



## EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

This information bulletin has been created to be used as a guide for individuals or teams tasked with preparing emergency evacuation and fire safety plans for their workplace, business, school, residential building, or high-rise building. It specifically lays out what items shall be included in accordance with the applicable fire code requirements here in the District of Columbia. All content was compiled based on the 2015 edition of the International Fire Code.

### WHAT OCCUPANCIES ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE AN EVACUATION PLAN?

#### Assembly Occupancies (Theaters, Clubs, Taverns, Restaurants, Arenas, etc.)

**403.2 Group A occupancies.** An approved fire safety and evacuation plan shall be prepared and maintained for Group A occupancies, other than those occupancies used exclusively for purposes of religious worship with an occupant load less than 2,000 persons.

#### Educational Occupancies (Schools, Daycare Centers, etc.)

**403.5 Group E occupancies.** An approved fire safety and evacuation plan shall be prepared and maintained for Group E occupancies and for buildings containing both a Group E occupancy and an atrium.

#### Business Occupancies (Office Buildings, Ambulatory Care Facilities, etc.)

**403.4 Group B occupancies.** An approved fire safety and evacuation plan shall be prepared and maintained for buildings containing a Group B occupancy where the Group B occupancy has an occupant load of 500 or more persons or more than 100 persons above or below the lowest level of exit discharge and for buildings having an ambulatory care facility.

#### Residential Occupancies (Hotel, Motel, boarding houses, bed& breakfast w/ 6 or more guest rooms)

**403.10.1 Group R-1 occupancies.** An approved fire safety and evacuation plan in accordance with Section 404 shall be prepared and maintained for Group R-1 occupancies. Group R-1 occupancies shall comply with Sections 403.10.1.1 through 403.10.1.3

**403.10.1.1 Evacuation diagrams.** A diagram depicting two evacuation routes shall be posted on or immediately adjacent to every required egress door from each hotel or motel sleeping unit.

**403.10.1.2 Emergency duties.** Upon discovery of a fire or suspected fire, hotel and motel employees shall perform the following duties:

1. Activate the fire alarm system, where provided.
2. Notify the public fire department.
3. Take other action as previously instructed.

**403.10.1.3 Fire safety and evacuation instructions.** Information shall be provided in the fire safety and evacuation plan required by Section 404 to allow guests to decide whether to evacuate to the outside, evacuate to an area of refuge, remain in place, or any combination of the three.

**Residential Occupancies (Apartment buildings, Dormitories, Fraternities/ Sororities, etc.)**

**403.10.2 Group R-2 occupancies.** Group R-2 occupancies shall comply with sections 403.10.2.1 through 403.10.2.3

**403.10.2.2 Emergency guide.** Fire emergency guides shall be provided for Group R-2 Residential occupancies. Guide contents, maintenance and distribution shall comply with Section 403.10.2.2.1.

**403.10.2.2.1 Emergency Guide contents.** A fire emergency guide shall describe the location, function and use of fire protection equipment and appliances accessible to residents, including fire alarm systems, smoke alarms and portable fire extinguishers. Guides shall include an emergency evacuation plan for each dwelling unit.

**Highrise Buildings (All buildings greater than 75 Feet in height)**

**403.11.2 High-rise buildings.** An approved fire safety and evacuation plan shall be prepared and maintained for high-rise buildings.

**WHAT INFORMATION IS REQUIRED IN MY PLAN?**

**404.2.1 Fire Evacuation Plans.** Fire evacuation plans shall include the following:

1. Emergency egress or escape routes and whether evacuation of the building is to be complete by selected floors or areas only or with a defend-in-place response.
2. Procedures for employees who must remain to operate critical equipment before evacuating.
3. Procedures for the use of elevators to evacuate the building where occupant evacuation elevators complying with Section 3008 of the International Building Code are provided. Elevators not meeting all of the requirements in the above mention section of the Building Code cannot be used an occupant evacuation elevator.
4. Procedures for assisted rescue for persons unable to use the general means of egress unassisted.
5. Procedures for accounting for employees and occupants after evacuation has been completed.
6. Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for rescue or emergency medical aid.
7. The preferred and any alternative means of notifying occupants of a fire or emergency.
8. The preferred and any alternative means of reporting fires and other emergencies to the fire department or designated emergency response organization.
9. Identification and assignment of personnel who can be contacted for further information or explanation of duties under the plan.
10. A description of the emergency voice/alarm communication system alert tone and preprogrammed voice messages, where provided.

