Developing an Accessible, Trauma Informed Evacuation Plan

Guidance for Agencies

Created by MASS Collaboration:
Movement for Access, Safety, and Survivors
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To request this document in alternate formats contact disability@barcc.org.
Introduction

Introduction to MASS Collaboration

This tool was created by the Movement for Access, Safety, and Survivors (MASS) Collaboration, a partnership between the following organizations:

- Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC)
- Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL)
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
- MBTA Transit police

Our collaboration is committed to understanding barriers from the perspectives of survivors with disabilities and those who support them. We do this in order to meet our goal of improving response and services for survivors of sexual violence who have disabilities.

Vision Statement

The MASS Collaboration envisions Boston as a city in which the culture within and between victim services, criminal justice, transportation, and disability advocacy and service systems promote the healing, empowerment, and safety of people with disabilities who have experienced sexual violence. Survivors/victims with disabilities will receive equal, responsive, safe, barrier-free services from compassionate professionals, staff, and volunteers who are knowledgeable about and comfortable with supporting survivors/victims with disabilities.

Mission Statement

The mission of the MASS Collaboration is to change the culture within and between all collaborating systems to enhance services to promote healing, empowerment and safety for people with disabilities who have experienced sexual violence. We will
accomplish this by incorporating the voices and needs of survivors/victims with disabilities to:

- Build formal and informal connections between our systems;
- Increase the knowledge, skills and confidence of professionals, staff, and volunteers;
- Enhance and develop policies and protocols based on best practices and current research about serving survivors/victims with disabilities in order to increase access to safe, responsive services.

**Introduction to this Document**

Our collaboration works at the intersection of sexual violence and disability; therefore we understand safety as including both physical and emotional safety. As we researched evacuation policies for agencies like ours (independent living centers and victim service centers) we found a lack of policies that are both trauma informed and disability inclusive. This guidance document was developed through our collaboration’s discussions and includes perspectives of survivors and people with disabilities. The information in this document is meant to provide information to organizations about issues to consider in developing trauma-informed, accessible evacuation policies and procedures. It is not intended to provide legal advice.

This tool contains the following section and links.

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  - **Section 2:** Creating Accommodation Plans
  - **Section 3:** Staff Preparation and Training
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- **Part D: Meeting Location and Accounting for Staff**
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- **Part 2: Building and Equipment Readiness**
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  - **Section 3: Clear Paths of Travel**
  - **Section 4: Fire Extinguishers**
  - **Section 5: Evacuation Chairs**
  - **Section 6: Evacuation Bags**

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- **Part 4: Appendix**
  - [Request for Accommodations Example Form – Staff, Volunteers and Interns](#)
  - [Request for Accommodations Example Form – Consumer, Clients and Residents](#)
  - [Evacuation Assistance Tip Sheet for Staff](#)
Part 1: Guidance for Developing Evacuation Policy and Procedures

It is important to be prepared in case of an emergency such as a fire, natural disaster, etc. Part of preparing for an emergency is to have clear agency protocols. The following section provides information to guide your agency in developing policies and procedures for emergency evacuation. Part 3 contains a template that you can adapt for your organization.

Section 1: Responsibility of Staff

It is important that your agency create a culture where all staff are willing to assist others as needed in an emergency. In addition, setting clear protocols help staff feel prepared with their responsibilities.

Generally, we recommend all staff try to evacuate with another person, if possible. Staff should accompany their clients, consumers, and visitors out of the facility.

Your agency should also decide on designated staff member(s) to perform the following responsibilities:

- Creating an accommodation plan
- Contacting emergency services, if needed
- Notifying staff of an emergency
- Notifying the public of emergency closing, if needed
- Assisting clients, consumers or visitors in the waiting room
- Waiting in the refuge area for emergency services
- Taking attendance following evacuation
- Bringing evacuation bag if organization decides to have one
- Assisting with evacuation chairs if organization decides to have them
Considerations when Designating Responsibilities:
Some things to consider when determining who to designate responsibilities include:

- Decision-making responsibility in the organization
- Who typically works in the office

Identify at least one backup in case the designated staff is not in the office during the time of the emergency (e.g. at a meeting outside of the office, out sick, on vacation).
Your agency might decide to ask any director or manager to be responsible for certain tasks during an emergency to ensure that one person is available. Another possibility is to create an emergency coverage schedule that ensures that staff are covering each shift during business hours. These staff would be responsible for being in the office during their shift or ensuring that there is coverage if they are unable to be in the office for their shift.

For some tasks your agency might decide that any staff could perform the task. For example, it might be logistically simpler to have the first staff who exits who is able to carry the evacuation bag grab it.

