

## Persons Requiring Assistance

It is the Employer'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.

In any evacuation procedure, special consideration must be given to those persons who, due to physical or other limitations, might require specific assistance in evacuating the building. People who may require assistance may fall into one of the following five groups<sup>1</sup>:

- **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 limitation.
- **Vision**
  - Vision loss can include a broad range of conditions ranging from complete blindness to partial of 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 dependant 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.
  - They can also range from allergies, epilepsy, haemophilia, diabetes, thyroid condition, multiple sclerosis, pulmonary or heart disease and/dependency on dialysis, sanitary or urinary supplies.
  - Individuals with non-visible disabilities may have difficulty performing some tasks without appearing to have a disability.

Where and when possible, Persons Requiring Assistance (PRA) should be identified prior to emergencies. Supervisors, Demonstrators, etc. should ensure their personnel discuss methods of evacuating persons requiring assistance, or what action to take in the event that a person is unable to evacuate.

In the case of persons who can evacuate the building, assistance may take any of the following forms:

---

<sup>1</sup> Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities / Special Needs - Emergency Management Ontario, 2007.

- Assisting the person to ensure they do not fall and become injured while evacuating.

In the case of persons who cannot evacuate, Emergency Wardens and others designated to do so must know:

- The location of the Stryker Stair Chairs; chairs are located in the following locations
  - Campus Security vehicle
  - 12<sup>th</sup> floor, Schmon Tower
  - 4<sup>th</sup> floor, Schmon Tower
  - 4<sup>th</sup> floor, Welch Hall outside the IRC
  - Level 100, south side of the Market in the designated Area of Refuge opposite Career Services
- The areas of refuge where a person can safely be left if evacuation from the building is not possible.
- The procedure for reporting the location of persons left in the building to Fire Department or building personnel.

#### **IMPORTANT NOTES:**

1. It should be understood that rescue by fire fighters is not inevitable, nor is evacuating via the elevator a certainty.
2. The elevator lobby is not a safe place to remain and wait for retrieval by the fire department or building staff. The exit stair (either inside the stair or immediately outside the stair) is the safest place and operationally an ideal place to stay. Exit stairs are designed to provide protection from smoke and fire and are therefore the safest locations in the building.
3. In the event that a person or person(s) chose to or have to remain on their floor or in the building during an evacuation and is in NO immediate danger (i.e. there is no fire in the building, or the fire is not in the vicinity and is not likely to spread to other areas of the building), they should move to the Area of Refuge (Exit Stiar) and take up a position immediately outside the stair until the alarm has been cleared or the situation changes.
4. Firefighters may concentrate their efforts on investigating and/or controlling any fire that may be occurring.
5. Should firefighters decide that a rescue of the PRA's is necessary; they may or may not use the elevator on "Firemans Service". Should this be the case, standard protocol dictates that the take the elevator to a safe floor somewhere below the "fire floor" and ascend the rest of the way using the exit stairs.

#### ***For more information contact:***

Rick Fraser, Emergency Preparedness & Life Safety Officer  
Human Resources and Environment, Health & Safety  
Telephone: 905-688-5550 ext. 3284  
Email: rfraser2@brocku.ca