

# **Personal Evacuation Guidelines for Students and Employees with Mobility, Auditory and Visual Disabilities**

All members of the University community should understand their roles and responsibilities when responding to emergency situations. The University recognizes that individuals with mobility, auditory or visual disabilities may require assistance in emergency situations, especially with accessing alerts, evacuating, and sheltering. **The University, therefore, asks all individuals who may need assistance in an emergency to self-identify to the University.** This means that students and employees of the University should contact the Office of Equity and Diversity [elizabeth.garcia2@scranton.edu](mailto:elizabeth.garcia2@scranton.edu) or [diana.collins@scranton.edu](mailto:diana.collins@scranton.edu) or by calling 570-941-6645.

The University will not assume that a student or employee requires a Personal Evacuation Plan.

The University shall work with self-identified individuals to develop a Personal Evacuation Plan that includes a means of communication in the event of an emergency and specific procedures for evacuation and sheltering.

## **Guidelines**

The following document outlines procedures for alerting, evacuating or sheltering persons with disabilities located on The University of Scranton campus during an emergency. Persons with disabilities must do all that they can before and during an emergency to ensure their personal safety. All members of the University community also have a responsibility to facilitate the safe evacuation and sheltering of persons with disabilities by adhering to the following guidelines. While this policy applies to permanent disabilities, an evacuation plan may be appropriate in instances of temporary mobility disabilities on a case-by-case basis.

## **Self-Identification with the University**

All faculty, students, and staff requiring evacuation assistance during an emergency must complete a confidential [Self-Identification Emergency Evacuation Form](#) according to the schedule outlined in the “Timelines” section below. The Self-Identification Questionnaire gathers information to assist in alerting, evacuating, or sheltering individuals in case of an emergency. Self-identification is strictly voluntary. The Office of Equity and Diversity is available to answer any questions that arise when completing the form.

NOTE: There may be instances where an individual may not request a Personal Evacuation Plan or complete the Self-Identification Emergency Evacuation Form for a multitude of reasons. In limited instances, where the University learns that a community member has mobility issues (e.g. use of a wheelchair) that might prevent them from exiting a building in an emergency situation, OED may reach out to the individual to inform them of these Guidelines and to invite them to complete the Self-Identification Emergency Evacuation Form. The individual is not required to engage with OED if they do not wish to engage in the creation of a Personal Evacuation Plan.

Individuals completing the Self-Identification Emergency Evacuation Form should return it as follows:

**Students:**

By uploading the form to [Accommodate](#)

**Employees (Faculty, Other Academic Personnel, Staff and Administrators):**

By hand delivery to the Office of Equity and Diversity, Institute for Molecular Biology and Medicine, or by email to [non-academic-accom@scranton.edu](mailto:non-academic-accom@scranton.edu).

Once the questionnaire is received, applicants will be contacted to engage in the interactive process to develop a Personal Evacuation Plan.

**Non-OED Self-Identification:**

A student or employee needing assistance may voluntarily provide information to anyone within the University community about their need for assistance during an emergency. However, such notification is not intended to be a substitute for proper identification using the Self-Identification Questionnaire.

**Timelines:**

Applicants requiring assistance shall update their self-identification information as follows:

- **Students:** At least at the start of each academic term and whenever circumstances warrant an update (e.g. changes in their condition or changes living or learning locations).
- **Employees:** Whenever circumstances warrant an update (e.g. changes in their condition or changes in, teaching or office locations).

**Personal Evacuation Plans**

**Students:**

Once a student submits a Self-Identification Questionnaire, OED will work with the student and the University's Health and Safety Officer, and if necessary, with the Director of Residence Life, to develop a personal emergency plan that includes specific evacuation procedures, sheltering procedures, and means of communication in the event of an emergency specific to the student. The process may require the student to meet with OED and the Health and Safety Officer in order to complete the process and obtain a Personal Evacuation Plan. The plan may include some or all of the following information:

- Where and how to inform/contact emergency response personnel of the student's location;
- Instruction on how to register for the University's Emergency Notification System;
- The safest area located on each floor within the building that the individual will move to, to await assistance from emergency response personnel (e.g. police and fire), if appropriate;

- Depending on the building and the situation, the best evacuation options for the individual, including, but not limited to:
  - Horizontal evacuation
  - Elevator usage
  - Area of rescue, stairwell, lobby, etc.
- How to identify of an evacuation assistant (see below) identified by the student;
  - Evacuation assistants may be required to alert and give further instruction in emergency situations for individuals with auditory or visually or physically impaired, individuals who need assistance in navigating unfamiliar routes during an emergency evacuation, in addition to assisting the individual to the nearest outside emergency exit, refuge area or with communicating with emergency response personnel.
- Who to contact for emergency evacuations that might occur at times when others are not usually present, or when the evacuation assistant is not in the building.

For the Personal Emergency Plan to be implemented, OED, along with the University's Health and Safety Officer, must meet with the student to finalize the content of the Plan and to review the expectations and responsibilities in the plan for the student. All individuals must sign off on the Plan. University Police will NOT track a student's class or residential location at the time of the emergency. Students must contact emergency response personnel in accordance with the Personal Evacuation Plan

**Employees:**

Once an employee submits a Self-Identification Questionnaire, OED will engage in the interactive process with the employee. OED will work with the Health and Safety Officer to develop a Personal Emergency plan that includes specific evacuation procedures, sheltering procedures, and means of communication in the event of an emergency.