Section 2: Creating Evacuation Accommodation Plans:
Accommodations to Prepare for Emergencies:
Accommodations to help staff prepare for emergencies can include but are not limited to:

- Evacuation instructions in alternate formats such as braille, audio etc.
- Providing alternative options for emergency drills. Some individuals who are sensitive to stimuli may be overstimulated by an emergency drill. People who have been traumatized in the past may be triggered by an emergency drill.

Accommodations During Emergencies:
Accommodations during emergencies can include but are not limited to:

- Assistance getting down steps. This can include those who use mobility devices (canes, crutches, wheelchairs, etc.) and those with invisible disabilities.
The need to use stairs instead of elevators is the largest obstacle for evacuation. In some cases, employees willing to assist in an emergency must be trained in techniques for assisting those with varying physical abilities. In other cases, staff can simply ask someone whether and how they would like to be assisted.

If an agency decides to use equipment such as evacuation chairs, it can be helpful to know in advance whether someone could use the assistance and how they would like assistance provided.

- Ensuring necessary medications are taken out of the building
  - A predetermined leader or trusted peer can be responsible for transporting medications out of the building in the event that staff is unable to transport their own medication.

- Assisting service animals to a refuge area or to emergency exits:
  - It is important to note that service animals and their owners should not be separated. Service animals should also be evacuated in case of emergency.

- Noise cancelling headphones. For some people the stimulation of all of the noise during an evacuation can make the evacuation process overwhelming.

- Small calming items. These could be as simple as small stones that someone can hold to help ground them in the present.

Making an Evacuation Plan with Staff:
When employees are told they can request accommodations, they should be told they can make reasonable accommodation requests specific to emergency evacuations and emergency drills. All staff should be informed. Human Resources (HR) or administrators should not make assumptions about whether someone needs accommodations. Some staff who may not need accommodations from the agency on
a daily basis may need accommodations for an emergency or when preparing for an emergency. Let staff know that they are not required to disclose the nature of their disability to receive a requested accommodation.

Making a plan in collaboration with staff

Individual accommodations plans should be made in collaboration with those who request assistance evacuating and emergency drills. Don’t make assumptions about what someone can or can’t do. The needs and preferences of employees that make requests for emergency evacuations must be discussed. The choices of individuals and their ability to assess what they can do should be respected. For example, someone who uses a wheelchair might be able to bump down a short flight of stairs on their own.

Confidentiality

Let staff know about the confidentiality of plans. Nothing should be shared without the consent of the person requesting the accommodation. Some requests, however, may be difficult to implement without telling at least some staff. For example, if someone needs assistance with an evacuation chair, people who are assisting with evacuation chairs may need to know in advance to be prepared to assist this individual. Have a conversation with staff about these issues where confidentiality and being able to meet accommodation requests need to be balanced. Ask staff how they would like their accommodation needs to be communicated to staff who need to know about the request.

Documentation

Agencies should keep a record of employees that request accommodations in emergencies and emergency drills. Files should be kept in a place that able to be referenced quickly. Requests should be reviewed every 6 months to ensure that information provided by the individual requesting accommodations is still accurate. One way that some agencies may track accommodation needs is by keeping a list of all staff who have accommodation needs during an emergency and assigning specific staff to be responsible for ensuring that accommodations are being provided during the
emergency. It’s important to be sure to discuss and respect confidentiality concerns with staff before including staff names and their requested accommodation on a list.

**Making an Evacuation Plan for Volunteers and Interns:**
If the agency has interns and/or volunteers who work regularly in the office, we recommend that a similar process be followed to create accommodation plans. Agencies should determine who creates these plans if it’s different than the people who create the plans with staff (e.g. intern supervisor instead of HR). Agencies should also determine where these plans will be filed.

A [sample Request for Evacuation Accommodation form for staff](#) (pages 48-50) can be found in the appendix. This form can be adapted for use with volunteers and interns.

**Making an Evacuation Plan for Consumers/ Clients:**
Your organization should determine whether to make an evacuation accommodations plan with consumers/clients. Some things to consider are:

- Agencies that have residential services (e.g. shelter, group home) should discuss accommodation needs with their clients/consumers, similar to how they would discuss this with employees.
- Agencies without residential services where staff might see a client/consumer briefly (e.g. once a week for one hour) will need to consider whether an individualized evacuation plan would be effective. Some things to consider:
  - How many clients/consumers does the staff person have in their caseload at one time? If this is a high number, staff may not be able to remember the accommodation needs and it may be more logistically feasible for staff to ask if there is any specific assistance needed if an emergency arises.
  - How will discussing an evacuation plan impact the client/consumer? Will it create more anxiety or will it help them feel more prepared?

