

Emergency Evacuation Drill Program

Purpose

To establish a policy that outlines how emergency evacuation drills are planned, executed, evaluated and documented.

General

Emergency evacuation drills are conducted to ensure that occupants of a building are familiar with the process of evacuating a building through safe and efficient use of the building's means of egress (evacuation routes) and the effective location of designated meeting places. Evacuation drills are intended to replicate how occupants should respond in a real emergency situation so all practices that would be commonly used during a real emergency will also apply during planned evacuation drills. Emergency evacuation drills ensure that orderly egress occurs under controlled circumstances which helps to prevent the panic that has been responsible for the majority of fire fatalities in the principal fire disasters of history. Orderly evacuation and control are the primary purposes of emergency evacuation drills.

Policy

West Chester University requires that emergency evacuation drills be planned, conducted and evaluated for all University owned and affiliated facilities per applicable Commonwealth Laws and Federal Codes and that all occupants of University facilities actively participate in these drills. Emergency evacuation drills shall be held at unexpected times under varying conditions to simulate the potential for the unusual conditions that may occur during real emergencies. Emergency evacuation drills will be monitored and evaluated by Environmental Health and Safety and records of these drills will be kept on file at the office of Environmental Health and Safety for a minimum of three calendar years and will be submitted annually for student, employee and public review as required by applicable Commonwealth and Federal law.

Emergency Evacuation Drill Procedures

- Residential Occupancies

In compliance with the minimum standards established by PA Title 34 Section 50.57, International Fire Code Chapter 4 as adopted by Pennsylvania, NFPA 101 (Life Safety Code) and NFPA 1 (Uniform Fire Code), this policy will require that an emergency evacuation drill be conducted in each residential facility using the following guidelines;

- **Fall and Spring Academic Semesters** – A minimum of four evacuation drills are required by the Pennsylvania Fire Code annually. The first evacuation drill will be conducted within ten days of the start of the fall semester and drills will be conducted again during the month of October. Spring semester evacuation drills will be conducted during the months of February and April. These drills will be conducted at various times during the day, but not before 9:00 am or after 7:00 pm.
- **Winter and Summer Sessions** – During each month that a residential facility is occupied for more than 15 consecutive days by any specific group of residents, an evacuation drill will be required. These groups will include but are not limited to occupancy by University students for the winter and summer academic sessions, occupancy by the Academic Development Program and/or occupancy by any camp, conference or other University sanctioned event requiring lodging in the residential facilities for more than 15 consecutive days.

These evacuation drills will be scheduled by Environmental Health and Safety and conducted by the Resident Director or Graduate Hall Director as assigned. The times of these drills will rotate to allow for morning evacuations, afternoon evacuations and evening evacuations. Drills will be conducted only between the hours of 8:00 am and 11:00 pm. For any month that a residential facility is occupied for less than 15 consecutive days, evacuation drills will not be required but can be performed for the purposes of training building staff at the discretion of the Office of Residence Life and Housing or University Student Housing upon approval from the office of Environmental Health and Safety.

- **Other Occupancies**

In compliance with the minimum standards established by PA Title 34, NFPA 101 (Life Safety Code) and NFPA 1 (Uniform Fire Code) for all non-residential facilities, evacuation drills will be scheduled and conducted by Environmental Health and Safety at least once each semester during normal business hours. The Facility Administrator will be advised in advance of the date for the scheduled drill, but the specific times for these drills will not be made available in advance. Facility Administrators are encouraged not to share the scheduled drill information with anyone other than those directly involved in planning the drill. Consideration will be given to altering the drill schedule when major academic exams are being administered or other such situations exist when the drill would create a serious interruption to academic or administrative pursuits. All changes to the drill schedule must be approved by Environmental Health and Safety.

- **Compliance**
Commonwealth law requires that all occupants of the building evacuate during an evacuation drill. Those persons who are responsible for classes that are in session should be the last to leave the classroom and the last to return following an all clear signal. This same individual should also appoint someone to accompany any person in the class who is physically unable to participate in the evacuation drill, to the nearest Area of Rescue Assistance. They are to remain with that person until the evacuation drill has been completed. Vertical evacuation by those persons who are physically impaired and those who are assisting them will not be necessary. All evacuation drills must be conducted in an orderly and dignified manner, keeping in mind the importance of speed in evacuating the building in a real emergency.
- All University employees will become familiar with the evacuation exits nearest to their teaching post, research post, or office area. As a general rule, occupants should use the closest exit but pre-determine an alternate exit route in case the primary route is not accessible. Students in residence halls should avoid using the center stairwell during an evacuation drill. However, the center stairwell may be used if all other exits are impassable during a real emergency. Students, employees and guests are encouraged to become familiar with the posted evacuation plans. This preplanning is of extreme importance. It is everyone's responsibility to know the quickest way out of a building in the event of an emergency.
- Do not re-enter an evacuated building until authorized to do so by the official conducting the evacuation drill

Responsibilities

- **Environmental Health and Safety**
 - Environmental Health and Safety will be responsible for scheduling all residential facility evacuation drills and for notifying the Graduate Hall Director of the days and times for all drills prior to the start of each academic session. Environmental Health and Safety will conduct all evacuation drills for the purpose of observation and evaluation.
 - Environmental Health and Safety will be responsible for scheduling as well as conducting all evacuation drills for academic and administrative facilities. Facility Administrators for these buildings will be notified at least two weeks in advance of what week the drill will occur. No other information pertaining to the drill will be released prior to the drill. Environmental Health and Safety personnel will be responsible for completing the drill evaluation form.

