

IN ALL EMERGENCIES, AFTER AN EVACUATION HAS BEEN ORDERED:

Evacuation of people with disabilities will be given high priority in all emergencies and will be evacuated if possible. Evacuating a disabled or injured person by only one person with no assistance is a last resort.

Attempt a rescue evacuation ONLY if you have had rescue training.

Check on people with special needs during an evacuation, determine if they have established a “buddy system,” and ensure their safe evacuation.

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.

If the situation is life threatening, call 9-1-1.

Do NOT use elevators, unless authorized to do so by police or fire personnel. Elevators could fail during a fire, earthquake or flood.

BLINDNESS OR VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Most visually impaired persons will be familiar with the immediate area they are in and may have learned locations of exits and fire alarms in advance.

Tell the person the nature of the emergency and offer to guide him/her by offering your left/right elbow (this is the preferred method when acting as a “Sighted Guide”). Do NOT grasp a visually impaired person’s arm.

Give verbal instructions to advise about the safest route or direction using compass directions, estimated distances, and directional terms or information (i.e., elevators cannot be used or if there is debris or a crowd.)

As you walk, tell the person where you are and advise of any obstacles, e.g. stairs, overhanging objects, uneven pavement, curbs, and narrow passageways.

DEAFNESS OR HEARING LOSS

Buildings on the CSU Long Beach campus are equipped with visual (flashing light) as well as auditory evacuation alarms. However, persons with impaired hearing may not perceive an emergency exists. Where anyone appears to not be recognizing an alarm is sounding/flashing an alternative warning technique is required. Two alternative methods of warning are:

- Write a note stating what the emergency is and what the evacuation route is i.e. "Fire – go out the rear door to Parking Lot".
- Turn the room lights on and off to gain attention – then indicate through hand gestures or writing (i.e. on a blackboard) what is happening and where to go.

Offer visual instructions to advice of safest route or directions by pointing toward exits or evacuation map.

NON-AMBULATORY

Most non-ambulatory people will be able to exit safely without assistance out of single story buildings.

All 2+ story buildings will require persons to be carried out. If evacuation assistance is required, always ask the person what method of assistance they prefer. Some people have minimal ability to move and lifting them may be dangerous to their well being. If the person prefers to be moved in their wheelchair the wheelchair user will be carried facing away from the stairs.

Some people have no upper trunk or neck strength to assist in being carried out. If a seatbelt is available, secure the person if use of a chair is the method employed to carry the person to safety.

If moving a person more than three (3) flights, a “relay team” arrangement is

If the person prefers to be removed from their wheelchair, their needs and preferences will vary. Always consult the person as to his/her preference with regards to:

- Ways of being removed from a wheelchair
- The number of people needed for assistance
- Whether to extend or move extremities when lifting because of pain, catheter leg bags, spasticity, braces, etc.
- If a seat cushion or pad should be brought along with him/her if he/she is removed from the wheelchair.
- Being carried forward to backward on a flight of stairs.
- After-care. If a person is removed from the wheelchair (i.e., a stretcher, chair with cushion pad, or car seat) perhaps paramedic assistance might be needed.

SUMMARY

Prepare occupants in your building ahead of time for emergency evacuations. Know your building occupants. Train staff, faculty, and students to be aware of the needs of people with disabilities and to know how to offer assistance. Hold evacuation drills in which occupants participate, and evaluate drills to identify areas that need improvement. Develop plans that cover regular working hours, after hours, and weekends. Everyone needs to take responsibility for preparing for emergencies. People with abilities should consider what they would do and whether they need to take additional steps to prepare.

At alarm, options are:

In an extreme emergency, leave the building immediately and notify emergency personnel of a disabled person needing assistance.

In a moderate emergency, help the disabled person to your department's area of safe refuge assembly point, leave the building, and notify emergency personnel of a disabled person needing assistance.

Assist the disabled person to evacuate.