If your agency decides to create an evacuation plan with clients/consumers protocols should be developed for developing individualized plans. Determine who creates plans
with clients/consumers. Similar to creating a plan with staff, develop plans in collaboration with clients/consumers and be clear about what is possible with confidentiality.

A sample Request for Evacuation Accommodation form for consumer/clients can be found in the appendix on page 51-53).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creating an Evacuation Accommodation Plan Checklist</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your organization indicate that staff can request accommodations for emergency drills and evacuation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your organization have a protocol for how staff can request accommodations for emergency drills and evacuation?</td>
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<td>Is your protocol inclusive of staff input?</td>
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<td>Does your protocol include considerations around staff confidentiality?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your organization indicate that interns/volunteers can request accommodations for emergency drills and evacuation? (if applicable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your organization have a protocol for how interns/volunteers can request accommodations for emergency drills and evacuation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is your protocol inclusive of intern/volunteer input?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your protocol include considerations around intern/volunteer confidentiality?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has your organization decided to create accommodation plans with clients/consumers? (if so answer the questions below)</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your organization indicate that clients/consumers can request accommodations for emergency drills and evacuation?</td>
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<td>Does your organization have a protocol for how clients/consumer can request accommodations for emergency drills and evacuation?</td>
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<td>Is your protocol inclusive of client/consumer input?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your protocol include considerations around consumer/client confidentiality?</td>
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</table>
Section 3: Staff Preparation and Training

Agencies should ensure that staff and when applicable, interns, volunteers and consumer/clients (such as those in a residential setting) are prepared for an emergency evacuation. This includes:

- Regular training, including regular review of policies and protocols
- Practicing evacuation (emergency drills)

Training

Organizations should identify the staff who will coordinate trainings about emergency evacuation. These may be different individuals for training staff, volunteers/interns, and consumer/clients.

The person coordinating training will ensure that:

1. There is a schedule for trainings. Plan for initial and continued trainings. An appropriate time for an initial training for staff and interns/volunteers can be during orientation for new staff/volunteers or during staff/volunteer meetings. If training will be provided to consumer/clients determine an appropriate time for initial training. Regular trainings should also be scheduled (e.g. once a year).

2. Training content will include at least:
   - Review of protocols
   - Review of all exits, paths of travel, refuge area, and meeting location
   - Tips for assisting others to evacuate which includes:
     ○ Asking whether assistance is needed and how best to assist
     ○ Tips for calming someone who is having difficulty evacuating
       (handout in appendix on pp 55-56)
   - If the expectation is that staff will use fire extinguishers for small fires, training those staff on how to use fire extinguishers.
   - If the expectation is that staff will use evacuation chairs, training those staff on how to use evacuation chairs.
Plan trainings for interns/volunteers and consumers/client that cover content relevant for them.

3. Trainers are identified.
   Examples:
   ○ Human resources
   ○ Leadership
   ○ Other staff
   ○ Outside consultant

4. Training materials are developed to be delivered in multiple formats and updated.
   Examples of different formats include:
   ○ Presentation
   ○ Written materials
   ○ Videos
   ○ Walk-through of building, pointing out refuge area, emergency exits, outside meeting area
   ○ Role plays - for example for practicing calming techniques

5. There is a schedule (e.g. once a year, etc.) to review protocols and trainings. It is important that they are up-to-date and continue to reflect current best practices. Be sure to obtain input from staff and volunteers/interns when reviewing protocols and training. If you are providing training to consumer/clients be sure to obtain feedback from them as well.

**Training Specific to Equipment**

**Fire extinguishers:**
Training around using fire extinguishers should include when it is appropriate to try to use a fire extinguisher and how to use one. To determine whether to use a fire extinguisher consider:

- Have I alerted others in the building that there’s a fire?
- Has someone called the fire department?
- Am I physically able to use a fire extinguisher?
- Is the fire small and contained in a single object (like a pan or wastebasket)?
- Am I safe from the fire’s toxic smoke?
- Do I have a clear escape route?

