

# Evacuation Procedures for Individuals with Disabilities

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY  
DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER



## POLICY & PROCEDURES

### POLICY

UNCW strives to maintain a community that is as safe as possible for all persons. To ensure that individuals with disabilities, who are part of our campus community, are safely evacuated during emergencies, the university seeks to take appropriate and reasonable accommodations to achieve this goal.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

In emergencies, it is critical that all persons have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and expectations.

Individual responsibilities are as follows:

**ALL BUILDING OCCUPANTS** should be aware of this procedure and other evacuation procedures. *Without exposing themselves to additional danger*, occupants should do the following:

- Assist individuals with disabilities in the selection of evacuation options
- Notify police or fire personnel of the location of individuals unable to evacuate the building
- Physically assist individuals in evacuation if possible

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES** you are the expert on your disability. Before an emergency, identify yourself as having a disability and clearly state your needs for assistance. Know the safest way to life and carry your wheelchair and be able to describe this process to persons who offer to assist you in evacuation. Encourage students to select a friend who is knowledgeable about their disability that they can count on for help if evacuation is necessary.



**UNIVERSITY POLICE** will serve as the primary responders to all emergencies on the UNCW Campus. As the first responder, they will concentrate their efforts on identifying the exact nature of the emergency, collecting information about site conditions from building occupants and calling for and directing them to additional emergency resources. They will serve as a focal point for information about persons remaining inside the building including students with disabilities and will inform the Wilmington Fire Department of this information when they arrive. Remind Wilmington Fire Department personnel on site of this policy and the possibility that students with disabilities may remain in the areas of refuge.

**WILMINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT** will serve as the emergency response element responsible for the evacuation of persons who remain inside the building. In addition to other building concerns, WFD will check all areas of refuge in each building and perform assisted evacuations as necessary.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY (EH&S)** will serve as the coordinating department for evacuation procedures, considering the interest of other agencies and departments. The procedure will be based on comments from students, other departments and incident investigations. EH&S will serve as the UNCW-WFD liaison informing them of this procedure, any changes, their expectations and responsibilities.

**THE DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER** will provide information to students with disabilities in the form of this procedure and other sources of information. Voice students' concerns in the development, implementation and revision of this procedure.

## **PROCEDURES**

Evacuation of persons with disabilities will be conducted in the following areas of campus using the following options in priority order. They will be conducted in the same manner that evacuations are conducted for all persons during alarms of any type. Before drills, building managers, and University Police will be noticed so that persons with disabilities are not unnecessarily evacuated. During any emergency, elevators cannot safely be used for emergency egress. In fact, many of them are recalled to the ground floor so they can be used by emergency personnel and not by building occupants who may become trapped in them.

## RESIDENCE HALLS

**Horizontal Evacuation:** This is the preferred method of evacuation. If you are near a location that accommodates horizontal evacuation without the use of elevators or stairs, this is your best option. If the evacuation alarm sounds, move away from the area of danger, to a distance of at least 300 feet from the building.

**Vertical Evacuation:** Stairways can be used by persons who are able to evacuate with or without assistance and are the first option when you are not on ground level. Persons with visual impairments or those who use walking aids should use this option with discretion and may wish to utilize a "buddy" for assistance if possible.

If there is any possibility of gaining assistance, this is the preferred method. The *Additional Sources of Information* section below provides information in assisted vertical evacuation.

**Stay in Place:** If you are unable to exit without assistance and you are unable to locate someone who can provide assistance, then the *stay in place* option is possible. Position yourself in a room that is away from imminent danger. Close the door to this area and contact **911 Emergency**. Inform the telecommunicator of your location, that you are mobility impaired and require evacuation assistance. Wait for help in this area and maintain communication with the telecommunicator.

## ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT BUILDINGS

**Horizontal Evacuation:** This is the preferred method of evacuation. If you are at a location that accommodates horizontal evacuation without the use of elevators or stairs, this is your best option. If the evacuation alarm sounds, move away from the area of danger, to a distance of at least 300 feet from the building.

