

## Safe Evacuation of Persons Who May need Assistance

### 8. Emergency Egress Procedures for Staff / Students / Public with Impairments

It is a requirement of Fife Fire and Rescue that the University must put in place appropriate management plans to evacuate all staff including those with impairments from a building in the event of a fire alarm being activated. All Schools/Units and Residences should therefore have an appropriate egress plan for all potential occupants.

In preparing a building egress plan, consideration must be given to the needs of disabled people. If people use a wheelchair, or can only move with the use of walking aids, their disability is obvious. Many disabilities are often less obvious than this and staff should be vigilant in an emergency, so that help can be given to those individuals who need it most. Provision for people with a temporary disability that may affect their mobility (e.g. broken limbs) should also be considered and incorporated into building egress plans.

It is recommended that Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are produced for all those who declare an impairment which may affect their ability to egress a building.

While acknowledging the potential for individual differences in the emergency egress needs of people with similar disabilities, some general guidelines can be made to aid the emergency egress of disabled people in the absence of PEEPs.

#### 8.1 Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP)

Staff, students or members of the public who have an impairment which would affect their egress from a building in the event of an emergency should have an appropriate PEEP produced and all relevant personnel informed of this PEEP. A PEEP for an individual can be produced with the help of the person concerned and the Fire and Training adviser from Environmental, Health and Safety Services. A form for undertaking PEEPs is given in Appendix 5.

Where it is not practicable to produce an individual PEEP as the person may only be visiting a building, it may mean that generic Building Emergency Evacuation Plans (BEEPs) for specific common impairments should be produced and made part of the evacuation management plan. Such generic BEEPs can be produced with the help of the Fire and Training adviser from Environmental, Health and Safety Services.

#### 8.2 People with Restricted Vision

##### Fire Safety Signs:

People with restricted vision or colour perception may experience difficulty in seeing or recognising fire safety signs which will include fire exit signs.

Additional fire safety signs may be required that are sufficiently large and well designed with a good, clear typeface and sited so that they can be seen easily and can be readily distinguishable. If such signs are required then these should be requested from Estates

### **Familiarity with Escape Routes:**

Staff from the School/Unit/Residence should take time with a person who has restricted vision to familiarise the person with all possible escape routes, especially those that are not in general use.

### **Egress from a Premise:**

Where practicable, a sighted person should lead those members of staff with restricted vision to safety. This could be one of the duties of a nominated 'Buddy' to do this or a duty of a Fire Warden. It is recommended that a sighted person should lead, inviting the other person to grasp their elbow, as this will enable the person being assisted to walk half a step behind and thereby gain information about doors and steps etc. Similar assistance should be offered to guide dog owners, with the owner retaining control of their dog. A sighted person should remain with staff with restricted vision at the assembly point until the emergency is over.

### **Lighting and Colour Contrast**

Good lighting and the use of simple colour contrasts can also help visually impaired people find their way around. Further advice can be obtained from [Disability Services \(http://www.dundee.ac.uk/disabilityservices/\)](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/disabilityservices/), the [Royal National Institute for the Blind \(http://www.rnib.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx\)](http://www.rnib.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx), and the [National Federation of the Blind of the United Kingdom \(http://www.nfbuk.org/\)](http://www.nfbuk.org/).

## **8.3 People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

Whilst it is possible that some people who have a serious hearing impairment may be able to make their way to a place of safety independently, difficulties may be encountered in identifying the fire alarm. Consideration should therefore be given to the following:

- Is the person a lone worker or 'out of hours' worker (identifying the need for specialised equipment e.g. flashing lights inter-linked to the fire alarm)?
- Is it always possible for a colleague or other member of staff to ensure that the person has been alerted?
- If in sleeping accommodation, is there a need for additional specialised equipment to wake the person?
- Does the person use a different form of communication e.g. sign language?

Further advice can be obtained from [Disability Services \(http://www.dundee.ac.uk/disabilityservices/\)](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/disabilityservices/) and the [Royal National Institute for Deaf People \(http://www.rnid.org.uk/\)](http://www.rnid.org.uk/).

Specialised equipment is available (eg Deaf Alerters) in certain areas of the University (eg Residences and The Main Library). Staff should be aware of how this equipment works and ensure that it is suitably maintained.