Use a fire extinguisher when all of these questions are answered “yes.” If you’re unsure about whether or not it’s safe to use a fire extinguisher, and for all other situations, alert others, leave the building, and call 911.¹

When using a fire extinguisher the acronym PASS can be helpful.
- Pull the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you and release the locking mechanism
- Aim low. Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire
- Squeeze the lever slowly and evenly
- Sweep the nozzle from side-to-side

**Evacuation Chair:**
If you decide to use evacuation chairs identify experienced trainers to train your staff in using evacuation chairs. Check to see whether trainers have an empowering approach to applying securements or if you need to supplement information. To be empowering to people with disabilities and have a trauma-informed approach, it is important to have open communication.
- Ask if the individual is able to secure themselves and what they need assistance with.
- Communicate what you are doing. E.g. “I’m going to reach across you to grab this belt.
- Let the individual know they can let you know if they’re uncomfortable with anything. Check in about comfort which can be both physical and emotional. Pay attention to body language that can communicate discomfort.

¹ [https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/extinguishers.html](https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/extinguishers.html)
Emergency Drills:
Emergency drills provide people with the opportunity to practice evacuating. Organizations will need to decide who will participate in emergency drills - staff, interns/volunteers, consumer/clients. For agencies providing residential services, residents should be included in emergency drills. If an agency providing only office-based services to clients/consumer will not include clients/consumers in emergency drills, they will need to consider how to schedule the drills, so as to not disrupt services to clients/consumers.

While drills can be helpful, they can also be difficult for some people. For example, someone with a sensory disability may be overstimulated by drills. Someone with PTSD may be triggered and have a traumatic response during a drill.

Considerations and Accommodations Surrounding Emergency Drills:
1. Notify people of upcoming practice drills. Let staff, volunteer/interns, and consumer/clients know that if they have concerns about participating in the drill that they can speak with HR, another administrator, or other designated staff.

2. Discuss concerns and determine alternate ways for practicing. These could include:
   ○ Determining if any accommodations will help: such as noise cancelling headphones, holding an object that will help them stay grounded, another staff to provide support.
   ○ Performing the emergency drill without the use of alarms.
   ○ Providing an opportunity to practice coping with alarms if appropriate. Playing a short recording of the alarm before the drill can give an individual a better understanding of what to expect.
   ○ Individually walking the staff person through the evacuation process separately from the group drill.
   ○ Reading detailed instructions of an evacuation may be a reasonable alternative form of training.
3. Sending a reminder the day of the drill may relieve some anxiety people may experience surrounding evacuation drills.
4. Discuss self-care plans for after drills.

Overall, it is important to note that some individuals may benefit from frequent emergency drills, but for others, practice drills may trigger anxiety. Keep in mind that the learning style of individuals can vary and some people may be able to retain information simply by reading instructions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Checklist</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your protocol have a designated person (people) to coordinate emergency evacuation training for staff and if applicable interns/volunteers and consumer/clients?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your protocol have a schedule for initial and on-going training for staff and if applicable interns/volunteers and consumers/clients?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your protocol have a schedule for reviewing and revising evacuation policies and protocols?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you include stakeholder feedback when reviewing and revising evacuation protocols?</td>
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<td>Does your organization’s training include different modalities? (video, print, presentation, etc.)?</td>
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<td>Does your training content include review of protocols?</td>
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<td>Does your training include review of exits, path of travel, refuge area and meeting location?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your training include tips for assisting others to evacuate?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your training include using a fire extinguisher? (if applicable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your training include an empowering and trauma-informed approach to using evacuation chairs, or other assistive devices? (if applicable)</td>
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<td>Does your protocol have a schedule for reviewing and revising evacuation training?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your organization take into consideration possible accommodations during emergency drills?</td>
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**Section 4: Emergency Evacuation Process:**

**Part A: Notification**

If the alarms are not set off by themselves, someone will need to pull the alarms. Ensure that staff know where the pull stations are and how to pull the alarms.

In addition to alarms, agencies should determine whether they will provide other ways of notifying people of the emergency.

**Notifying Emergency Services:**

If alarms do not automatically contact emergency services, a plan must be made to contact first responders. Identify which staff will be responsible for notifying emergency responders. When communicating with first responders, let them know where the refuge area is located and if there are people who may need specific assistance evacuating.

**Notifying Staff, Interns, and Volunteers:**

Your agency may choose to text or e-mail staff to spread the message. This can be helpful for staff not currently in the office to notify them that they should not come to the office. This may also be helpful for someone who can’t hear alarms and may be in a location where they can’t see alarms with visual cues.
Steps:
1. Determine if you will provide an alternate mode of notification.
2. Determine which mode(s) you will use.
3. Determine what the message will be in the notification.
4. Determine who will send the notification.