**Vertical Evacuation:** Stairways can be used by persons who are able to evacuate with or without assistance and are the first option when you are not on ground level. Persons with visual impairments or those who use walking aids should use this option with discretion and may wish to utilize a "buddy" for assistance if possible. If there is any possibility of gaining assistance, this is the preferred method. The *Additional Sources of Information* section below provides information in assisted vertical evacuation.

**Stay in Place:** If you are unable to exit without assistance, and you are unable to locate someone who can provide assistance, the *stay in place* option is possible. Position yourself in an area that is away from imminent danger, where you have access to a telephone and preferably an exterior window. Close the door to this area, contact **911 Emergency**. Inform the telecommunicator of your location, that you have a mobility impairment and require evacuation assistance. Wait for assistance in this area and maintain communication with the telecommunicator.

**Area of Refuge:** When no other option is available, the final option is to position yourself in an "Area of Refuge." Areas of Refuge are assigned as the stairwell landings in every building on the UNCW Campus. These areas offer the following advantages:

- Stairwells are typically "smoke proof enclosures"
- They offer the easiest access by rescuers who will enter via the stairs
- Others that evacuate the building will use the stairwells, and therefore, you stand the greatest probability of obtaining a buddy for vertical evacuation or of notifying a buddy that you remain inside and rescue is needed.
- If smoke or flames penetrate the "smoke proof enclosure" measures, it will spread quickly inside stairwells.
- Wheelchairs located in the stairwells can limit the egress of all building occupants.

The disadvantages of the fore-mentioned option are as follows:

- If smoke or flames penetrate the "smoke proof enclosure" measures, it will spread quickly inside stairwells.
- Wheelchairs located in the stairwells can limit the egress of all building occupants.

## **ASSISTED EVACUATION METHODS**

### **OUT OF CHAIR EVACUATION:**

The helper would kneel in front of the wheelchair (chair) and place the person's arms up and over the helper's shoulders and across their chest. The helper would lean forward before standing.



### **IN CHAIR EVACUATION:**

Unlock the brake, gently lean the chair backward and move it to the edge of the first step. One helper steadies the chair by holding the rods to which the footrests are attached. Do not lift the chair from the bottom position. The helper in the top position controls the descent of the chair by bending their legs slowly and taking most of the weight of the chair.



### **TWO PERSON CARRY FORE AND AFT:**

One helper reaches under the arms and grasps the individual's right wrist with their left hand and left wrist with their right hand. If person with disability is able to separate their legs, the other helper stands between their chair legs, the helper stands alongside and carries from that position.



### **TWO PERSON CARRY SIDE BY SIDE:**

Helpers position themselves next to the wheelchair and grasps the other helpers upper arm or shoulder. The person with a disability places their arms around the helpers neck. The helpers then lean forward and place their free arm under the individual's legs and firmly grasp each other's wrists. The helpers descend the steps at the same time side by side.



## **Additional Sources of Information**

The following information is available for review at the EH&S Department or through the following web links:

United States Fire Administration Fact sheet:

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/pdf/fswy22.pdf>

National Fire Protection Association Recommendations:

<http://www.jcfd.org/Jdisable.html>

U.S. Fire Academy-Publication:

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/pdf/usfapubs/fa-154.pdf>

## Emergency Contact Numbers

### Accidents, Injuries & Illnesses

#### Emergency 911:

Please include the following information:

1. Location of Emergency
2. Nature of Emergency
3. Caller's Name

#### Fire:

In the event of a fire or explosion, call **911 Emergency** and give the location of the incident.

*If indoors: building and room number.*

*If outdoors: street and nearest identifiable facility.*

#### Other Resource Numbers:

- **Ambulance: 911**
- **Fire: 911**
- Crisis Line/Open House: 910-392-7408
- Disability Resource Center: 910-962-7846  
TDD: 800-735-2962
- Environmental Health & Safety: 910-9623057
- University Police Non-Emergency: 910-962-2222

#### Adverse Weather Hotline:

When severe weather strikes and there is doubt about the University's schedule, for information call: **910-962-3991**

If you are away from the Wilmington area, you may call the University's toll free number for information: **888-657-5751**

Or you may visit the UNCW Emergency Alert website: <http://sites.google.com/site/uncwalert/>

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