Many public areas of the buildings have hearing loops which allow those who have suitable hearing aids to allow these people to listen to lectures. Such loops can also be used to inform people with hearing impairments that the fire alarm has been activated and that they should go to the assembly point.

Buildings which have hearing loops should ensure that they are suitably maintained and should provide instruction on their use to all those using these facilities.

## **8.4 People with Restricted Mobility**

### **8.4.1 Person with walking aids/restricted mobility. Consider:**

- Introducing a 'Buddy System' where a friend, colleague or member of staff will accompany the person to a refuge or safe area;
- Being prepared to allow able bodied persons to egress from the premises first;
- Being prepared to travel at a rate that is comfortable to the person with impaired mobility;
- Assessing the need for specialised equipment.

### **8.4.2 Wheelchair Users. Consider:**

- Identifying locations for wheelchair refuges and means of communication from refuges;
- Identifying if a wheelchair user can reach the refuge unaided. If not, consider the introduction of a 'Buddy System';
- Identifying the best method of egress or if there is a need for the provision of specialised equipment (e.g. Evac-Chair);
- As wheelchair users are experienced in transferring from the wheelchair to other forms of seating, they should be allowed to determine the method for transferring from the wheelchair to the specialised equipment.

## **8.5 Use of Lifts**

The use of a normal passenger or goods lift for egress purposes is not permitted, as it is possible that people may become trapped within the lift itself. The University does not have any lifts which meet the necessary standards to act as an evacuation lift

## **8.6 Evac-Chairs**

Special chairs (Evac-Chairs) which can be used to transport persons requiring assistance down a stair are available from Safety Services. Guidance on the means of escape from University buildings for persons requiring assistance and training in the use of Evac-Chairs is available from the Fire and Training Officer from Environmental, Health and Safety Services. The Fire Wardens and the Fire

Marshal should be involved in making arrangements for assisting disabled persons to use an Evac-Chair in the event of a fire or other emergency.

## **8.7 Refuges**

A refuge is a purposely built fire resisting enclosure on upper or lower floors of a building for the sole use of mobility restricted persons (or others with this identified need) in the event of fire alarm activation/emergency egress situation. Refuges should also comply with the following:

- Totally enclosed in fire resisting structure.
- Provision of communications for any person in the refuge.
- Accessible to and from the outside via a protected escape route.
- Provision of emergency lighting.
- Provision of Fire Action Notices, emergency numbers and egress procedure.
- Sole use for egress purposes for individuals with identified special egress needs.
- Refuge areas should only be used as a temporary haven whilst awaiting egress.

## **8.8 Safe area**

In many existing University buildings construction and provision of refuges is not practically possible. In these circumstances, safe areas must be provided in appropriate locations usually staircase landing enclosures. These areas should comply with the physical provisions detailed below:

- A monitored automatic fire alarm system must be provided.
- Fire compartmentation of the building and separation within the compartment must be of a high standard. This will be confirmed by asking Estates or Environmental, Health and Safety Services.
- Communications systems provided in safe area.
- Safe areas should be within a 30 minute fire resisting enclosure, ideally within a staircase enclosure.
- Provision of appropriate signage.
- Provision of Fire Action Notices.
- Provision of emergency contact numbers.
- Provision of Evac-Chairs in appropriate location.

**University of St Andrews**  
**Emergency Egress Questionnaire for Staff with Impairments**

The University is committed to being as inclusive to all staff as far as reasonably practicable and wishes to ensure the safety of all staff. The University is determined to put in place all reasonably practicable means to allow those with impairments to work in a normal environment. To do this however, it will be necessary to determine what reasonably practical modifications need to put in place to ensure that all staff are working in a safe environment which includes putting in place plans for the egress of staff who may have difficulties in evacuating a building in an emergency

There are many reasons why a person may believe they would have restrictions in evacuating a building in the event of an emergency. These include those who have a hearing impairment and thus cannot hear an alarm, mobility impairments (including those with temporary impairments eg broken leg), sight problems where they cannot identify the signs showing the quickest means of exit in the event of an emergency.

This questionnaire is intended to be completed by staff/students/general public to identify what modifications the University needs to make to include all staff by ensuring that all staff can evacuate a building safely.

**NOTE:** There is no compulsion to complete this form. The aim of this form is to ensure the University can put in place reasonable practicable means of egress for an individual who voluntarily informs the University of an impairment. If a person wishes to discuss this matter in confidence, they may contact the Occupational Health Adviser for confidential medical advice.

