



THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

## OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

# Evacuation Chairs University of Utah 2016

Emergency evacuation chairs are fold-up chairs which allow for people with permanent or temporary mobility limitations to be moved down stairs during an emergency. These devices can help faculty, staff, students or first responders quickly move people with mobility limitations down the stairs or across rough terrain. The University of Utah has purchase them voluntarily, evacuation chairs are not mandatory or required by law.

### Purpose

To ensure consistency in purchasing, placement, training, maintenance and testing, accountability and departmental oversight of emergency evacuation chairs on all University of Utah properties.

### Scope

The University of Utah emergency evacuation chair program will apply to individuals trained in the proper use of an emergency evacuation chair, campus volunteer emergency assistants and first responders; campus departments with emergency evacuation chairs currently in place; and departments that are considering, or in the process of purchasing, emergency evacuation chairs. The program is not intended to include individuals who procure emergency evacuation chairs without reporting their existence to the University of Utah Fire Marshal.

### Self-Reporting by University of Utah Employees and Students

Any person who needs assistance with evacuation planning, is encouraged to notify the Campus Fire Marshal (within Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety). Additionally, the University of Utah Center for Disabled Services and the University of Utah Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action Office collaborate with OEHS/the Fire Marshal to promote the availability of these services.

### Responsibility

*Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety (Fire Marshal):*

- Maintain a campus-wide inventory of all known emergency evacuation chairs
- Provide technical assistance on the location for the emergency evacuation chair within a building
- Provide one emergency evacuation chair training class a year (or more by request) for campus emergency evacuation chair users
- Coordinate with building representatives who will check and ensure that the emergency evacuation chair in their building is operational through a brief deployment of the chair
- Perform yearly checks of all emergency evacuation chairs in campus buildings to ensure that the devices are still located in the same location and are intact
- Provide updates to the Evacuation Chair Guidelines document

- Maintain an updated campus-wide emergency evacuation chair map on the OEHS website that depicts the locations of the emergency evacuation chairs housed in campus buildings

*University of Utah Center for Disabled Services and Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action*

- Coordinate with OEHS and appropriate departmental personnel regarding individuals who may need assistance with a personal emergency plan for their building
- Provide assistance in marketing the Evacuation Chair program and guidelines

*Departmental Representatives:*

- Assist with the identification of individuals who may need assistance during emergency situations
- Coordinate emergency evacuation chair training for colleagues
- Provide updates to their Emergency Plans relative to assisting individuals with disabilities during emergencies
- Provide assistance in marketing the Evacuation Chair program and guidelines
- Receive training on how to use the emergency evacuation chair

*Volunteer Emergency Evacuation Assistants responsibilities include:*

- Aid individuals in their buildings who may need extra assistance during an emergency situation, particularly evacuations
- Receive training on how to use the emergency evacuation chair
- Provide assistance in marketing the Evacuation Chair program and guidelines
- Coordinate with department staff for a replacement in the event that the individual can no longer serve in the Volunteer Emergency Evacuation Assistant role for their building

## Evacuation Chair Purchases

A department or unit interested in obtaining an evacuation chair for their building or area should contact OEHS (801) 581-6590 or at [questions@ehs.utah.edu](mailto:questions@ehs.utah.edu). OEHS will coordinate with the requesting department to provide the department with a chair, an overview of the Evacuation Chair Program Guidelines, discuss potential locations for the evacuation chair(s), and discuss the identification and training of potential volunteer evacuation chair assistants.

The requesting departments must agree to assign a responsible individual to check the emergency evacuation chair several times a year.

## Placement

Evacuation chairs are ideally located in the vicinity of the user for whom they are intended to assist or in a visible area in a stairwell, or in a hallway near a stairwell, that is utilized daily with signage placed above the actual emergency evacuation chair and outside the nearest stairwell doors.

Instructions for operating the standard model emergency evacuation chair are located on each emergency evacuation chair.

## Maintenance and Inspections

- Building personnel should check emergency evacuation chairs for functionality once a year to ensure that each device is operational. This check should involve removing the chair from the storage hook or cabinet, deploying the chair as you would if it were needed for an actual emergency.
- Personnel should check to make sure that appropriate signage is posted and the instructions for use remain available near the emergency evacuation chair.
- OEHS will conduct a yearly check of each unit in campus buildings to confirm the evacuation chair location, perform a brief visual inspection, and check to make sure the appropriate signage and instruction cards are in place.
- Building personnel should immediately contact OEHS if the evacuation chair or cabinet are damaged or missing. The University of Utah Police will be contacted to file a report for any stolen or damaged emergency evacuation chairs.

## Training

- Specific building personnel responsible for the evacuation chair, are responsible for identifying several building staff members who will volunteer to complete a brief training on how to use an emergency evacuation chair. Students may volunteer at their instructor's request to assist another student with a disability during an emergency, but it is preferred (unless exigent circumstances exist) that faculty and staff trained volunteers actually deploy and operate an evacuation chair to help any individual who needs mobility assistance during an emergency.
- OEHS will coordinate classes on how to use an emergency evacuation chair once a year on campus for volunteers who are located in buildings where evacuation chairs are housed. Campus personnel may attend the free class on a volunteer basis in order to learn the safe and appropriate method to aid an individual who may need evacuation assistance during an emergency. Additional classes may be scheduled by request for specific buildings on campus.

## Evacuation Response Options for Individuals with Mobility Issues

All persons, including those with disabilities, are required to evacuate a facility anytime the fire alarm system is activated. People without disabilities should exit the building using the nearest exit. Elevators should never be used in the event of a fire without explicit authorization by fire or police personnel. Depending upon the facility and type of disability, people may have the following evacuation options:

- *Horizontal evacuation* is defined as using building exits to the outside ground level or moving into unaffected wings of multi-building complexes.
- *Vertical or stairway evacuation* involves using steps to reach ground level exits from the building. It is important to remember that stairway evacuations of individuals who use wheelchairs may be hazardous to disabled individuals, rescuers, and others attempting to evacuate and should not be attempted by untrained personnel unless there's no other alternative. Evacuation chairs may be an option with appropriate training and assistance. Individuals with mobility impairments who are able to walk independently or with assistance may be able to negotiate stairs.

- *Area of Refuge* – With assistance (a buddy) an individual with a disability may move to an area of refuge away from obvious danger. The buddy will then go to the building evacuation assembly point and notify the on-site emergency personnel of the location of the person with a disability. Emergency personnel will determine if further evacuation is necessary. 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.

## Records Management

Emergency Evacuation chair information will be maintained in the following manner:

- A listing of evacuation chair locations will be maintained by OEHS. Any changes in locations or new purchases should be reported immediately to OEHS.
- A campus map of evacuation chair locations will be maintained by OEHS and updated on an annual basis. This map will be available on the OEHS website.
- OEHS will perform and document an annual check of each evacuation chair located in campus building.

## Evacuation Chair Locations

OEHS maintains an updated listing of all the evacuation chairs located in buildings on the University of Utah campus in Salt Lake City.

Our life's work is caring for



801.581.6590 • [www.oehs.utah.edu](http://www.oehs.utah.edu)

125 South Fort Douglas Blvd, Salt Lake City, UT 84113