



Staffordshire
UNIVERSITY

POLICY AND GUIDANCE ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF EMERGENCY EVACUATION
ARRANGEMENTS FOR PEOPLE WITH
ADDITIONAL NEEDS

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LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Fire Precautions Act 1971
- Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997

The University's current evacuation procedures outline the action to be taken by staff, students and visitors in emergency situations. However, in view of the increasing numbers of building users who are mobility impaired it is appropriate to provide guidance on the development of procedures that will enhance the safety of people with additional needs. There is a vast range of individual mobility capabilities, ranging from those of sight impaired people to the very different needs of wheelchair users and it would not, for those reasons, be possible to formulate a standard set of procedures which would accurately reflect each individual's particular needs. The following guidance should, therefore, be used to form the basis by which more detailed '**personal evacuation plans**' can be developed. Clearly, the content of these plans will vary but they must take full account of an individual's particular mobility capabilities eg visually impaired people can be assisted/guided to a place of safety outside the building, whilst, for short periods, wheelchair users can be assisted or directed to a refuge area/point within the building. The following procedures should be adopted:

1 STUDENT SUPPORT

Prior to enrolment each academic year Faculty PVC's/Directors of Service and Faculty Administrators will be provided with a list of intending new students who have declared physical or sensory disabilities. The list will

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identify the nature of the disability, particularly those with mobility or sight impairments and also the 'Award' which the student will be undertaking.

- Each support worker enlisted by Student Support to assist some disabled students will be issued with a copy of this policy and guidance document.

2 FACULTY PRO VICE CHANCELLORS

PVC's must ensure that appropriate support is provided for disabled users of buildings in emergency situations. In practice PVC's may delegate the performance of H&S duties to nominated senior managers as appropriate but will, nevertheless, provide a clear and decisive lead to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to discharge their own responsibilities. In particular, this relates to the following points.

- That relevant information is extracted from the students timetable to enable prompt tracking of a students whereabouts whilst in their areas of responsibility.
- That members of staff with scheduled formal contacts with students (identified from the timetable) must be issued with a personal copy of this policy and guidance document.
- That '**personal evacuation plans**' are formulated within the framework of this policy and guidance document for both staff and students as appropriate and fully discussed and agreed with the disabled people concerned.
- That each disabled person, either staff or student, be issued with a copy of this policy and guidance document.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

- That disabled people requiring help should be assisted to a place of safety outside the building and this includes wheelchair users from ground floor locations.
- That wheelchair users, in other than ground floor locations, should, in the first instance, be assisted or directed to a refuge area/point.

(A refuge point will usually be a protected lobby or stairway area. Alcoves in fire protected and enclosed corridor areas are also acceptable provided that egress routes are not obstructed).

- That one or more helpers should remain with the wheelchair user. Another helper should alert the campus security lodge (*44) and the attendant emergency services of their whereabouts in case an assisted emergency evacuation becomes necessary.

3 DIRECTORS OF SERVICE

In general, students will be using refectories, libraries, information technology facilities and social areas on a random basis. Directors of Service should ensure that the following matters are taken into account when emergency evacuation arrangements are formulated.

- That duty staff are particularly vigilant and are aware of the presence of disabled people in their areas of responsibility.
- That '**personal evacuation plans**' are formulated within the framework of this policy and guidance document for both staff and students as appropriate and fully discussed and agreed with the disabled people concerned.
- That duty staff be issued with a personal copy of this policy and guidance document.
- That disabled members of staff be issued with a personal copy of this policy and guidance document.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

- That disabled people requiring help should be assisted to a place of safety outside the building and this includes wheelchair users from ground floor locations.
- That operational procedures include a requirement that duty staff assist/guide wheelchair users (other than from ground floor locations) to a refuge area/point and remain with them. Another helper should alert the campus security lodge (*44) and the attendant emergency services of their whereabouts in case an assisted emergency evacuation becomes necessary.

GUIDANCE NOTES - SUMMARY

SOME DO'S

- Disabled people should be assisted/guided to a place of safety outside the building; this includes wheelchair users from ground floor locations. In assisting people with visual or mobility impairments it may be more appropriate to avoid the main cluster of evacuees when exiting the building.
- Other than ground floor locations, wheelchair users should in the first instance, be assisted or directed to a refuge area/point and that one or more helpers should remain with them. Another helper should alert the campus security lodge (*44) and the attendant emergence services of their whereabouts in case an assisted emergency evacuation becomes necessary.
- Ensure fire alarm is sounding.
- Ensure emergency services have been summoned.
- Personal evacuation plans must be fully discussed and agreed with the individuals concerned, preferably at 'induction'.
- Disabled people should take part in practice fire drills in order to test the effectiveness of the evacuation plans. Wheelchair users, for example, could be assisted to a refuge area/point and the drill officer informed accordingly.
- PVC's/Directors or other nominated senior managers, as appropriate, should ensure that evacuation plans are reviewed at frequent intervals and that the procedures are revised if there is reason to believe that they are no longer relevant or effective.
- PVC's/Directors of Service or other nominated senior managers, as appropriate, should ensure that a personal copy of this policy and guidance document is distributed to all people with additional needs and

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that it is also prominently displayed on notice boards throughout the University.

SOME DON'TS

- It is generally preferred that wheelchair users remain in their own chairs to avoid causing injury to themselves or helpers.
- Take care not to obstruct corridors or stairways since this could cause unwarranted injury to both disabled and other evacuees.
- Lifts should **never** be used during emergency and/or practice evacuations.

Further advice may be obtained from the University Health & Safety Officer
ext 2726 e.mail k.h.lloyd@staffs.ac.uk

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