University Health Network
Policy & Procedure Manual
Occupational Health & Safety: Individualized Workplace
Emergency Response Planning for Employees with
Disabilities

Policy

University Health Network (UHN) is committed to the safety of employees who require assistance in an emergency situation, by assigning responsibility for and identifying employees with disabilities, and having a plan to ensure that these employees are able to evacuate a hazardous environment in accordance with the UHN Emergency Codes.

It is expected that all employees involved in assisting employees with disabilities during an emergency response do so in a safe manner. Employees must also ensure that the environment, equipment, and tools used during the emergency response are safe and in good working condition.

Note: This policy is available in accessible formats on request. This policy meets the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Standard Accommodation in Employment.

Roles & Responsibilities

Emergency Procedures Committee

- Ensure that applicable UHN Emergency Codes incorporate general procedures and considerations for persons who require assistance to evacuate a hazardous environment in accordance with this policy.

- Include this policy as part of the review of all UHN Emergency Codes.

Department Managers/Supervisors

- Be aware of employees with permanent disabilities and/or those who require temporary assistance to evacuate in the event of an emergency.

- Ensure that employees are trained and aware of the general emergency response plan for employees requiring assistance.

- Notify the Occupational Health and Safety Department and other stakeholders, as required, in order to develop and communicate individual emergency response plans.
• Discuss with the employee who requires assistance to determine the level of assistance required to evacuate a floor area in the event of an emergency and determine the need to create individualized emergency response plans based on the procedures in the UHN Emergency Codes to achieve the established emergency procedures for the unit and building.

• Assign a buddy to the employee requiring assistance.

• Review the individualized emergency response plan when an employee moves to a different location within UHN.

• For all locations, designate fire marshals and/or wardens, ensure that they are aware of employees requiring assistance, and what measures are needed for those employees to evacuate the building safely in the event of an emergency.

Employees

• Participate in training on the general emergency response plan for employees requiring assistance.

• Assist those in need.

• Follow procedures as required.

• If assigned to be a buddy, advise the employee who requires assistance of any absences and/or inability to provide assistance.

Employee Requiring Assistance

• Inform the supervisor or manager if assistance is required in the event of an emergency situation.

• Work with the supervisor or manager to determine an individualized plan that will achieve the results intended by the unit and building’s established emergency procedures.

• Inform the supervisor or manager when his/her condition changes, requiring different, or more or less assistance.

• During an emergency that requires an evacuation, communicate to staff members if additional assistance with evacuation is needed.

• Maintain communication with the assigned buddy.
Occupational Health & Safety Department

- During employee health reviews for new hires, identify permanent and/or temporary disabilities of employees who may require assistance during an evacuation.

- Review, update and communicate the general emergency response plan for employees requiring assistance.

- As part of the return to work planning process, identify the specific functional limitation (i.e. inability to descend stairs) that would warrant an individualized emergency response plan.

- During the return to work/permanent accommodation planning, have the manager identify how the emergency response measures for that individual will be applied within his/her department.

- In collaboration with the manager and employee, review any restrictions and how they would impact the employee’s ability to evacuate (i.e. inability to descend stairs).


- Review and update the individualized emergency response plan when the employee’s overall accommodation needs or return to work plans change.

Definitions

Buddy: The employee assigned during the planning stage, who will assist the employee requiring assistance during an evacuation.

Employee requiring assistance: Any employee with a permanent or temporary disability that may affect his/her ability to evacuate the building safely during an emergency. Examples of conditions that may affect safe evacuations may include, but are not limited to, inability to climb/descend stairs, inability to hear emergency alarms, and/or see signs, emergency equipment and evacuation directions.