**Important Note:** The primary focus of evacuation plans is to prepare for and define roles for evacuation and relocation of building occupants during an emergency. Fire evacuation plans are important to both the emergency responders and the building occupants. It focuses the occupant's activities on facilitating a smoother evacuation or relocation process and provides the fire department with critical information on the building and the location of the occupants.

**404.2.2 Fire Safety Plans.** Fire safety plans shall include the following:

1. The procedure for reporting a fire or other emergency.
2. The life safety strategy including the following:
  - 2.1. Procedures for notifying occupants, including areas with a private mode alarm system.
  - 2.2. Procedures for occupants under a defend-in-place response.
  - 2.3. Procedures for evacuating occupants, including those who need evacuation assistance.
3. Site plans indicating the following:
  - 3.1. The occupancy assembly point.
  - 3.2. The locations of fire hydrants.
  - 3.3. The normal routes of fire department vehicle access.
4. Floor plans identifying the locations of the following:
  - 4.1. Exits.
  - 4.2. Primary evacuation routes.
  - 4.3. Secondary evacuation routes.
  - 4.4. Accessible egress routes.
    - 4.4.1. Areas of refuge.
    - 4.4.2. Exterior areas for assisted rescue.
  - 4.5. Refuge areas associated with smoke barriers and horizontal exits.
  - 4.6. Manual fire alarm boxes.
  - 4.7. Portable fire extinguishers.
  - 4.8. Occupant-use hose stations.
  - 4.9. Fire alarm annunciators and controls.
5. A list of major fire hazards associated with the normal use and occupancy of the premises, including maintenance and housekeeping procedures.
6. Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for maintenance of systems and equipment installed to prevent or control fires.
7. Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for maintenance, housekeeping and controlling fuel hazard sources.

**Important Note:** The above section requires an overall fire safety plan with emphases on the building, building site layout, and hazards.

**404.2.3.1 Lockdown Plan contents.** Lockdown plans shall be approved by the fire code official and shall include the following and comply with Sections 404.2.3.2 and 404.2.3.3:

1. Initiation. The plan shall include instructions for reporting an emergency that requires a lockdown.

2. Accountability. The plan shall include accountability procedures for staff to report the presence or absence of occupants.
3. Recall. The plan shall include a prearranged signal for returning to normal activity.
4. Communication and coordination. The plan shall include an approved means of two-way communication between a central location and each secured area.

**404.2.3.2 Training frequency.** The training frequency shall be included in the lockdown plan. The lockdown drills shall not substitute for any of the fire and evacuation drills required.

**404.2.3.3 Lockdown notification.** The method of notifying building occupants of a lockdown shall be included in the plan. The method of notification shall be separate and distinct from the fire alarm signal.

**Important Note:** The fire code does not require a lockdown plan. It only requires emergency evacuation and fire safety plans. However, if you develop a lockdown plan for your building, it must be strictly supervised in order to maintain occupant safety at an acceptable level.

## **PLAN UPDATES AND DISTRIBUTION**

**404.3 Maintenance.** Fire safety and evacuation plans shall be reviewed or updated annually or as necessitated by changes in staff assignments, occupancy or the physical arrangement of the building.

**404.4 Availability.** Fire safety and evacuation plans shall be available in the workplace for reference and review by employees, and copies shall be furnished to the fire code official for review upon request.

**404.4.1 Distribution.** The fire safety and evacuation plans shall be distributed to the tenants and building service employees by the owner or owner's agent. Tenants shall distribute to their employees, applicable parts of the fire safety plan affecting the employees' actions in the event of a fire or other emergency.

