

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.

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- 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](#).

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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).
- Document the employee's individualized emergency response plan in his/her disability management file using the [Individualized Emergency Response Plan](#).
- 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.

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