

Staff- Emergency Evacuation Guidelines for Persons with Disabilities

Evacuation is difficult and uncomfortable for both the rescuers and people being assisted. Some people have conditions that can be aggravated or triggered if they are moved incorrectly. Remember that environmental conditions (smoke, debris, loss of electricity) will complicate evacuation efforts.

BEFORE AN EVACUTION IS ORDERED

Students should be invited to volunteer ahead of time to assist disabled persons in an emergency. If volunteers are not available, designate someone to assist who is willing to accept the responsibility.

- DO NOT evacuate disabled people in their wheelchairs. This is standard practice to ensure the safety of disabled people and volunteers. Wheelchairs will be evacuated later, if necessary.
- Always ASK disabled people how you can help BEFORE attempting any rescue technique or giving assistance. Ask how they can best be assisted or moved, and if there are any special considerations, or items that need to come with them.
- Before attempting an evacuation, volunteers and the people being assisted should discuss how any lifting will be done and where they are going.
- Proper lifting techniques (e.g. bending the knees, keeping the back straight, holding the person close before lifting, and using leg muscles to lift) should be used to avoid injury to rescuer's backs.
- Certain lifts may need to be modified depending on the disabilities of the people.

Everyone needs to take responsibility for preparing for emergencies. People with disabilities should consider what they would do and whether they need to take additional steps to prepare themselves.

WHEN AN EVACUATION HAS BEEN ORDERED:

- Evacuate people with disabilities, if possible.
- DO NOT use elevators, unless authorized to do so by police or fire personnel. Elevators could fail during a fire or major earthquake. Persons unable to evacuate should remain in the stairwell landing.
- Call 911.
- Check on persons with a disability during an evacuation. A "buddy system," where people with disabilities arrange for volunteers (Staff/Students) to assist them in an emergency, is a good method.
- Attempt a rescue evacuation ONLY if you have had rescue training or the person is in immediate danger and **cannot** wait for professional assistance.
- Always ASK someone with a disability how you can help BEFORE attempting any rescue technique or giving assistance. Ask how he or she can best be assisted or moved, and whether there are any special considerations or items that need to come with the person.

Evacuating a disabled or injured person yourself is the last resort. Consider your options and the risks of injuring yourself and others in an evacuation attempt. Do not make an emergency worse.