

Emergency Evacuation Guidelines for People Requiring Assistance

It is Idea Exchange's responsibility to ensure that Persons Requiring Assistance (P.R.A) to evacuate are provided information on plans in place to ensure their safety during emergency situations. Alternatively, Persons Requiring Assistance also have a responsibility to indicate if alternative measures are required if their reason for requiring assistance is not obvious. People who may require assistance may fall into one of the following four groups (but are not limited to):

Mobility

- Mobility limitations may make it difficult for a person to use stairs or move quickly over long distances. These can include reliance on mobility devices such as a wheelchair, scooter, walker, crutches or a walking cane.
- In addition, people with a heart condition or various respiratory difficulties can experience certain levels of mobility limitations.

Vision

- Vision loss can include a broad range of conditions ranging from complete blindness to partial or low vision that cannot be corrected with lenses or surgery.
- A person's ability to read signs or move through unfamiliar environments during an emergency may be challenged, creating a feeling of being lost and/or being dependent on others for guidance.

Hearing

- A person can be deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. The distinction between these terms is based on the individual's language and means of communicating rather than the degree of hearing loss.
- In an emergency, the method in which emergency warnings are issued becomes critical to how a person with hearing loss is able to respond and follow instructions to safety.

Non-Visible Disabilities

- Non-visible disabilities can include communication, cognitive, sensory, mental health, learning or intellectual disabilities in which an individual's ability to respond to an emergency is restricted.
- These can also range from allergies, epilepsy, hemophilia, diabetes, thyroid condition, multiple sclerosis, pulmonary or heart disease and/dependency on dialysis, sanitary or urinary supplies.

Emergency Procedures – For Employees and Volunteers requiring Assistance

Idea Exchange will make all reasonable efforts to provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees and volunteers who have a disability, if the

disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and if Idea Exchange is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's or volunteer's disability.

Employee and Volunteer Workplace Emergency Response Plans are available for employees and volunteers to complete with assistance from Human Resources. Employees and Volunteers are responsible to advise Human Resources if need should arise due to a temporary or permanent disability. Once completed, all plans will be discussed with the individual's supervisor.

Emergency Procedures – For persons requiring Assistance – STAIRS

If there are members who have difficulty using the stairs, they can be coached to sit as they go down the stairs. If there are members who are not able to use the stairs, they should be asked to station themselves at the top of the staircase. If it is safe to do so, one staff should remain with these members until they can be assisted down the stairs by the Fire Department. If it is not safe to stay, staff should call 911 to inform the fire department that individuals have been left in the building. Under no circumstance should the elevator be used. **Staff should not physically assist anyone down the stairs.**

Emergency Procedures – For Members requiring Assistance – STAIRS

The below information will be posted and **printed upon request.**

WHENEVER YOU HEAR A FIRE ALARM AT IDEA EXCHANGE:

If you are able to descend the exit stair with or without assistance, do so when there is a break in the flow of persons evacuating, or when the stair is clear.

If, during your decent, you are unable to continue:

- Stop at the next stair landing down.
- If you are obstructing others exiting by remaining in the stairwell, and if the fire is not on that floor, exit the stair and remain immediately outside the exit stair.

WHENEVER YOU HEAR A FIRE ALARM AT IDEA EXCHANGE & YOU ARE UNABLE TO EVACUATE:

If there is no fire, smoke or unsafe conditions on the floor:

- Attend the nearest Exit Stair to you and await further directions from the first responders, and the fire department.
- Do not leave your Exit Stair area unless there is an unsafe condition or directed to do so.

If you encounter smoke or fire on your floor:

- Enter the nearest Exit Stair and wait for the arrival of assistance from first responders or the fire department.

Emergency Evacuation Guidelines for People with Disabilities

The below information will be posted on our website and printed upon request.

Preparing for an Emergency Evacuation

Preparing for an emergency evacuation can greatly reduce the risk to your safety during a fire, flood, storm or other dangerous situation. In order to help people with disabilities prepare for an emergency evacuation, the following recommendations are based on *NFPA's Emergency Planning Guide for People with Disabilities*. Disabilities may include: physical/systemic, blind/low vision, deaf/hard of hearing, psychiatric/psychological, speech, and/or cognitive. These guidelines also apply to persons with temporary injuries, e.g., a broken leg. We strongly encourage those with a disability to read through these guidelines to ensure that you are prepared for an emergency evacuation. If you need further assistance in preparing for an evacuation, please contact the Cambridge Fire Department.

Guidelines

1. Familiarize yourself with the buildings' exit routes. Become aware of the buildings' stairwells and corridors noting any areas that may be difficult or impossible for you to traverse by yourself. Determine whether there is an exit path that you will be able to use in case of an emergency. If possible, identify at least two separate escape paths. Please note: In most cases, this means being able to exit the building without use of the elevator.
2. If you do not need assistance evacuating or being alerted to an alarm, you should run through a practice evacuation to verify you will not need assistance and to uncover any weaknesses in your plan.
3. During an emergency, if you will need assistance in evacuating the building for any reason, follow below.
 - a. If you need assistance evacuating the building, you will be asked to remain where you are. If it is safe to do so, one staff member may remain with you until you can be assisted by the Fire Department. If it is not safe to stay, staff will call 911 to inform the fire department that you have been left in the building. Staff are not to physically assist anyone.
 - b. STAIRS - If you have difficulty using the stairs or need assistance evacuating the building, you will be coached to sit as you go down the stairs. If you are not able to use the stairs, you will be asked to station yourself at the top of the nearest exit stairs. If it is safe to do so, one staff member may remain with you until you can be assisted down the stairs by the Fire Department. If it is not safe to stay, staff will call 911 to inform the fire department that you have been left in the building. Under no circumstance should the elevator be used. Staff are not to physically assist anyone down the stairs.
4. Update your plan to reflect changes in exit routes or contact methods.