

Evacuations

Shelter in Place (see Active Shooter) (AggieAlert will provide instructions)

Americans with Disabilities Act Guidance (ADA) - During emergencies, there may be some occupants that will require additional assistance to safely evacuate the building, take shelter, obtain information, etc... The following information has been developed a basic guide to assist these individuals both before and during an emergency. Some individuals may make others aware of what assistance they may need. This information will be kept with the building's Emergency Coordinator, and may be distributed to select building occupants at the discretion of the individual needing assistance.

General Guidelines:

In the event of an emergency, some occupants may require some degree of assistance in evacuating the building, taking shelter, etc.

If you encounter someone who needs assistance during an emergency you should attempt to assist the individual, if it is possible to do so without endangering the health and safety of either yourself or the person needing assistance.

If you know or have reason to believe that you will need assistance during an emergency you should report that information to your Building Emergency Coordinator, Resident Advisor or others close to you as soon as possible. This information will be kept confidential unless otherwise expressed by you.

Emergency Evacuation for Persons with Disabilities:

General

This section provides general guidance on evacuation guidelines for persons with disabilities. Faculty, staff, students, and visitors with disabilities should develop their own emergency plans, which should identify primary and secondary evacuation routes. Further assistance can be requested through the Office of Emergency Management, who will coordinate the appropriate resources.

Be familiar with evacuation options.

Seek individuals who may be willing to serve as evacuation assistants assist in case of an emergency.

Ask supervisors, instructors, building emergency coordinators, Environmental Health and Safety, or the Office of Emergency Management about evacuation plans for buildings.

In some cases, it may be beneficial to have a pre-assigned “buddy” to assist during emergencies.

During an emergency, especially fires and/or fire alarms, the nearest exit stairs should be used for evacuation unless otherwise instructed. Unless instructed, elevators should not be used.

Evacuation Options

Persons with disabilities should evacuate to the nearest exit. Persons with disabilities have four basic evacuation options:

Horizontal

Using building exits to the outside ground level

Go to the nearest exit stair landing, and wait for emergency personnel. If you can, contact emergency personnel and let them know your location.

Stairway

Use exit stairs to reach ground level exits from the building

Shelter-in-Place and wait for information from Aggie Alert

Unless danger is imminent, remain in a room with an exterior window, a telephone, and a solid or fire-resistant door. This option should be reserved if it is too dangerous to leave the area you are located.

Keep in contact with emergency personnel by contacting University Police (334-7675) and reporting your location directly.

If the phone lines fail, signal for help from the window by waving a cloth or other visible object.

Area of Refuge

Go to a marked area of refuge away from obvious danger. Note: Not all facilities will have these areas.

Notify emergency personnel. This can be done by calling University Police (334-7675) and pushing the emergency assistance button.

Mobility Impaired - Wheelchair

Persons using wheelchairs should stay in place, or move to an area of refuge based on the emergency. Notification to emergency personnel should be made as soon as possible if the individual remains in the building. If the person with a disability is alone, he/she should contact University Police (334-7675) with their present location and/or the area of refuge they are headed to.

If the stair landing is chosen as the area of refuge, please note that many campus buildings have relatively small stair landings, and wheelchair users are advised to wait until the heavy traffic has passed before entering the stairway. Stay to the side of the landing so the stairs remain open to ensure both the safety of occupants evacuating and yourself.

Stairway evacuation of wheelchair users should be conducted by trained professionals. The fire department and emergency medical services have equipment to move individuals down stairs. Only in situations of extreme danger should untrained people attempt to evacuate wheelchair users. Moving a wheelchair down stairs is never safe.

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. If danger is imminent, the individual should wait until the heavy traffic has cleared before attempting the stairs. If there is no immediate danger (detectable smoke, fire, or unusual odor) or the person cannot evacuate, the person may choose to stay in the building using one of the other evacuation options mentioned above.

Hearing Impaired

The majority of buildings on campus are equipped with fire alarm strobe lights to warn of a fire or fire alarm. All campus facilities have audible fire alarms, and most have some form of mass notification system (classroom intercom, etc...) Persons with hearing impairments may not hear audio emergency alerts and will need to be alerted of emergency situations. The strobe lights may provide some warning. Emergency instructions can also be given by writing a short explicit note explaining what action(s) to take.

While a person who has a hearing impairment can take shelter or evacuate on their own, it may be necessary to assign someone to remain with them to help relay instructions on what to do as the emergency progresses.

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 him or her through the evacuation route. During the evacuation the assistant should communicate as necessary to assure safe evacuation.

Psychological Impairment

Emergencies can be very stressful experiences for anyone. Some individuals may experience a greater level of stress when confronted with an emergency than others. This may cause them to not process information as clearly or correctly, and therefore not function as well during an emergency situation. They may

become excited, confused, appear to make irrational decisions, or even appear to freeze and not move.

These individuals may need extra assistance in comprehending information and instructions, as well as taking steps such as evacuating. In many cases, talking the person through what is happening and helping them to safety will resolve any problems. It is important to remain calm, and speak at a normal tone (calm and clear). If you cannot help the individual or helping the individual will place you in greater danger, leave the area and contact University Police at 334-7675. Provide them with as much information as possible. This includes a description of the individual, their location when you saw them, what is wrong, etc...

For more information on this topic, contact the Office of Emergency Management. 336-285-2405