

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

EVACUATION PROCEDURES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Board Approved on September 21, 2017



SUGGESTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Remain calm.
- Be familiar with all standard Park District emergency evacuation procedures. Please note that these guidelines are in addition to all other emergency evacuation advice for all individuals.
- Meet with the Park District staff to review the best evacuation routes for the building(s) you will be using.
- Convey your personal emergency evacuation needs in writing to the Park District Safety Council, your instructor, or instructor's supervisor/manager at the beginning of each season, or when classes are added and/or changed throughout a season.
- Establish a buddy system and alternate for each class or facility area. Instruct these buddies on how to assist you in the event of an emergency. Some people may need two buddies.
- Carry cards or tags with emergency information, contacts and instructions on personal assistance needs.
- If assistance is not immediately available, and you cannot exit the building, you should remain calm and move to the safest area possible such as an exit corridor or an office with the door shut, either which is a good distance from the hazard and away from falling debris. Rescue personnel will first check all exit corridors for those trapped.
- Continue to call for help or use a whistle or noisemaker until rescued. All employees should familiarize themselves with these procedures in order to assist in planning for the evacuation of people with physical and sensory, and cognitive disabilities.
- Individuals who use canes should keep a spare cane in their emergency kits.
- Keep spare batteries for hearing aids and computers close at hand.
- Keep a pair of gloves for traveling over debris.
- Have wheelchair tire patching kits with you at all times.
- Power wheelchair users should carry battery charging car or vehicle adapters with instructions to charge batteries from auxiliary sources.
- Carry all essential medications and copies of prescriptions at all times.

IN ALL EMERGENCIES, AFTER AN EVACUATION HAS BEEN ORDERED

- Evacuation of people with disabilities will be given the highest priority in all emergencies and will be evacuated if possible. Evacuating a disabled or injured person by only one person with no assistance is a last resort.
- Attempt a rescue evacuation ONLY if you have had rescue training.
- Check on people with special needs during an evacuation, determine if they have established a "buddy system," and ensure their safe evacuation.
- Always ASK someone with a disability how you can help BEFORE attempting any rescue technique or giving assistance. Ask how he or she can best be assisted or moved, and whether there are any special considerations or items that need to come with the person.

EMERGENCY RESPONSES BY DISABILITY

BLINDNESS OR LOW VISION

- Most persons who are blind or have low vision will be familiar with the immediate area they are in and may have learned locations of exits and fire alarms in advance.
- Tell the person the nature of the emergency and offer to guide him/her by offering your left/right elbow (this is the preferred method when acting as a "Sighted Guide"). Do NOT grasp a blind or person with low vision's arm.
- Speak directly to the person. Be descriptive when giving directions verbally giving information on the environment. Example: if you are approaching steps, mention how many. "There are approximately 12 steps. This is the first...this is the last." You are the person's eyes.
- Ask the person to bring white canes, their guide dog, and any other mobility aids.
- Give verbal instructions to advise about the safest route or direction using compass directions, estimated distances, and directional terms or information.
- As you walk, tell the person where you are and advise of any obstacles, e.g. stairs, overhanging objects, uneven pavement, curbs, and narrow passageways.
- When you have reached a safe lawn, parking lot or designated evacuation center, orient the person to where he or she is and ask if any further assistance is needed.
- Some individuals may have service animals that may be disoriented during the emergency, and may require additional assistance.
- Always walk on the opposite side of the service animal.
- Emergency supplies should be marked with large print, fluorescent tape and Braille.
- Keep doors shut or wide open.

DEAFNESS OR HEARING LOSS

- Gain the person's attention before starting a conversation; wave your hand, flash the lights, etc.
- Speak directly to the person, identify yourself and offer assistance. If the individual uses an interpreter, speak to the individual, not the interpreter.
- Face the person directly. Maintain eye contact. Speak in a normal tone of voice unless asked to speak up.
- Keep your face in the light, don't put your face in a shadow or cover your face with your hands.
- People who speech-read (lip-read) catch, at most, only 80% of what is said. Most speech readers have great difficulty when a responder has facial hair. Stressful situations like a disaster may also lower the individual's ability to comprehend.
- Many structures are not equipped with visual (flashing light) evacuation alarms and persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may not perceive an emergency exists. An alternative warning technique is required. Two (2) methods of warning are:
 - Write a note stating what the emergency is and what the evacuation route is; i.e. "Fire-go out the rear door to Parking Lot".
 - Turn the room lights on and off to gain attention - then indicate through hand gestures or writing (i.e. on a black board) what is happening and where to go.
- Offer visual instructions to advise of safest route or directions by pointing toward exits or evacuation map.
- People who cannot speak loudly, or with voice/speech impairments, may be carrying a whistle or have other means of attracting attention of others.

