

Evacuation Procedure

Building Specific Evacuation Procedures

<https://www.wku.edu/ehs/beap/>

Evacuation for Persons with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities should identify primary and secondary evacuation routes, and seek out colleagues who are willing to provide assistance if an evacuation becomes necessary. Faculty, staff, and students can help by being aware of others who may need assistance during an evacuation.

Mobility Impaired

Persons with mobility impairments, who are able to walk independently, should be able to negotiate stairs in an emergency with minor assistance. Wait until the heavy traffic has cleared on the stairwell before attempting to exit. At least one person should accompany the individual with mobility impairments to provide assistance, if necessary.

Mobility Impaired-Wheelchair

In most buildings, people will need to use stairwells to reach building exits. Elevators cannot be used because they have been shown to be unsafe in an emergency. It is not safe to attempt to move a wheelchair down stairs.

Evacuation Options for People with Disabilities:

- **Stay in Place**
 - 1) Working with an evacuation assistant, select a room with an exterior window, a telephone, and a solid fire-resistant door. Remain with the disabled person in this room, and send someone to the evacuation assembly area to notify emergency personnel of the location of the person needing assistance. It is also possible to place the person needing assistance near a stairway landing to await assistance, although this area may not be protected from smoke and other hazards.
 - 2) Fire Department personnel, who are trained in emergency rescue, can then enter the building and assist the person in exiting the building, either down the stairs or using the emergency elevator recall.
 - 3) While staying in place, the wheelchair user should keep in direct contact with emergency services by calling 911 and reporting his/her location directly.
 - 4) **Stairway evacuation of wheelchair users should be conducted by trained professionals from emergency services.** Only in situations of extreme danger

should untrained people attempt to evacuate wheelchair users. If this must be attempted, one additional option is noted below:

- **Two-Person Cradle**

- 1) Wait until other evacuees have moved down the stairwell;
- 2) Two helpers should stand on either side of the individual;
- 3) The helpers should reach under the individual and lift them out of the wheelchair in a cradle position;
- 4) Helpers should control the descent by walking slowly and cautiously;
- 5) **NEVER** leave a wheelchair in a stair well;
- 6) Transfer the individual to a sturdy office chair;
- 7) One helper should gently lean the chair backwards;
- 8) The second helper should face the chair and hold onto the front legs of the chair. Both helpers should then lift the chair simultaneously, and lift with their legs.
- 9) The helpers should control the descent by bending their legs and keeping their backs straight.

Hearing Impaired

Some buildings on campus are equipped with fire strobe lights; however, some are not. Persons with hearing impairments may not hear audio alarms and will need to be alerted to emergency situations by an evacuation assistant.

Visually Impaired

Most people with visual impairments will be familiar with their immediate surroundings and frequently traveled routes. Since the emergency evacuation route may be different from the commonly traveled route, persons who are visually impaired may need assistance during an evacuation. The evacuation assistant should offer his/her elbow to the individual with the visual impairment and guide him/her through the evacuation route. During the evacuation, the evacuation assistant should communicate (as necessary) to ensure a safe evacuation.