Notifying Clients/Consumers/Visitors:
In some emergency situations it would not be safe for people to come to your office for appointments. Make a plan for how staff who are expecting a client, consumer or visitor would contact them to cancel appointments. Consider how to communicate to the public to prevent walk-ins. Consider both the method of communication and the information you want to share. Your agency may choose to post on social media or the agency website about office closures. Make sure that these modes of communication are both visually accessible and accessible to screen readers. To assess for the accessibility of your communications, go to this link for our Communication Access Tool. Some organizations have specific staff responsible for posting these public communications. If not, identify a staff member to be responsible for sharing this information.

Steps
1. Determine how staff will contact any visitor coming in that day.
2. Determine whether a public notification will be made.
3. Determine mode(s) of public notification.
4. Determine what the message will be in the notification.
5. Determine who will send the notification.

Notifying Leadership:
It is important that the Executive Director and possibly other leadership are aware of the situation. If the Executive Director is not in the building (e.g. multiple office sites, Executive Director is at an off-site meeting, etc.) designated staff should contact the
Executive Director when it’s safe to do so to let them know about the situation. Agencies may determine that there are other leadership who must also be notified.

### Accessible Emergency Notification Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a protocol for notifying emergency responders?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will your agency have a protocol for alternate notification of staff?</td>
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<td>If so, does the protocol identify the method? (e.g. email, text)</td>
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<tr>
<td>If so, does the protocol identify who will notify staff?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If so, is there a process for determining the message that will be sent?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you have a protocol for staff to notify expected consumer/clients or other visitors when needed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you have a protocol to notify the public when needed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If so, does the protocol identify the method? (e.g. website, social media)</td>
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<tr>
<td>If so, does the protocol identify who will notify the public?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If so, is there a process for determining the message that will be sent?</td>
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### Part B: Refuge Area

A refuge area is a set location inside your agency for people unable to evacuate down the stairs to wait for emergency services. While asking people to wait instead of evacuating is not ideal, there may be no other option in an emergency. During emergencies, elevators shut down which may limit access to leaving the building. Some individuals may be able to evacuate down stairs with some assistance or an evacuation chair. If those are not options, a refuge area is an area where emergency providers will know to look for staff. The layout of your facility can have an effect on your options for a refuge area. Considerations for choosing a Refuge Area Include:

- Be sure that the location will allow for communication between those in the refuge area and first responders.
- Choose an area with an outside window, allowing first responders to see you.
- Be sure the refuge area is close to an exit.
- Choose an area that is large enough for multiple people to wait.
Steps for protocols:

1. Create a plan for notifying emergency services with the location of the refuge area.
   a. It can be helpful to set up a plan with your local first responders. This can help the first responders be more comfortable with the layout of your organization. They can advise on strategic locations for emergency equipment, refuge area(s), and more.
   b. In areas that could be served by multiple departments your agency may not be able to create a plan with all departments that could potentially respond to an emergency. We recommend to first create a plan with the department closest to your organization. You can create an additional plan for notification that could include designating staff who have exited to let emergency responders know about the refuge area or including written information posted in a fire panel.

2. Decide on a designated staff member to remain in the building to communicate with and wait for first responders (e.g. A director or manager will remain in the refuge area.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Refuge Area Checklist</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your organization have a designated refuge area for those unable to evacuate downstairs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is your designated refuge area in close proximity to exits?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is your refuge area close to an outside window?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your refuge area allow for communication with first responders?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you communicated with your local first responders about the refuge area?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your organization have a designated staff member responsible for providing support in the refuge area until emergency services to arrive?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part C: Equipment Protocol
In addition to making sure you have the appropriate equipment, your organization will need to set up protocols around use of the equipment during an emergency.

Fire Extinguishers:
Fire extinguishers can be helpful on a small fire. Determine whether your agency will train all staff or if certain designated staff will be responsible for using a fire extinguisher on a small fire. Provide training on when and how to use a fire extinguisher. See guidance on fire extinguisher training (page 12-13).

Evacuation Chair: (for information about evacuation chairs go to pages 34-36)
If an organization chooses to purchase an evacuation chair, the following should be included in the protocol:

● Designate staff member(s) who have volunteered to be trained to maneuver the chair during an emergency. Ensure that there is regular training for these staff. See guidance on evacuation training (page 13-14).
● Designate location where the chair(s) will be stored. This should be near emergency exits.

Evacuation Bag: (for information about evacuation bags go to pages 36-37)
If an organization chooses to use an evacuation bag(s), the following should be included in the protocol:

● Designate staff member to create and maintain the bag(s). A checklist of items can be helpful for this.
● Determine where the bag(s) will be stored. You might want a bag at each emergency exit, for example.
● Determine who is responsible for taking the bag with them during an emergency. This could be a specific person or the first person exiting who is able to carry the bag.
Part D: Meeting Location and Accounting for Staff:
Organizations should designate a meeting place following an evacuation that is both safe and accessible. Keep in mind both physical and psychological safety and accessibility:

1. Physical: Ground should be level, path should be accessible with curb cuts, snow should be cleared, etc.
2. Psychological accessibility: For some people, the meeting location will be overstimulating or triggering and they may need the option of waiting in a nearby alternate location or having the option to leave once they have been accounted for.