If a person is willing to inform the University of their impairment, they should complete this form and then discuss the information on the form with their School Safety Co-ordinator or Disability Co-ordinator or Residence Manager to produce a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

**1. Name and Place of Work / Residence**

Name .....

Job Title / Student Status .....

School / Unit .....

Residence .....

Brief Description of Duties or studies .....

.....

**NOTE:** If you need assistance in evacuating a building, a PEEP will be produced that will specify what actions need to be taken for you to egress the building as quickly as practicable in the event of an emergency. There may be some buildings that you need to use which the University cannot guarantee safe egress for you without specific structural modifications. These modifications may take some time to put in place. In these cases you should be patient whilst these solutions are being considered and developed. In some cases safe egress will not be feasible and other solutions will need to be found

**NOTE - Alternative formats of this form can be obtained on request from  
Environmental, Health and Safety Services**

**This section should be completed by the person who needs assistance in evacuating a building**

|   |            |           |  |
|---|------------|-----------|--|
| Location  |            |           |  |
| 2. Where are you based for most of the time (list in order of time spent in a particular School/Unit/ Building)     |            |           |  |
| <b>Awareness of Emergency Egress procedures</b>   |            |           |  |
|   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Comments</b>  |
| 3. Are you aware of the emergency egress procedures which operate in the building(s) in which you work / reside?    |            |           | Details  |
| 4. Due to your impairment, do you require specialised emergency egress procedure?                                   |            |           | <p>If you do, please could you give details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you need a personalised emergency evacuation plan in Braille?<br/><b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>Do you require the emergency egress procedure on a tape? <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/><br/><b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>Do you require the emergency egress procedures in large print? <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/><br/><b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul> |
| 5. Are emergency signs which identify emergency escape routes and exits clearly visible to you?                     |            |           | <p>Do you require such emergency signs in Braille?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b></p>   |
| <b>Emergency Alarm</b>  |            |           |  |
|   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Comments</b>  |
| 6. Can you hear the fire alarm in areas of the places that you work and/or reside?                                  |            |           |  |
| 7. If you are staying in a University residence, do you need assistance to hear the fire alarm when you are asleep? |            |           |  |
| 8. Could you easily raise the alarm if you discovered a fire?   |            |           |  |
| <b>Assistance to Evacuate the Building</b>  |            |           |  |
|   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Comments</b>  |



|  |            |           |   |
|--|------------|-----------|---|
| <p>9. Do you assistance to get out of your place of work or residence in an emergency?</p>           |            |           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is anybody designated to assist you in evacuating a building? If so, please could you name those designated to help you.<br/> <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/>      <b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Is the arrangement with your assistant a formal agreement organised by the School / Unit/ Residence?<br/> <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/>      <b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Are you always in contact with those designated to help evacuate a building in an emergency.<br/> <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/>      <b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul> |
| <b>Evacuating a Building</b>   |            |           |   |
|  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Comments</b>   |
| <p>10. Can you evacuate a building quickly (eg within 3-4 minutes) in the event of an emergency?</p> |            |           | <p>If not, please could you explain why.</p>  |
| <p>11. Do you find stairs difficult to use</p>   |            |           | <p>If so, could you explain why stairs pose a problem to you (eg are you a wheelchair user?)</p>  |
| <b>Any other relevant information</b>  |            |           |   |
| <p>Any other information which may be relevant to produce a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan.</p>  |            |           |   |

**University of St Andrews**  
**Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan for .....**

**This document should be completed by the relevant Manager / Residence Manager based on the information provided by the member of staff or student**

**Awareness of the need to evacuate**

The following alarm systems are required:

**Name** .....

**Job Title / Student Status** .....

**School / Unit** .....

**Residence** .....

**Brief Description of duties or studies** .....

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Usual Building Fire alarm system

Fire alarm pager device

Visual fire alarm system

Other .....

**Egress Procedure**

**Safe Routes to an identified Refuge or Final Exit**

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**Communication link with assistance**

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**Method of Assistance**

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**Designated Assistance**

The following people have been designated to give me assistance to get out of the building in an emergency.

Name

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Contact Details

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Name

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Contact Details

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Name

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Contact Details

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**Equipment Provided**

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