

Emergency Evacuation of People with a Disability

Policy Statement

The University of Nottingham is committed to promoting access for people who have a disability or long-term medical condition. This includes consideration of the requirements to enable effective evacuation of buildings in an emergency.

The University will seek to comply with the guidance in British Standards, Codes of Practice and the Building Regulations. Reasonable adjustments will be made wherever possible to facilitate safe access and egress.

General information concerning facilities and procedures to assist in the emergency evacuation of people with a disability will be made available.

The emergency evacuation requirements for a person with a disability or long-term medical condition will be assessed following a request from that person and if appropriate a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan will be developed in conjunction with the individual.

The arrangements for the emergency evacuation of people with a disability will form part of the emergency procedure in place for each building.

General Evacuation Arrangements

Buildings are reviewed to identify reasonable adjustments that can be made to meet the generally foreseeable requirements for the emergency evacuation of those with a disability or long-term medical condition.

Building reviews are carried out by the Safety Office with recommendations arising being submitted to the Estate Office. An appropriate member of the School or Departmental Management may additionally request the Safety Office to carry out a review in response to changing local circumstances.

Information describing the general emergency and evacuation arrangements for the building will be available at the main entrance to the building and at all entrances accessible to wheelchair users. This will also be available via the University Web Pages.

The academic member of staff conducting a lecture, laboratory practical session or other teaching activity is responsible for ensuring that the lecture theatre or room is cleared in the event of an alarm. Staff receiving visitors are responsible for their safe evacuation.

Personal Emergency Egress Plan

In addition to any general provisions that may have been made to facilitate emergency egress of persons who have a disability, it might be necessary to develop a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). The purpose of this is to identify with the person concerned any additional arrangements that may reasonably be made to enable their effective evacuation in an emergency. This will reflect the unique characteristics of the buildings that they need to visit and their own requirements.

A person with a disability must notify the University of their situation to initiate the preparation of a PEEP. Notification should be made as follows:

- Students should notify Academic Support
- Members of staff should notify their line manager
- In the case of university accommodation by indicating on the Residence Form issued prior to arrival or subsequently the Hall Manager should be notified.

The PEEP should be developed by an appropriate member of the School or Departmental Staff in conjunction with the person with a disability. Advice may also be sought from the University Fire Safety Advisor and other relevant School or Departmental personnel.

The completed PEEP should be forwarded to the University Fire Safety Advisor for formal endorsement. A copy of the PEEP should be given to the person concerned with a copy retained by an appropriate member of School, Departmental or building management.

The person with a disability is responsible for following those arrangements that either require an action to be taken by them or a condition to be met.

A separate PEEP might be needed for each building to be used by the person with a disability. Where buildings are to be used that do not form part of their School the PEEP may need to be developed in conjunction with the appropriate contact for that building. Academic Support will arrange the necessary referrals for students.

The [form for the PEEP](#) is available from the Safety Office Web Site and should be completed at the earliest possible opportunity ([also available as PDF](#)).

The Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan will take account of the following general features:

- Ability to hear or see an evacuation alarm,
- Ability to follow evacuation routes,
- Ability to negotiate obstacles such as stairs,
- Availability of appropriate assistance during and outside normal working hours.

[Appendix 1](#) contains general guidelines to assist in resolving emergency evacuation requirements and developing personal evacuation plans. These will be revised in line with procedural and technical developments.

[Appendix 2](#) describes the evacuation procedure for wheelchair users.

[Appendix 3](#) contains information for wheelchair users on the generic emergency evacuation procedure. Should the wheelchair user have reservations about the suitability of this then they should notify the University and if appropriate a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan will be developed.

General Guidelines to Assist In Developing Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans.

Guidance on Implementation

These guidelines have been produced to support the policy for the emergency evacuation of persons with a disability. They outline the general considerations that might be applied when identifying emergency evacuation requirements during the development of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan. However, due to the combination of individual requirements and specific features of the buildings much of the detail will be resolved at individual and building levels.

Means of escape

Information

The procedure for evacuation will vary from building to building according to the height, size, age and type of building involved.

Detailed plans and instructions will be sited in reception areas and designated entrances for mobility impaired access. This information will include:

- Particular features of fire alarm systems designed to assist people with a disability.
- Exit routes with direct egress for wheelchairs.
- Refuge areas and protected exit routes where these have been identified.

Refuges will be identified and approved by the Fire Safety Advisor. A refuge is a designated temporary safe area where someone can wait in comparative safety for assistance. It is a fire resisting enclosure that is served by a safe route to a storey exit, evacuation lift or final exit from the building. Refuges will usually be sited within a staircase and will be clearly marked.

Exit routes for wheelchairs and refuge areas will be clearly marked with appropriate signage.

Evacuation considerations

Hearing Impaired

Fire alarm systems may be linked to Deaf Alerter paging systems. Buildings provided with this facility will be clearly signed at the entrances. This will also be indicated on the building access plan.

If a person with a hearing impairment works in isolation consideration will be given to the provision of non-audible techniques such as a visual warning device or a Deaf Alerter pager. In all other cases colleagues should assist with their evacuation - the means by which colleagues are identified and informed will be specified in the PEEP. Deaf Alerters are also available in some of the University's residential accommodation.