Alternate Location:
The agency may decide to identify a specific location as an alternate location for people to meet once they’ve been accounted for. Alternatively, they could allow people to decide on the alternate location themselves. This might be especially helpful in areas where it is hard to predict what locations may be quiet during an emergency. Protocols for alternate locations should include:
- How the alternative location will be identified.
- Whether staff who are triggered or overstimulated may leave the area (for example, to go home).
- Whether agencies want staff to go to alternate locations with another staff person. For clients, consumers and visitors, staff should be required to go to the alternate location with their visitor.
- Who staff will communicate with if they are waiting in an alternate location or leaving.

Communication with First Responder on the Scene:
There should be communication with first responders when they arrive on the scene. Designated staff should be decided on to communicate with the first responder. Other staff should know to notify designated staff of important information to relay to the first responder.
Relevant information includes:
- If anyone inside is waiting in a refuge area
- Where the refuge area is
- If anyone inside may require assistance evacuating
- If a service animal would need assistance evacuating

Attendance:
Organizations should decide who is responsible for taking attendance following an evacuation. It is recommended to have multiple possibilities for each office location (e.g. any director or manager). Depending on the size of the facility, designated staff can be assigned to specific zones/wings/floors. We recognize that accounting for everyone immediately after an evacuation is challenging, especially if it’s typical for some staff to work regularly out of the office (e.g. doing trainings in the community, at meetings, home visits etc). Do your best to account for staff, volunteers/interns, and consumer/clients. Ask those at the meeting place if there’s anyone they saw that day that isn’t at the meeting place. Create a plan for accounting for everyone who would have been in the building that day soon after the evacuation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessible Evacuation Follow-Up Checklist</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your protocol identify a designated meeting place?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the designated meeting place physically accessible?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the path to the designated meeting place physically accessible?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your protocol allow for an alternate meeting place for people who need a low stimuli option?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your protocol identify designated staff to communicate to first responders on the scene about key information?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your organization identify designated staff member to take attendance following evacuation?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part E: Evening/Weekend/Overnight Emergency Plan:
Frequently during evening or overnight shifts, there are fewer staff available. In these situations, emergency plans need to be adapted.

Responsibility of staff may vary depending on the scenario:
● Some staff may be responsible for evacuating with one client/consumer they are seeing at the time. Others in residential facilities may be responsible for the evacuation of all residents.
● Plans will differ depending on different aspects of the situation. This can include the number of people to be evacuated, the time of day of the evacuation (evening vs overnight when residents might be sleeping), and whether clients/consumers can go home. If the facility is residential an alternate temporary space will need to be identified. Be sure that this temporary location is accessible and safe.
● Leadership should meet with these staff to develop an emergency plan. In case of emergency, staff should always contact the Executive Director or other designated leadership when it’s safe to do so in order to obtain additional support.

Section 5: Post-Crisis Support:
It is normal to have reactions to an emergency situation. Even if a situation seems minor (e.g. someone burns toast and sets the alarms off), the experience of alarms and evacuation can create a range of emotions such as anxiety, heightened feelings, re-traumatization etc. Agencies should normalize the range of reactions to emergencies and encourage all involved to make plans for self-care. Agencies should also make a plan for supervisors to check-in with supervisees and/or for HR or other administrator to check-in on staff who indicate a need for additional support. Staff working with consumer/clients should check-in with their consumer/client to see how they’re doing and make plans for self-care. If needed, additional resources such as Employee Assistance Program or counseling services can be offered.
Agencies should also research and be prepared with resources to contact for agency-wide post-emergency crisis support when needed.

**Review of Process:**
After an emergency evacuation, debrief with staff about how the evacuation process went and if there are improvements needed in regards to protocol or training. Check-in with staff who have requested accommodations for emergency evacuations and ask how accommodations were met and if any improvements need to be made. By actively seeking feedback you can continually improve your protocols and better prepare all staff for emergency evacuations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Crisis Checklist</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your agency normalize reactions to emergencies and encourage self-care?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your organization have a protocol for checking in with those who have indicated that emergencies can be especially difficult?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your organization have a process for supervisors to check-in with supervisees?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your organization have resources for agency-wide crisis support when needed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your protocol include reviewing the evacuation protocols and training after an emergency?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 2: Building and Equipment Readiness

In addition to developing protocols, it is important to ensure that your building and emergency equipment are working and accessible. This allows for everyone in your building (staff, consumers/clients, visitors, etc.) to evacuate safely. The best way to ensure access is to include people with disabilities in the process of reviewing your building accessibility for emergency evacuation.

