

*Guidelines For Emergency Evacuation Of Persons With Physical Disabilities*

Bowling Green State University

Environmental Health & Safety  
University Police  
Disability Services

## *Emergency Evacuation of Persons with Physical Disabilities*

### **GROUND FLOOR:**

On a ground-level floor, persons with physical disabilities should evacuate via accessible exits along with the other occupants of the building.

### **ABOVE OR BELOW-GROUND FLOORS:**

#### **Visual Impairments**

Most persons with visual impairments will be familiar with their immediate surroundings. In the event of an emergency, tell the person with a visual impairment the nature of the emergency and offer to guide the person to the nearest emergency exit. Have the person take your elbow and escort him or her out of the building. As you walk, tell the person where you are and advise him or her of any obstacles. When you reach safety, orient the person to where he or she is and ask if any further assistance is needed.

#### **Hearing Impairments**

Most buildings on campus are not yet equipped with visual alarms. Some persons with hearing impairments may not perceive audio emergency alarms and will need to be alerted to the situation by gestures or by turning the light switch off and on. Emergency instructions can be given by verbalizing, mouthing, or by a short, explicit note. Example: "Fire alarm -- go out south doors—now!"

It is appropriate to offer assistance to a hearing impaired person as you leave the building.

### ***Mobility Impairments***

Since elevators should not be used for evacuation during a fire alarm, persons with mobility impairments may need assistance in evacuating unless they are on a ground floor with accessible exits. As persons with mobility impairments have varying degrees of limitations, information is offered for two possible scenarios: ambulatory and non-ambulatory impairments.

### ***Ambulatory Mobility Impairments***

Persons with mobility impairments who are able to walk independently, either with or without the use of crutches or a cane, may be able to negotiate stairs with minor assistance in an emergency situation. Even some persons who customarily use a wheelchair or scooter for long distance travel may be able to walk independently in an emergency situation. If individuals are able to walk up or down stairs, it is advisable that they wait until the heavy traffic has cleared before attempting to evacuate. Someone should walk beside the person to provide assistance in exiting the building, if needed.

### ***Non-Ambulatory Mobility Impairments***

In keeping with current philosophy and preference to "stay in place," the most recent advice from fire and campus safety experts is that wheelchair users should exit the building on their own if they can do so. If they encounter stairs or otherwise cannot exit the building on their own, wheelchair users should move to and remain at a designated area of rescue assistance until emergency rescue personnel arrive. A specific person should be designated to inform emergency personnel of the disabled person's location. If rescue is deemed necessary, qualified personnel will assist in the evacuation.

**NOTE: The person with the disability is the best authority on how to be moved.**

***Elevator Breakdowns***

Between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, call Facilities Services (2-2251). They will notify the repair personnel and let you know the probable length of time until the elevator will be repaired. If the repair time will be lengthy, contact university police (2-2346) to coordinate the evacuation of a wheelchair user. University police should also be contacted for breakdowns after 5:00 PM and they will notify appropriate personnel. **NOTE: Elevators will not operate during fire alarms.**

*If you have questions, please contact:*

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Disability Services  
413 South Hall  
Bowling Green, OH 43403  
Phone: (419) 372-8495  
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[www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/disability](http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/disability)

# *BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY EMERGENCY PROCEDURES*

## **FIRE**

1. Close door behind you to contain fire.
2. Sound alarm by using fire alarm pull station.
3. Immediately and calmly evacuate building. Do not use elevator--use stairwell only.
4. CALL 911- Give location and description.
5. Do not re-enter the building for any reason. Only emergency personnel can authorize re-entry.

Note: Use portable fire extinguishers only if you have been trained and it is safe to do so. Use on very small fires only. Safe evacuation is your main priority.

## **MEDICAL - SEVERE ILLNESS OR INJURY**

1. Check the scene. Do not place yourself in a life-threatening situation.
2. CALL 911 - Give location and description of incident.
3. If you are trained in CPR and/or first aid, assess the need for support.

## **CRIMES IN PROGRESS OR SUSPICIOUS PERSONS**

CALL 911 and give information on the person and situation.

## **SUSPICIOUS OBJECT OR PACKAGE**

1. Do not touch or disturb the object or package.
2. If there is a written threat or suspicious substance, leave object and vacate room. Wash hands.
3. **CALL 911** and follow Dispatcher's instructions. Wait for emergency officials.

## **BOMB THREAT**

1. Get as much information as possible from the caller (location, when it was placed, etc.)
2. **CALL 911** and follow Dispatcher's instructions.

## **TORNADO**

1. Monitor local weather stations with radio, weather radio, or TV.
2. Know your shelter locations, listed on tornado information posters in building.
3. Seek shelter when tornado warning siren or other warning systems advise.
4. Take battery-powered radio to shelter to monitor weather conditions.

## **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT - CHEMICAL OR RADIATION SPILLS, LEAKS**

1. Evacuate to a safe distance.
2. **CALL 911** - Give location and description of material.
3. Prevent access to area until response team arrives.
4. If chemical or radiation material contacts eyes or skin, flush immediately and continuously for at least 15 minutes. Use eye wash station, safety shower or other water source.

## **UTILITY EMERGENCIES - GAS LEAK, FLOODING, ELEVATOR OR POWER FAILURE.**

CALL 372-7647, M-F 8:00A.M. - 5:00 P.M., After these hours, call Public Safety at 372-2346.