

Emergency Evacuation for Evacuation of Disabled People from University buildings:

Introduction

This document outlines the guidance for the evacuation of disabled people from University buildings, during an emergency situation. For the purposes of this document disabled people will include anyone with either a mobility or sensory impairment who requires assistance to evacuate the building.

The aims of the guidance are that:

- Buildings should have effective exit routes for disabled people who cannot in practice evacuate a building unaided.
- Staff in those buildings should have standard procedures for ensuring that disabled people are safely evacuated.
- The individuals themselves should know what procedures are in place for their evacuation from any building in which they are working or studying.
- Disabled people working or studying outside normal hours must inform Security of their whereabouts, to enable them to notify Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service.

This guidance is based on the following principles being adopted, either singly or a combination of two or more, depending on local circumstances and the building under consideration.

- Provision of evacuation lifts.
- Provision of phased fire alarm systems depending on building compartmentation.
- Provision of safe areas, together with a monitoring and removal procedure.
- Definition of maximum floor levels of occupancy permitted for disabled person, in properties with five or more floors where evacuation lifts are not provided.
- Training in management of evacuation procedures for building occupiers.

Provision of evacuation lifts

Considered essential in high rise buildings i.e. buildings with 5 or more floors. Evacuation procedures are built around the use of such lifts, ensuring the removal of disabled people directly to open air outside the building. Evacuation lifts will also be considered for other buildings, which are otherwise regarded as "high risk" for this purpose, and not simply restricted to high rise buildings.

Provision of phased fire alarm depending on building compartmentation

In newly designed buildings, compartment lines in the building may permit the fire alarm system to be phased. The alarm will activate in the compartment where an alert is detected, by continuous sounder, with pulsed sounders or time delay activation in the other compartments. This permits horizontal movement of disabled people into other compartments, and use of existing passenger lifts as part of the evacuation procedures. This principle can also apply to existing buildings, but is dependent on the compartment lines, and existing software features in the fire alarm panel.

Provision of safe areas with a monitoring and removal procedure

This element is based on the principle of providing protected safe areas in buildings, directing and moving disabled people to these areas, monitoring their presence with in-built fixed communications, and evacuated by trained University personnel, if considered necessary.

Maximum floor levels permitted for use by disabled people, in properties with five or more floors, where evacuation lifts are not provided

Where it is not possible to convert lifts to evacuation lifts in buildings which have five or more storeys, consideration will be given to the manual handling procedure that would be required to evacuate disabled people from such higher levels. It may be impractical to permit disabled people to use the floors above level 5, as monitoring and removal would be physically arduous, labour intensive and physically undesirable.

Training in management of procedures for building occupiers

The scope and intensity of training required for relevant members of College/School/building personnel (as appropriate) will vary according to the provisions in place for evacuation of disabled people. Where evacuation lifts are provided, or phased alarms are introduced, the procedure and training will be relatively simple and easily achievable.

In buildings where the procedure requires the provision of safe areas, the training required becomes much more complicated and labour intensive. Recovery Teams will be required. These teams will require intensive training on:

- Sensitive interactions with disabled people
- Safe manual handling of disabled people
- Safe use of evacuation chairs
- Fire evacuation procedures

How this can be achieved needs careful consideration. Training will be of primary importance for all participants active within this procedure. Ensuring consistent availability of Recovery Team members will also be a challenging issue. The University are presently investigating how best to achieve this.

Although principally designed for mobility impaired people, people with other impairments, e.g. hearing or sight impairment, can also adopt this procedure, however they would generally be expected to evacuate the building in the normal course of events, with assistance as required from other occupants.

Informing disabled people of the evacuation procedures in the buildings occupied or visited

In due course, a list plan indicating which buildings are compliant in this regard, and which are not, will also be posted on the web, on the Estates and Buildings website (for ready updating), with appropriate links. A planned programme of work, towards as full compliance as practicable, will also be published.

Policy on this subject will be included at an appropriate point in the central University Health and Safety Policy (General Precautions), again suitably linked to other appropriate websites, and suitable reference to this will require to be made in School etc. health and safety policy documents.

The responsibility for informing disabled people of the fire evacuation procedures will rest with the School or Support Group. The University Fire Safety Adviser (UFSA) is available to advise on procedures as required. This will ensure uniformity of instruction for each building, as the procedures bed in.

As the "register" of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) develops, and experience is gained, the Disability Office is likely to become the main information point, with support from the UFSA and relevant College/School personnel, as required.

Specific, tailored information relating to individual disabled people will appear in their individual PEEP, which will be fully discussed with the individual concerned, by the School or Support Group to ensure that he or she is entirely comfortable with, and confident in, the arrangements which relate to him/her as an individual.

As Estates and Buildings work progresses to incorporate required structural alterations, and as School etc management are appropriately instructed and trained in relevant procedures, the relevant information will be compiled in registers of buildings and procedures, to be held in Estates Operations, Disability Office, Health and Safety Department, and will be published on the web.

Appropriate Fire Action Notices for disabled people are, and will be, displayed prominently throughout University buildings. Information leaflets will also be provided and retained in an appropriate area, open to the public. These can also be distributed through Room Bookings for appropriate buildings.

The University Fire Safety Adviser will always be available for disabled people to consult, should their circumstances, condition, work or study pattern, etc. change.

Issues associated with evacuation policy

Communications

1. Disabled students and staff entering the University

The application, registration and matriculation/enrolment process for new students and staff will be reviewed and amended as required, to ensure that the University receives the earliest possible indication of a person with a disability who may require special provisions.

1. Communication chain for dissemination of information

A further trigger, prior to the matriculation/enrolment process, is necessary to ensure that information is given to all parties who will be involved with preparing procedures for disabled people, i.e. Estates and Buildings, Health and Safety, relevant School management, Disability Office, etc.