Section 1: Signage

Exit Signs:
During an emergency evacuation, exit signs are essential to guide the occupants of a building to safety. If smoke or loss of lights in a building affects visibility, exit signs can be critical to safely lead people out of the building.

Ensure that all emergency exits are labeled. In addition, anything that could be mistaken as an emergency exit should be labeled (e.g. “Storage Closet” or “Not an Exit”).

The following website provides additional information about different types of exit signs: https://www.compliance.gov/sites/default/files/Fast%20Facts-Exit%20Signs.oct_.%202016.pdf

Accessible Signs:
It is important to make sure signs are available in multiple formats to ensure accessibility. This includes written, tactile, and picture based signs. Fonts on exit signs should be at least 6 inches tall.

The following document is a helpful guide to creating signage that is ADA compliant: http://www.accentsignage.com/wp-content/uploads/ADA-Quick-Reference.pdf
Considerations for tactile signs:
- Tactile signs include braille and/or raised letters. These signs should be displayed near emergency exits.
- Signs with raised letters should be created in all uppercase.

![Tactile Sign](image)

Figure 1: A tactile sign with both braille and raised letters

Considerations for written signs:
Signs should be printed in an accessible font and have readable color contrast. Choosing colors that contrast from one another is important to ensure a sign is readable (ex: using yellow font on a black background instead of a white background). This allows the text or images on the sign to pop out on the background.

The following website provides information on designing accessible written signs:
https://www.esigns.com/effective_sign_design_tips.html

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Steps:
1. Clearly label all emergency exits with tactile and visual (written) signage.
2. Label paths that could be mistaken as emergency exits for what they are (ex: “Storage Closet”). Doors that could be mistaken for emergency exits should be clearly labeled “Not an Exit”.
3. Exits should be marked by tactile signs that are properly mounted. Agencies must have a tactile sign next to each door inside a stairwell to identify floor level, stair level, and exit level. Mounting locations can vary depending on the different designs of doors. See figure 2 for properly located tactile signs. The base of the tactile sign can be hung between 48” at the lowest point to 60” at the highest point. This allows signs of different sizes to be hung in the same visual field.
4. Picture-based representations can provide quick and easily understood instruction. Examples of picture-based signs are in Figure 3.

Figure 2: A guideline of how to ensure tactile signs are accessible. The base of the tactile sign can be hung between 48” at the lowest point to 60” at the highest point. This allows signs of different sizes to be hung in the same visual field.

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5 https://adacentral.com/content/ada-sign-installation-2016.pdf
7 https://adacentral.com/ada-compliance-info/ada-sign-installation.html
The following document provides additional information for how to hang signs for different doors:
https://adacentral.com/content/ada-sign-installation-2016.pdf

Figure 3: Two picture-based signs. The sign on the left is a person traveling toward and exit door. The sign on the right is a person pressing an emergency alarm button.⁸

Figure 4: An emergency sign with lit up letters larger than 6 inches⁹.

⁸ https://www.multicolorsigns.com/emergency-signs.html
‘Reminders of Emergency Procedures:
It is helpful to hang instructions to remind people of evacuation procedures. To be inclusive to people with different learning styles include both written and picture-based formats. Reminders should be posted in places frequently accessed by staff, consumers/clients, and visitors. These include waiting rooms, meeting rooms, offices, hallways, bulletin boards, and other high-volume areas. Font size for emergency procedures should be at least 14 point font (6 inches if on metal or plastic) and have readable color contrast.

Figure 5: An example of a picture-based emergency procedure

Section 2: Emergency Alarms:

Emergency alarms should have both distinct visual and audible signals to alert people of an emergency. This system provides a way to alert everyone to an emergency, including people who would not be able to hear an audio only alarm.

Figure 6: An example of a strobe fire alarm

Considerations for Visual Signals on Emergency Alarms:

- For about 3% of people with epilepsy, exposure to flashing lights at certain intensities or visual patterns can trigger seizures. This condition is known as photosensitive epilepsy and is common in children and adolescents. It becomes less frequent with age.
- Strobes between 1 and 2 flashes per second are appropriate for individuals who are D/deaf or hard of hearing and do not trigger seizures.

