

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITY



### Purpose

This program establishes procedures for emergency evacuation of the physically handicapped from classrooms, assemblies, and otherwise occupied buildings at Mesa Community College and its entities. The guidelines set forth in this program are in compliance with *NFPA 101 Life Safety Code*, the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, and *American National Standard A117.1*.

### Introduction

Mesa Community College policies and procedures require that all persons in a facility evacuate that facility any time the fire alarm system is activated. Persons with disability may not be able to evacuate unassisted. Therefore, they should inform another person that assistance may be necessary during a fire alarm activation.

### “Buddy System” Option

Make use of a “Buddy System.” During the first week of classes or employment, make several acquaintances with fellow students, residents, class members, or office workers. Inform them of any special assistance that may be required in the event of a fire alarm (i.e., hearing the alarm, guidance during evacuation, etc.)

When the fire alarm sounds, the “Buddy” (or assistant) will make sure of the location of the person with disability, then go outside and inform emergency personnel that a person in that location needs assistance in leaving the building. Emergency personnel will then enter the building and evacuate that person.

### Evacuation Options During a Fire Alarm

Use of the “Buddy System,” along with the following evacuation options, will help to assure the prompt evacuation of any person with disability.

#### • Horizontal Evacuation

Move away from the area of imminent danger to a safe distance (i.e., another wing, an adjoining building, opposite end of the corridor, or outside if on the ground level).

- **Vertical (Stairway) Evacuation**

Stairways can be used by those who are able to evacuate with or without assistance. Persons with sight disability may require the assistance of a sighted person. Persons who must use crutches or other devices as walking aids will need to use their own discretion, especially where several flights of stairs are concerned.

- **Stay-in-Place**

Unless danger is imminent, remain in a room with an exterior window and a telephone, closing the door if possible. Call College Safety dispatcher at 1-7046 and give your name, location and reason you are calling. The dispatcher will relay the information to Campus Security, who will assist by notifying on-scene emergency personnel. Phone lines normally remain in service during most building emergencies. If the phone lines fail, the individual can signal from the window by waving a cloth or other visible object.

- **Area of Rescue**

If the person with disability cannot get far enough away from the danger by using *Horizontal Evacuation*, then that person should seek an Area of Rescue. Areas of Rescue meet the requirements listed within "[Americans with Disabilities Act, Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities \(ADAAG\)](#)"; section 4.3.11 Areas of Rescue Assistance.

Such an area should have the following: 1) 2-way communication, 2) smoke barrier, and 3) one-hour fire-rated assembly (i.e., fire-rated door, walls, ceiling). Specific areas of rescue for each building will be designated by signage at the handicap entrances.

Note: Library stairwells qualify as areas of rescue.

## **Disability Guidelines**

**Prior planning and practicing of emergency evacuation routes are important in assuring a safe evacuation.**

- **Mobility Impaired (Wheelchair)**

Persons using wheelchairs should Stay-in-Place, or move to an Area-of-Refuge with their assistant when the alarm sounds. The evacuation assistant should then proceed to the evacuation assembly point outside the building and tell emergency personnel the location of the person with disability. IF the person with disability is alone, he/she should phone college safety at 1-7777 (outside phone dial 480-461-7777). He/she should give their present location and need of assistance or the Area-of-Refuge to which they are headed.

- **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 disability may choose to stay in the building, using the other options, until emergency personnel arrive.

- **Hearing Impaired**

Most buildings on campus are equipped with fire alarm horns/strobes that sound the alarm and flash strobe lights. The strobe lights are for hearing-impaired persons. Persons with hearing impairments may not notice or hear emergency alarms and will need to be alerted of emergency situations. Mesa Community College is continuously upgrading the fire alarm systems in campus facilities to meet ADA requirements.

- **Visually Impaired**

Most buildings on campus are equipped with fire alarm horn/strobes that sound the alarm and flash strobe lights. The horn is for sight-impaired persons. 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. The assistant should offer assistance to the individual with visual impairment and guide his or her through the evacuation route.

Upon request from persons with hearing or sight impairments, personnel with Facilities and the Health & Safety Department will install fire alarm horns or strobe lights in their work area.