SPEECH DISABILITIES

- Identify yourself and offer assistance.
- Concentrate on what the person is saying.
- Try to ask questions that require only short answers.
- Do not speak for the individual or attempt to finish his or her sentences.
- If you do not understand something the individual says, do not pretend you do. Ask the person to repeat what he or she said and then repeat it back to confirm.
- Be patient. Take as much time as necessary as long as it does not endanger you.
- If you are having difficulty understanding the person, ask the individual if it is acceptable to use pen and paper, a talk board, etc.

COGNITIVE OR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

- Identify yourself and offer assistance.
- In a normal tone of voice, speak slowly and clearly.
- If you are in a public area with many distractions, consider moving to a quiet or more private location to facilitate communication.
- Break instructions into small steps in easy to follow language.
- Be prepared to repeat what you say. Take the time to understand the individual and make sure the individual understands you.
- Offer assistance completing forms or understanding written instructions. If safe, provide extra time for decision-making. Wait for the individual to accept the offer of assistance.
- Treat an adult as an adult, don't over assist or patronize.
- Be patient, flexible and supportive. Depending on the nature of the disability, the individual may have difficulty with processing instructions, short-term memory, attention span, perception, balance, disorientation, etc.

WHEELCHAIR USERS/ MOBILITY DISABILITIES

- Identify yourself, offer assistance and wait for him or her to instruct you.
- Put yourself in at the wheelchair user's eye level. Untrained personnel should NOT evacuate mobility-impaired persons unless the situation is life threatening. It may be necessary to help clear the exit route of debris (if possible) so that the person with a disability can move out or to a safer area.
- Be sure the person has crutches, canes, walkers or any other mobility aid with them.
- Avoid leaning on wheelchair or assistive device. This is part of the individual's body space.
- Offer to push the wheelchair, wait for acceptance. Do not assume he or she wants to be pushed. Never push without expressed permission.
- If people with mobility impairments cannot exit, they should move to a safer area, e.g. an office with the door shut which is a good distance from the hazard (and away from falling debris in the case of earthquakes).
- Move out of the person's way instead of making them move around you.
- Notify police or fire personnel immediately about any people remaining in the building and their locations.
- If people are in immediate danger and cannot be moved to a safer area to wait for assistance, it may be necessary to evacuate them using an evacuation chair or a carry technique. (See illustrations at the end of this section.) Carrying options include using a two-person lock-arm position, or having the person sit in a sturdy chair - preferably with arms. **BEFORE TAKING ACTION, ALWAYS ASK the person their preferred method of assistance.**

OTHER MEDICAL AND HIDDEN DISABILITIES

- Identify yourself, ask the nature of their disability and how best to help them.
- Most non-ambulatory people will be able to exit safely without assistance out of single story buildings.
- Frequently, non-ambulatory persons have respiratory complications or rely on electric artificial respirators. They should be given priority assistance if there is smoke or fumes, as their ability to breathe is seriously in danger.
- All 2+ story buildings will require persons to be carried out if evacuation assistance is required; ALWAYS ASK the person what method of assistance they prefer. Some people have physical conditions in which moving and lifting them may be dangerous to their well-being. If the person prefers to be moved in their wheelchair follow the procedure below.

Moving a person in a wheelchair down a flight of stairs:

- If the person is to be moved in their wheelchair it is desirable to have a minimum of two assisting persons, with four assisting persons preferred for adults with heavy wheelchairs.
- Secure the wheelchair seatbelt.
- The wheelchair battery may have to be removed.
- The strongest person(s) should be placed at the back of the chair and will grip the chair handles.
- The other assisting person(s) will note what parts of the chair are removable such as wheels, arm rests, footplates so they do NOT lift the chair by those parts. They will grip the front seat frame or non-removable leg rests.
- Always keep the wheelchair facing away from the stairs (backwards).
- ROLL the wheelchair up or down the stairs. DO NOT carry as this may cause back trouble for the assistant. Let the wheelchair carry the weight.
- Keep the wheelchair slightly tilted back to keep the wheelchair user secure. However, do not tilt too far as this could cause the assistant to lose balance and pitch forward.

