

# **Evacuation – Persons with a Disability**

**This section provides a general guideline of evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities during fire and other building emergencies. Individuals with disabilities are responsible to identify their primary and secondary evacuation routes, and seek out colleagues who are willing to serve as “evacuation assistants”. Other faculty and staff members can help by being aware of others who may need assistance in an evacuation.**

## **MOBILITY IMPAIRED - WHEELCHAIR**

**Wheelchairs are either self-powered or powered by electric motors. Persons who utilize self-powered wheelchairs often do not want assistance but may be obstructing the flow of traffic. Electric motor powered wheelchairs may move quite slowly, causing the same effect. If a wheelchair bound person in a self-powered chair is moving too slowly, evacuation assistants are to tell the person they will help and push them at a speed consistent with the flow of traffic towards an exit, regardless of objections. Electric-powered chairs are often equipped with a release mechanism accessible from the rear of the chair. Evacuation assistants should locate the release, activate it, and push the person and wheelchair at a speed consistent with the flow of traffic. In either case, once outside the building, help the wheelchair bound person to a safe location away from the building and discuss the reasoning for the unwanted assistance. It is easier to request forgiveness when they are unharmed.**

## **STAY IN PLACE**

**If there simply is no way for a wheelchair bound person to exit the building even with assistance from an evacuation assistant, they should select a room with an exterior window, a telephone, and a solid or fire-resistant door. The evacuation assistant should remain with the disabled person in this room, and send someone to notify emergency personnel of the location of the person needing assistance. Fire Department personnel, who are trained in emergency rescue, can then enter the building and assist both persons in exiting the building.**

**While staying in place, the wheelchair user and/or evacuation assistant should keep in direct contact with emergency services by calling 911 and reporting his/her location directly.**

**If it becomes necessary to carry a wheelchair bound person, please follow the below guidelines.**

## **2 PERSON CRADLE**

- 1. Wait until the selected evacuation path is relatively clear.**
- 2. Two helpers stand on either side of the individual.**

3. Reach under the individual and lift them out in a cradle.
4. Helpers control the exit by walking out slowly and cautiously.
5. NEVER leave a wheelchair in a hallway.

Or another technique is:

#### **OFFICE CHAIR EVACUATION**

1. Transfer the individual with the disability to a sturdy office chair.
2. One helper gently leans the chair backwards.
3. The other helper faces the chair and holds onto the front legs of the chair. Both helpers will lift the chair simultaneously, lifting with their legs not their backs.
4. The helpers control the exit by bending their legs and keeping their back straight.

#### **MOBILITY IMPAIRED- NON-WHEELCHAIR**

Persons with mobility impairments who are able to walk independently should be able to negotiate their exit in an emergency with minor assistance. The individual should wait until the heavy traffic has cleared on the hallway before attempting to exit. There should be at least one evacuation assistant with the challenged individual to assist if needed.

#### **HEARING IMPAIRED**

All CCC buildings are equipped with fire strobe lights. If you see a person who appears unaware the fire alarm is sounding, it is possible they have a hearing impairment and will need to be alerted to emergency situations by an evacuation assistant.

#### **VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

Most people with visual impairments will be familiar with their immediate surroundings and frequently traveled routes. Since the emergency evacuation route may be different from the commonly traveled route, persons who are visually impaired may need assistance in evacuation. The evacuation assistant should offer his/her elbow to the individual with the visual impairment and guide him/her through the evacuation route. During the evacuation, the evacuation assistant should communicate as necessary to ensure safe evacuation and to try and calm them.

Once outdoors, all persons should move to a safe location and distance away from the building. It is generally not recommended to stand on the sidewalks next to buildings.