

EOP Annex 6 – Evacuation Strategy for Persons with Disabilities

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Purpose

The following course of action summarizes the measures for evacuating or sheltering persons with disabilities located on an Aims campus during an emergency. Every member of the College community has a responsibility to facilitate the safe evacuation and sheltering of persons with disabilities by adhering to the following guidelines.

Applicability

The College recognizes that individuals with disabilities may require assistance with alerting, evacuating, and sheltering in the event of an emergency. Aims Community College encourages students, faculty and staff with disabilities to self-identify. The College does this through diverse means including on-line web information, admission processes, college catalog, and information through academic courses.

Regulatory Requirements

This emergency evacuation strategy meets or exceeds the regulatory requirements and guidelines of the Occupational Health & Safety Administration (OSHA) and the guidelines of the Life Safety Codes of the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA 101).

Evacuation Options

College procedures require all persons, including those with disabilities, to evacuate a facility anytime the fire alarm system is activated or otherwise instructed to do so. Individuals with mobility impairments who are able to walk independently or with assistance may be able to negotiate stairs. However, if danger is imminent, the individual should wait until heavy traffic has cleared before attempting the stairs.

Elevators are never to be used in the event of a fire without explicit authorization by fire or police personnel. Stairway evacuation of wheelchair users should only be conducted by trained professionals (i.e. the fire/rescue or other trained emergency responders). Only in situations of extreme danger should untrained people attempt to evacuate wheelchair users. Moving a wheelchair down the stairs is never safe. Persons with disabilities must evacuate to the nearest exit which can be reached safely. Persons with disabilities have four basic evacuation options:

- 1. Horizontal Evacuation:** (If applicable, going from one building to a connected, adjacent building on the same level).
- 2. Stairway Evacuation:** Use steps to reach ground level exits from the building.
- 3. Area of Refuge:** If there is a major emergency that requires a building evacuation, people with disabilities may not be able to evacuate without help. There are designated areas of refuge in each building that provide protection where they may wait until assistance is available from emergency responders.

Stairway landings are designated areas of refuge. Elevators should not be used during an emergency, so people who cannot travel down the stairs should move to the outside area of

the stairwell and wait for the emergency responders. Individuals should wait in the designated area of refuge outside the stairwell, away from the path of traffic. Emergency responders will ascend to the areas of refuge to assist with evacuation down the stairs if the situation warrants. For small stair landings crowded with other building occupants using the stairway for evacuation, taking a position in a corridor next to the stair is a good alternative until the stair landing is clear. If the hazard becomes life-threatening before emergency responders arrive, people with disabilities should immediately move into the stairwell and close all doors.

For false alarms or an isolated and contained fire, a person with a disability may not have to evacuate. The decision to evacuate will be made by the responding emergency personnel.

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4. Stay in Place: The stay in place approach may be more appropriate for sprinkler protected buildings or buildings where an area of refuge is not nearby or available. It may also be more appropriate for an occupant who is alone when the alarm sounds.

Unless danger is imminent, remaining in a room with an exterior window, a room telephone or cell phone, and a solid or fire-resistant door is a viable option. With this approach, the person should call 9-1-1 and the appropriate Campus Security office to report his or her location directly. The dispatcher will relay the individual's location to on-site emergency personnel, who will determine the necessity for evacuation. If the phone lines fail or there is no cell phone signal, the individual can signal from the window by waving a cloth or other visible object.

Disability Planning Guidelines: Prior planning and practicing emergency evacuation routes from your classroom and/or work area are important in assuring a safe evacuation.

Mobility Impaired – Wheelchair

Persons using wheelchairs should stay in place or move to an area of refuge when the alarm sounds. Another student, faculty or staff member should then go to the emergency evacuation area and notify the on-site emergency personnel of the exact location of the person with a disability. If the person with a disability is alone, he/she should call 9-1-1 and provide their present location and the area of refuge to which he/she is headed to.

If the stair landing is chosen as the area of refuge, please note that some campus buildings have relatively small stair landings, and wheelchair users are advised to wait until the heavy traffic has passed before entering the stairway.

Stairway evacuation of wheelchair users should be conducted by trained professionals (i.e. the fire/rescue or other trained emergency responders). Only in situations of extreme danger should untrained people attempt to evacuate wheelchair users. Moving a wheelchair down the stairs is never safe.

Mobility Impaired - Non-wheelchair

Persons with mobility impairments, who are able to walk independently, may be able to negotiate stairs in an emergency with minor assistance. If danger is imminent, the individual should wait until the heavy traffic has cleared before attempting the stairs. If there is no

immediate danger (detectable smoke, fire, or unusual odor), the person with a disability may choose to stay in the building, using the other options, until emergency personnel arrive and determine if evacuation is necessary.

Hearing Impaired

A number of campus buildings are equipped with fire alarm strobe lights but some buildings are not. Persons with hearing impairments may not hear audio emergency alarms and will need to be alerted of emergency situations. Emergency instructions can be given by writing a short note explicitly stating to evacuate.

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Visually Impaired

Most people with a visual impairment will be familiar with their immediate surroundings and frequently traveled routes. Since the emergency evacuation route is likely different from the commonly traveled route, persons who are visually impaired may need assistance in evacuating. Another student, faculty or staff member should offer their elbow to the individual with a visual impairment and guide him or her through the evacuation route. During the evacuation the assistant should communicate as necessary to assure safe evacuation.

Responsibilities:

As an individual requiring assistance, how should I pre-plan an evacuation?

- ✓ **CREATING** a personal plan. Inform students, faculty, or staff members about your disability and let them know specifically what assistance you will need in an evacuation.
- ✓ **LEARNING** the locations of exit corridors, exit stairways, and designated areas of refuge.
- ✓ **PLANNING** a primary and alternate escape route.
- ✓ **TELLING** another student, faculty, or staff member how to assist you during an evacuation.
- ✓ **NOTIFY** someone you're safe by using your phone independently or make prior arrangements with **ACCESS** to have someone contact you or attempt to locate you through Campus Security.

As a student, faculty, or staff member, what can I do help individuals requiring assistance?

- ✓ **KNOW** the needs and capabilities of people requiring assistance who are routinely in your classroom or work area.
- ✓ **ASK** how you can help anyone requiring assistance before giving it.
- ✓ **OFFER** verbal assistance for individuals who are blind or visually impaired and guide them to the nearest exit.

Appendix 1 to Annex 6: Evacuation Locations for Multiple Level Buildings

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There are several buildings within Aims Community College that have two or more levels. The current buildings with two or more levels are: Allied Health and Sciences (Greeley Campus), Westview (Greeley Campus), College Center (Greeley Campus), and the Prairie (Ft. Lupton). Evacuation locations for each building are depicted below.

Greeley Campus, Westview Building Area(s) of Refuge