Deaf Alerters are available for those living in a Hall of Residence through the Hall Manager. Residential conference delegates or other similar visitors can also be provided with a Deaf Alerter through the Hall Manager.

Visually Impaired

Visually impaired people can be guided on level surfaces by taking a personal assistant's arm. This should continue on stairways with the personal assistant descending alongside or slightly in front of the visually impaired person. The identity and availability of suitable personal assistants and any training needs will be considered in developing the PEEP.

If they have a guide dog the person should be asked how they should best be assisted. Some guide dogs may follow on their owner's command but generally, if a personal assistant is leading the person, the guide dog should be held by the lead rather than the harness.

Other options that may be considered when developing the PEEP include signage and Braille plans.

Mobility Impaired

To facilitate the quick and efficient evacuation of buildings and to avoid impeding stairways, mobility impaired occupants may need to be evacuated last, from the relative safety of a refuge area. The appropriate means for communicating from a refuge to notify presence will be identified during preparation of the PEEP. The normal method is either via a telephone in the refuge or a mobile phone to notify the relevant local Security Office using the emergency phone number displayed in the refuge.

Lifts should not be used in a fire situation unless they are designated as fire or evacuation lifts.

Anyone who may be involved in assisting with this type of evacuation should seek advice from the Safety Office about appropriate training.

Ambulant Mobility Impaired People

Many mobility impaired people will be able to negotiate a stairway albeit slowly. Some may need physical assistance and considerations to be addressed in the PEEP might vary from a helping hand or support when negotiating stairs to being carried or using an [evacuation chair](#), in which case the PEEP will identify how this is to be achieved.

Wheelchair Users

A Generic Emergency Evacuation Procedure has been developed (Appendix 3). This describes the standard arrangements for evacuating a wheelchair user. However this might not be sufficient for all circumstances and where a wheelchair user is unsure of the operation or suitability of this they may request that a PEEP be developed. This should be initiated via Academic Support.

It is essential to seek advice from the person concerned as to the best way of providing assistance.

[Evacuation Chairs](#) are provided in buildings where appropriate and are designed for the safe descent of stairs. There will usually be a minimum of one Evacuation Chair in each stairwell serving refuges. If it is necessary to use an Evacuation Chair the wheelchair user should be asked to transfer in to this from their wheelchair.

Consideration can also be given to evacuating a wheelchair user in his/her own wheelchair. When negotiating stairs one personal assistant takes the rear handles of the chair and one or two personal assistants go to the front holding the underside of the main frame. The chair should then be rolled down one stair at a time, the personal assistants in front preventing the chair from rolling forward too quickly.

Wheelchairs with large wheels at the front may need to be physically carried down the stairs by four people.

It may not be physically possible to use either of the methods above with very heavy people or powered wheelchairs in which case the use of alternative evacuation equipment, such as evacuation chairs, may be necessary. There might also be medical reasons that determine the method to be adopted.

Evacuation Chairs

Where appropriate, evacuation chairs will be strategically sited in or near the refuge. Schools and departments occupying buildings provided with evacuation chairs are required to identify a number of personnel for training in the use of the chair and manual handling techniques. This can be organised via the Safety Office. The list of trained personnel should be kept under review by the School/Department to ensure adequacy.

[Evacuation Chair Instructions](#)

Appendix 2

Procedure for the Evacuation of Wheelchair Users

Principles

- Wheelchair users will only be evacuated if there is a fire in the building.
- A number of staff within each relevant building, and Security Staff, will be trained in the use of Evacuation Chairs.
- Training in the use of Evacuation Chairs is by arrangement with the Safety Office or a School/Departmental trainer.
- The Safety Office will be notified by the Estate Office when and where Evacuation Chairs and refuges are created in order to initiate training.
- Wheelchair users are expected to carry a mobile phone that they keep charged up.
- The information contained in Appendix 3 will be provided for wheelchair users.

During Normal Hours (Mon to Fri, 9-5)

- On the sound of the fire alarm the wheelchair user goes to the refuge.
- Refuges will be checked by building occupants as part of the Fire Token procedure where this is in place, or otherwise by a Fire Marshall. The wheelchair user should also telephone Security Control using the refuge telephone where provided or a mobile phone (0115 951 8888) to ensure that their presence is noted.
- The Local Evacuation Co-ordinator should telephone Security Control to establish whether there is a person within a refuge. The Security Patrol dispatched to the building will also relay relevant information.

- The local response team will if necessary, i.e. there is a fire in the building, effect the evacuation unless the Fire Brigade are in attendance and take control.
- Security will keep the person in the refuge informed until a local response team arrives.

Out of Hours

- On the sound of the fire alarm the wheelchair user goes to the refuge.
- From the Refuge the person phones Security Control using the telephone in the refuge where provided or a mobile phone (0115 951 8888).
- Security will attend the alarm and if necessary, i.e. there is a fire in the building, effect the evacuation unless the Fire Brigade are in attendance and take control.
- Security will keep the person in the refuge informed until the response team arrives.

[Appendix 3 - Generic Emergency Evacuation Procedure](#)

[Information for Wheelchair Users Concerning Emergency Evacuation Arrangements](#)