2. Interviewing disabled People with regard to their needs whilst on University premises

Every disabled person who requires assistance in evacuating University buildings must be interviewed, by the UFSA in tandem with relevant College/School personnel (as appropriate), to assess their needs while using University buildings. A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) must be discussed and confirmed, depending on the type of disability and buildings in use by the disabled person. This PEEP should also include procedures for out of normal working hours, if this is a relevant factor. With regard to undergraduates, Directors of Studies will have a key role in predicting the buildings in which a given disabled student will operate. School or Subject Area staff, in liaison with Human Resources, will have a similarly important input with regard to new staff and visitors.

3. Consideration or direction given as to the location of disabled people in any University Building

Where facilities are provided as part of the structure of a building, and evacuation procedures are in place in line with the proposed policy, this consideration would not apply. The immediate problems will arise where there is no provision in the buildings in question relating to safe and effective evacuation of disabled people, or the building cannot be modified within the required timescale. In such cases, a clear directive is required for Colleges (in Multi-Occupancy Buildings) and Schools (in instances in which a building is occupied by a single School) to provide facilities only on floors which will permit a disabled person to evacuate unaided, directly to open air away from the building, i.e. normally ground or basement levels.

4. Meetings arranged with College/School Management, Estates and Buildings, Health and Safety, to discuss issues arising.

In order to provide evacuation procedures and facilities for disabled people, it is important that meetings are convened to ensure that all the items

mentioned above are considered in formulating a PEEP for any given disabled person.

Advice on PEEP formulation can be obtained from

<http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/safety/fire/guidance/PEEP.pdf>

Building Definitions

Buildings within the university can be divided into two groups. These are:

- a. New buildings or extensively renovated buildings
- b. Existing buildings

New buildings or extensively renovated buildings

When applying for a Building Warrant for these buildings, City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) Building Control may determine that temporary waiting areas for disabled people are required, and determine their location. However, this is not always the case, and it is important that all provisions for disabled people are ensured through the University's Estates and Buildings project management processes, as per the fire strategy document for University buildings, in conjunction with the appropriate Scottish Technical Standards.

On every occasion the undernoted bullet points will be considered and evacuation principles for disabled people determined for the building under design.

- Provision of evacuation lifts.
- Provision of phased fire alarm systems, dependent on building
- Compartment lines, including opportunities for horizontal (sideways) evacuation.
- Provision of safe areas together with a monitoring and removal procedure.
- Definition of maximum floor levels permitted for disabled person occupation and use, in properties with five or more floors, where evacuation lifts are not provided.
- Training in management of procedures for building occupiers.

Existing Buildings

In dealing with the priorities of provision existing building can be split into two categories.

Category 1

These are buildings that require immediate action to ensure they can be safely used by disabled people.

- Buildings with significant use by the students and public, such as Libraries

- Buildings that are presently being used by disabled people
- Buildings where access for disabled people has been already provided
- High rise buildings (above five floors)
- Residences, or other buildings with sleeping risks
- Buildings that newly registered disabled people will use, and are not listed above

Category 2

Buildings which can be altered in line with budget restraints and include all other buildings not covered in Category 1. Any work required will be programmed into access provisions, renovation, refurbishment and risk assessment plans as required. A survey should also be carried out on buildings to determine which buildings are not suitable for use by disabled people, because of building construction and restraints. These buildings should be listed as should courses which may involve disabled people relocating to buildings which have provisions for emergency evacuation of disabled people.

In existing buildings, the provision of refuges is not always possible, however safe areas can usually be provided, protected, and fitted with communications which will permit the monitoring of the disabled person, and removal from the building, if required.

Timescales

For new buildings instruction must be given to the design teams and project managers to ensure all evacuation principles for disabled people are discussed fully and implemented as required. This instruction will be implemented immediately.

The University currently has both disabled staff and students present in their buildings without provision of procedures for evacuation. Locating the buildings in use by disabled people is a priority in order that a PEEP and the required provisions are put in place to ensure their evacuation in event of an emergency. This requires immediate action - a circular to Heads of Schools (and equivalent) regarding the University's interim policy and procedures in this regard, has been circulated by the Director of Corporate Services, see Emergency Evacuation of Mobility Impaired Persons circular dated 11th June 2006.

Buildings that provide particular services, such as libraries, and have public assembly functions, will be given priority.

All high rise buildings and residences will have their lifts surveyed and, if achievable, these will be converted to evacuation lifts. If conversion of a lift is possible, it should be instructed as part of a package of fire safety measures required, in consultation with the UFSA, and not in isolation. Surveys will commence immediately with a view to these buildings being converted for use within a two to three year programme.

All buildings where access has already been provided for disabled people, to meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements, must be provided with the facilities required for evacuation of disabled people. This should commence immediately, with a target for completion within two to three years. Priority must be given to buildings known to be used by newly appointed staff or newly matriculated students, if they are not covered by the above timescales.

Buildings mentioned in Category 2 will be altered in line with fire risk assessment or refurbishment plans, as finance and budget restraints permit, and have a timescale of 5 to 10 years for compliance. This may require adjustment for individual buildings if it becomes known that newly appointed or matriculated disabled staff or students require to use those buildings.

Staff will be trained in respective procedures for their buildings as work is implemented.

Voluntary Disclosure and Data Protection Act

Disclosure of any form of disability is, of course, an entirely voluntary matter; disclosure of a disability relevant to emergency evacuation is important to assist us to help protect a disabled individual, in their own particular circumstances. All such information disclosed will be treated as sensitive personal information in line with the Data Protection Act.

Contacts

Fire Safety Unit - fire@ed.ac.uk, 651 1226

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