Moving a person in a wheelchair over a curb or single step:

- Secure the wheelchair seatbelt.
- Just before reaching the edge of the curb or the step turn the wheelchair around so that it is facing away from the edge. You will back the wheelchair down.
- The assistant will hold tightly to the handles and slowly back the wheelchair so the rear wheels roll down the edge. The assistant will press a hip against the back of the chair as the rear wheels slowly roll off the edge.
- The assistant will press a foot on the anti-tipping bar as the chair is very slowly backed away from the curb. Then the front wheels are slowly lowered to the ground.
- Turn the wheelchair around being careful to avoid people passing by.

Moving a person in wheelchair over rough terrain:

- Secure the wheelchair seatbelt.
- When approaching surfaces that may cause a problem for wheels such as grates, soft lawns, pitted floors or sand turn the wheelchair around and go backwards.
- Lift the front wheels up very slightly to put the weight of the chair on the rear wheels. Do not tilt the chair too far back.
- If the person prefers to be removed from their wheelchair, their needs and preferences will vary. Always consult the person as to his/her preferences and needs.

Transferring a person out of a wheelchair:

- Check that the individual is not at risk when transferred or carried.
- Note the location of the wheelchair and upon exiting the building immediately inform the Public Safety Office of the location of the wheelchair so they can retrieve it. The wheelchair is essential to the person's mobility and safety and should be retrieved as soon as possible.
- Use a two-person chair carry when the two assistants link arms to form a backrest and grip wrists to form a seat. (See illustrations at the end of this section.)
- Semi-ambulatory person may lean against assistants back while assistant holds both persons arms over assistant's shoulders. The assistant leans forward slightly to take most of the person's weight.
- Two assistants carry person by extremities. One assistant stands behind and wraps arms around person's chest under person's arms. Second assistant stands facing away from the person between their legs and lifts person's legs under knees.

SERVICE ANIMALS

- Service animals come in all sizes and breeds from Chihuahuas to Great Danes and from dogs to monkeys. If an individual tells you their animal is a service animal, believe them.
- The animal may become scared and disoriented because of the disaster and may not be behaving as usual. Ask the owner to assist in calming the animal and help in its evacuation.
- Evacuate the service animal with the individual whenever possible.

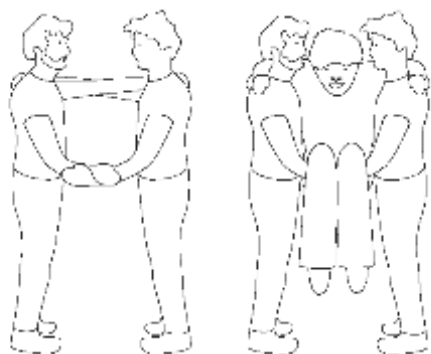
SUMMARY

- Prepare occupants in your building ahead of time for emergency evacuations. Know your building occupants.
- Train staff, volunteers, and participants to be aware of the needs of people with disabilities and to know how to offer assistance.
- Hold evacuation drills in which occupants participate, and evaluate drills to identify areas that need improvement.
- Develop plans that cover regular working hours, after hours, and weekends.
- Everyone needs to take responsibility in preparing for emergencies. People with and without disabilities should consider what they would do and whether they need to take additional steps to prepare.
- At alarm, options are:
 - In an extreme emergency, leave the building immediately and notify emergency personnel of a disabled person needing assistance.
 - In a moderate emergency, help the disabled person to your department's area of safe refuge assembly point, leave the building, and notify emergency personnel of a disabled person needing assistance.
 - Assist the disabled person to evacuate.

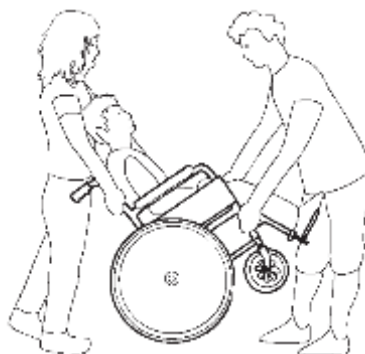
Evacuation Procedures For People with Disabilities

Methods of Assistance

Two handed chair carry



Chair carry



Packstrap carry



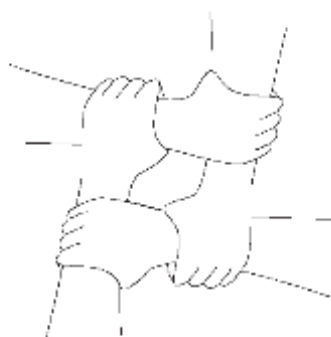
Walking Assist



Carry by Extremities



Packsaddle



Each bearer grasps one of his wrists and one of the other bearer's wrists, thus forming a packsaddle.