**Important Note:** Distribution in reference to Residential Apartment Buildings (R2), the following section applies:

**403.10.2.2.3 Emergency guide distribution.** A copy of the emergency guide shall be given to each tenant prior to initial occupancy.

## **TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

**406.2 Frequency.** Employees shall receive training in the contents of fire safety and evacuation plans and their duties as part of new employee orientation and not less than annually thereafter. Records of training shall be maintained.

**406.3 Employee training program.** Employees shall be trained in fire prevention, evacuation and fire safety in accordance with Sections 406.3.1 through 406.4.

**406.3.1 Fire prevention training.** Employees shall be apprised of the fire hazards of the materials and processes to which they are exposed. Each employee shall be instructed in the proper procedures for preventing fires in the conduct of their assigned duties.

**406.3.2 Evacuation training.** Employees shall be familiarized with the fire alarm and evacuation signals, their assigned duties in the event of an alarm or emergency, evacuation routes, areas of refuge, exterior assembly areas and procedures for evacuation.

**406.4 Emergency lockdown training.** Where a facility has a lockdown plan, employees shall be trained on their assigned duties and procedures in the event of an emergency lockdown.

## DRILL REQUIREMENTS

**405.1 General.** Emergency evacuation drills shall be conducted not less than annually where fire safety and evacuation plans are required or where required by the fire code official. Drills shall be designed in cooperation with the local authorities.

**405.2 Frequency.** Required emergency evacuation drills shall be held at the intervals specified in Table or more frequently where necessary to familiarize all occupants with the drill procedure.

GROUP OR OCCUPANCY	FREQUENCY	PARTICIPATION
Group A	Quarterly	Employees
Group B	Annually	All occupants/ employee
Group E	Monthly	All occupants
Group F	Annually	Employees
Group I-1	Semiannually on each shift	All occupants
Group I-2	Quarterly on each shift	Employees
Group I-3	Quarterly on each shift	Employees
Group I-4	Monthly on each shift	All occupants
Group R-1	Quarterly on each shift	Employees
Group R-2 (College Dorms)	Four annually	All occupants
Group R-4	Semiannually on each shift	All occupants

**405.5 Record keeping.** Records shall be maintained of required emergency evacuation drills and include the following information:

1. Identity of the person conducting the drill.
2. Date and time of the drill.
3. Notification method used.
4. Employees 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 complete evacuation.

**405.6 Notification.** Where required by the fire code official, prior notification of emergency evacuation drills shall be given to the fire code official.

**405.7 Initiation.** Where a fire alarm system is provided, emergency evacuation drills shall be initiated by activating the fire alarm system.

**405.8 Accountability.** As building occupants arrive at the assembly point, efforts shall be made to determine if all occupants have been successfully evacuated or have been accounted for.

**405.9 Recall and reentry.** An electrically or mechanically operated signal used to recall occupants after an evacuation shall be separate and distinct from the signal used to initiate the evacuation. The recall signal initiation means shall be manually operated and under the control of the person in charge of the premises or the official in charge of the incident. Persons shall not reenter the premises until authorized to do so by the official in charge.

### **Drills in Educational Occupancies**

**403.5.1 First emergency evacuation drill.** The first emergency evacuation drill of each school year shall be conducted within 10 days of the beginning of classes.

**403.5.2 Time of day.** Emergency evacuation drills shall be conducted at different hours of the day or evening, during the changing of classes, when the school is at assembly, during the recess or gymnastic periods, or during other times to avoid distinction between drills and actual fires.

**403.5.3 Assembly points.** Outdoor assembly areas shall be designated and shall be located a safe distance from the building being evacuated to avoid interference with fire department operations. The assembly areas shall be arranged to keep each class separate to provide accountability of all individuals.

For additional information and assistance on emergency evacuation planning requirements or for assistance with other occupancies not discussed in this Bulletin, please contact our Fire Prevention Division.

District of Columbia Fire and EMS Department  
Fire Prevention Division  
(202) 727-1614 or email us at [fems.fireprevention@dc.gov](mailto:fems.fireprevention@dc.gov).