity for evacuation. Phone lines are expected to remain in service during most building emergencies. If the phone lines fail, the individual can signal from the window by waving a cloth or other visible object.

*NOTE: If a cell phone is used, dial 315-792-7111 to contact University Police. You can also call emergency services direct by dialing 911. Make sure you give your name, location – including room number, and reason you are calling. The 911 operator will relay the information to emergency responders.*

4. **Area of Refuge/Rescue:** With an evacuation assistant, going to an area of refuge/rescue away from obvious danger is another emergency plan option. The evacuation assistant will then notify on-site emergency personnel of the location of the person with a disability. Emergency personnel will determine if further evacuation is necessary.

The safest areas of refuge/rescue are enclosed stairwells. Other possibilities include vestibules adjacent to exit stairs and elevator lobbies. Taking a position in a fire rated corridor next to the stairs is a good alternative to a small stair landing crowded with other building occupants using the stairways as a means of exit in an emergency.

For false alarms or an isolated and contained fire, a person with a disability may not have to evacuate. The decision to evacuate will be made by the Maynard Fire Department (MFD). MFD will tell the individual of their decision or relay the information via the University Police Department.

## **Suggested Guidelines for Different Types of Disabilities**

### **1. Mobility Impaired - Wheelchair:**

Persons using wheelchairs should stay in place, or move to an area of refuge/rescue with their assistant when the alarm sounds. The evacuation assistant should then alert MFD or University Police to the location of the person with a disability. If the person with a disability is alone, they should phone the University Police at 7111 or extension 7111, with their present location and the area of refuge they are headed to.

*NOTE: If the stair landing is chosen as the area of refuge/rescue, please note that many campus buildings have relatively small stair landings, and wheelchair users are advised to wait until heavy traffic has passed before entering the stairway.*

**Stairway evacuation of wheelchair users should be conducted only by trained professionals or the Maynard Fire Department. Only in situations of extreme danger should untrained people attempt to evacuate wheelchair users.**

### **2. Mobility Impaired - Non Wheelchair:**

Persons with mobility impairments who are able to walk independently may be able to negotiate stairs in an emergency with minor assistance. To assist people with mobility impairments who are ambulatory, ask the person how you can be of help and follow their instructions. If danger is imminent, the individual should wait until heavy traffic has cleared before attempting the stairs. If there is no immediate danger (such as detectable smoke, fire or an unusual odor), the person with the disability may choose to stay in the building with the options listed above, until emergency personnel arrive and determine if evacuation is necessary.