The plan may include some or all of the following information:

- Where and how to inform/contact emergency response personnel of the employee's location;
- Instruction on how to register for the University's Emergency Notification System;
- The safest area located on each floor within the building that the individual will move to, to await assistance from emergency response personnel (e.g. police and fire), if appropriate;
- Depending on the building and the situation, the best evacuation options for the individual, including, but not limited to:
  - Horizontal evacuation
  - Elevator usage
  - Area of rescue, stairwell, lobby, etc.
- How to identify of an evacuation assistant (see below) identified by the employee.
  - Evacuation assistants may be required to alert and give further instruction in emergency situations for individuals with auditory or visual or physically impairments who need assistance in navigating unfamiliar routes during an emergency evacuation, in addition to assisting the individual to the nearest outside

emergency exit, refuge area or with communicating with emergency response personnel.

- Who to contact for emergency evacuations that might occur at times when others are not usually present, or when the evacuation assistant is not in the building.

Employees who require non-auditory alerts should self-identify for the purpose of securing visual alarms to alert the individuals in the event of an emergency.

For the Personal Emergency Plan to be implemented, OED may require a meeting with the employee and the Health and Safety Officer to review the Plan.

### **Evacuation Assistant:**

Persons needing assistance are encouraged to identify a friend or colleague to serve as an evacuation assistant in the event of an emergency. The evacuation assistant can be a co-worker for an employee or a student for a student or anyone else at the University that is ready, willing, and able to perform the duties of an Evacuation Assistant. An evacuation assistant should be someone, who is likely to be in a building during the same timeframe as the individual needing assistance, but not necessarily in the same area. If necessary, OED can assist the applicant in identifying an evacuation assistant.

The University's Health and Safety Officer shall provide evacuation assistant with training on the following prior to incorporating the evacuation assistant to the personal emergency plan:

- Contents of these guidelines;
- Fire safety procedures;
- Process to assess surroundings in an emergency;
- Process to assist the individual without causing injury or bodily harm;
- Procedures to communicate with the individual;
- Procedures for assisting the individual in communicating with emergency response personnel.

In order to provide such training, the student or employee must notify the Office of Equity and Diversity who the assistant is in order to schedule the training.

## **Individuals with Mobility Impairments**

### **Elevators**

In certain buildings, elevators may be used to assist in the evacuation in areas not affected by fire and smoke. Most elevators are equipped with fire and smoke sensors.

### **Evacuation Scenarios**

Individuals with mobility impairments have varying degrees of impairment, the following information is offered for possible scenarios which may guide the interactive process with students, faculty or staff.

### Ambulatory

Individuals with mobility impairments who are able to walk independently or with minor assistance, including those who use crutches or a cane, may be able to negotiate stairs in an emergency situation. Even those who customarily use a wheelchair or scooter for long distance travel may be able to walk independently or with minor assistance in an emergency.

### Non-Ambulatory

Evacuating people who are not able to walk can be more complicated. In addition to the information contained in the personal evacuation plan, an individual can ask an employee of the University for assistance to the nearest exterior stairwell or safe area of refuge to await emergency personnel if there is no immediate danger. In the event of immediate danger, University Police (570-941-7777) and 911 should be contacted.

Only in situations of extreme and immediate danger should untrained employees attempt to evacuate a non-ambulatory person, as there is significant risk to the person with a disability, especially if the person has limited control of their body, is more prone to injury, or uses apparatuses such as respirators or catheters. Additionally, individuals attempting to assist the individual also risk injury. If danger is imminent, the person with a disability should be asked how best to be moved. While it is best to let the professional emergency personnel conduct the evacuation, a person with a mobility impairment can be carried by two people who have interlocked arms to form a chair or by carrying the person in a sturdy office chair.

### Individuals with Vision Impairments

Individuals with vision impairments should be familiar with their immediate surroundings; however, in the event of an emergency, employees or students may tell the person with the vision impairment the nature of the emergency, if known, and/or offer to guide the person to the nearest emergency exit. If the individual accepts assistance, then the employee or student should have the individual take an elbow and escort the individual out of the building. As you walk, tell the individual where you are and advise of any obstacles. When you reach safety, orient the person to where they are and ask if any further assistance is needed.

Usually, the safest areas of refuge are pressurized stair enclosures common to high-rise buildings, and open air exit balconies. Other possible areas of refuge include fire rated corridors or vestibules adjacent to exit stairs and pressurized elevator lobbies. Many campus buildings feature fire rated corridor construction that may offer safe refuge. Taking a position in a rated corridor next to the stair is a good alternative to a small stair landing crowded with the other building occupants using the stairway. If you plan to assist someone to a place of refuge ask the person if their evacuation plan identifies the best location.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY/PRIVACY STATEMENT**

The University is required by law to keep all medical information confidential; however, emergency safety personnel, and other University representatives may be informed if an individual with a disability might require help with alerting, evacuating, or sheltering during an emergency. The information shared with such individuals shall be limited to information necessary to help alert, evacuate, or shelter the applicant during an emergency.

## **Contact Information and Emergency Numbers**

**For all emergency calls contact University Police:**

**(570) 941-7777 -or- 9-1-1**

**Remain calm, state your name, location, nature of the emergency and stay on the line until directed.**

**Follow procedures as directed.**

### **Important Phone Numbers**

University Police (non-emergency)	570-941-7888
University Police (emergency)	570-941-7777
Police and Fire Departments	9-1-1