- Environmental Health and Safety will be responsible for ensuring that compliance with Commonwealth and Federal laws is met for all emergency evacuation drills.
 - All records required by law for evacuation drills will be kept in the office of Environmental Health and Safety
- Facility Administrators
 - Graduate Hall Directors for residential facilities are responsible for ensuring all residents are informed of building evacuation procedures for their facility. Resident Assistants for each floor/area of their assigned building that can assist others with the orderly evacuation of occupants in the event of a fire or other type of emergency as they are in the process of evacuation.
 - Facility Administrators in academic and administrative support facilities are not responsible for conducting or documenting evacuation drills. They may appoint “Evacuation Assistants” for each floor/area of their assigned building that can assist others with the orderly evacuation of occupants in the event of a fire or other type of emergency as they are in the process of evacuation. For Residence Halls the Evacuation Assistants are the assigned Resident Assistants.
- Evacuation Assistants
 - Evacuation Assistants should be responsible individuals who are normally present on the floor for which they are appointed.
 - Evacuation Assistants should become familiar with the building emergency evacuation signals, evacuation routes, Areas of Rescue Assistance, designated assembly areas and procedures for helping individuals to evacuate that are in need of assistance.
 - Evacuation Assistants may assist with the evacuation of their assigned floor/area as they are evacuating themselves by indicating to other occupants where the closest exits and designated assembly areas are located. Building occupants are expected to self-evacuate upon the activation of the fire alarm system and Evacuation Assistants are not responsible for checking individual rooms to ensure that a complete evacuation has occurred. This task will be performed by emergency first responders upon their arrival.
 - During evacuation drills, emphasis shall be placed on assisting those individuals who cannot self-evacuate to either an Area of Rescue Assistance or to achieve complete evacuation from the building.

Exception: If the person with a physical disability is unable to achieve complete evacuation from the building, the Evacuation Assistant or a designee shall assist that person to evacuate into the nearest, Area of Rescue Assistance. The Evacuation Assistants or designee should remain with that person until the fire evacuation drill has been completed

Scheduling

- **Time** - Fire evacuation drills shall be held at unexpected times and under varying times to simulate the unusual conditions that occur in the case of emergency.
- **Shifts** - Fire evacuation drills shall not be scheduled one half (1/2) hour before or one half (1/2) hour after a Department of Public Safety shift change.
 - **First Shift** occurs between the hours of 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM.
 - **Second Shift** occurs between the hours of 1:00 PM – 6:00 PM.
 - **Third Shift** occurs between the hours of 6:00 PM – 11:00 PM.

Pre-Drill Notifications

- The person responsible for conducting an emergency evacuation drill will notify the Public Safety Dispatcher at 610-436-3311 just prior to conducting a fire evacuation drill for the building.

Conducting the Fire Exit Drill

- **Alarm Activation** - The building's fire alarm system will be activated by the person responsible for the emergency evacuation drill in order to begin the evacuation process.
- **Evacuation** - All building occupants shall take part in the fire evacuation drill and are required to completely evacuate the building.

Exception: Those individuals with a physical disability, which might prevent them from completely evacuating the building in a safe manner, are still required to horizontally evacuate their floor to a designated area of refuge or to an exit stairway landing.

- **Accountability:** As occupants arrive at the building's designated assembly point area(s), efforts shall be made by the Facility Administrator or designee to determine if all occupants have successfully been evacuated and accounted for.
 - **Reset** – The person responsible for the emergency evacuation drill will reset the fire alarm system once the emergency evacuation drill has been completed.

- **Re-entry.** No person shall re-enter the building until authorized to do so by the person conducting the drill.

Emergency Evacuation Drill Reports

- **Documentation:** An *Emergency Evacuation Report* form shall be filled out and fully completed at the conclusion of the fire exit drill by the person responsible for conducting the drill. The *Emergency Evacuation Drill Report* form will require documentation of the following information:

1. The identity and title of the person conducting the drill.
2. Date and time of the drill.
3. Notification method used.
4. Personnel on duty and participating.
5. Number of occupants evacuated.
6. Special conditions simulated.
7. Problems encountered.
8. Weather conditions when occupants were evacuated.
9. Time required to accomplish a complete evacuation.

Exception: The *Overall Rating* section is to remain blank.

Corrections of Deficiencies

- **Fire Alarm System Deficiencies** - Fire alarm system deficiencies shall be immediately reported to Environmental Health and Safety by telephone and documented through an e-mail. Environmental Health and Safety shall immediately initiate corrective action for repair of any fire alarm system deficiencies.
- **Environmental Health and Safety Review** - Upon receipt of the *Emergency Evacuation Drill Report* form, Environmental Health and Safety shall fully review the report and assign an overall drill rating under the *Overall Rating* section of the form.
- **Quality Assurance** - Environmental Health and Safety shall report all noted discrepancies and/or recommendations for drill improvements by e-mail within seven (7) days to the Facility Administrator for appropriate corrective action.

Program Reviewed July 2022