Some emergency alarms are set to automatically alert first responders. Check whether this is the case with your agency’s alarms and test every 2 months to ensure that both visual and audio components are functioning.

---

Section 3: Clear Paths of Travel
In an evacuation, the paths of travel are:
- The paths within the building needed for people to be able to exit
- The paths within the building to the identified refuge area (pp. 18-19)
- The paths outside to the meeting location. The meeting location should be accessible to all staff. Make sure there are curb cuts in paths of travel to the meeting location. During the winter, ensure that snow is not covering curb cuts and that the meeting location is clear of snow.

Clear hallways, ramps, sidewalks, and streets are critical for safe, accessible evacuation. It is recommended to have someone check your pathways daily to ensure that these are always clear and accessible (e.g. no objects blocking hallways, appropriate snow removal).

Section 4: Fire Extinguishers
Many offices would be considered a ‘light fire hazard”. Wood, paper, cloth, and electronics are the most common combustibles in an office setting. The following provides information about different kinds of fire extinguishers.

Figure 7: Different types of fire extinguishers. These include water, foam, CO2, powder, and wet chemical fire extinguishers.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{13}\)https://surreyfire.co.uk/fire-extinguisher-colours/
This guide can help your agency decide what kind of fire extinguisher would best fit your needs.

### Using the Appropriate Type of Fire Extinguisher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fire Extinguisher Type</th>
<th>Fires This Extinguisher Can Put Out</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water Fire Extinguisher</td>
<td>Common Combustibles</td>
<td>Wood, paper, cloth, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foam Fire Extinguisher</td>
<td>Common Combustibles</td>
<td>Wood, paper, cloth, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flammable Liquids and Gasses</td>
<td>Gasoline, Propane, and Solvents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2 Fire Extinguisher</td>
<td>Flammable Liquids and Gasses</td>
<td>Gasoline, Propane, and Solvents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live Electrical Equipment</td>
<td>Computers, Fax, Machines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powder Fire Extinguisher</td>
<td>Common Combustibles</td>
<td>Wood, paper, cloth, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flammable Liquids and Gasses</td>
<td>Gasoline, Propane, and Solvents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live Electrical Equipment</td>
<td>Computers, Fax, Machines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wet Chemical Fire Extinguisher</td>
<td>Cooking Media</td>
<td>Cooking Oils and Fats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is recommended that there are fire extinguishers placed approximately every 50 feet\(^4\). In addition, fire extinguishers should be checked once a month to make sure no parts are broken or missing and that the pressure gauge needle is in the green area. Once a year, the fire department should come to inspect and certify fire extinguishers.

Section 5: Evacuation Chairs

What is an Evacuation Chair?

An evacuation chair is used to safely and quickly assist evacuations in a multilevel facility during an emergency.

Figure 8: An example of what an evacuation chair can look like.¹⁵

Figure 9: An example of someone being evacuated with an evacuation chair.¹⁶

¹⁵https://www.posturite.co.uk/emergency-products/evacuation-chairs/evacurite-evacuation-chair.html
When Would an Evacuation Chair be Useful?
Evacuation chairs can be used to assist some of the following:
- Individuals who use mobility devices
- Individuals with heart conditions
- Individuals with back injuries
- Individuals with asthma
- Individuals with temporary injuries

Should my Organization Purchase an Evacuation Chair?
An evacuation chair might allow your agency to evacuate someone immediately who might otherwise have to wait in a refuge area for emergency services. Depending on the emergency, there could be additional risks for people having to wait in a refuge area. Listed below are considerations your agency should think about before deciding to purchase an evacuation chair.

Benefits of an evacuation chair:
- Evacuation chairs only require the assistance of one person.
- There may not be a need to wait for emergency services to assist in an evacuation. In an urgent situation you could evacuate someone immediately.
- Using an evacuation chair does not exert as much energy if traveling down several flights of stairs compared to other methods.

Limitations of an evacuation chair:
- This purchase requires some staff members to be trained in maneuvering the evacuation chair. Agencies need to consider whether there is staff with the ability to operate the chair safely and comfortably.
- Evacuation chairs will not be helpful if an individual is unconscious.
- There are risks to having staff who are not experienced using an evacuation chair compared to evacuation by trained emergency responders. Even with
training, it is unlikely for staff to have many opportunities to practice using an evacuation chair\(^\text{17}\).

If your agency chooses to purchase an evacuation chair, please research several options. There is a large variety in the functions and abilities:

- Some cannot be used on spiral staircases
- Chairs can have different weight limits
- Chairs have variation in the height requirements for person handling the chair

Agencies may tend to purchase the most cost-efficient evacuation chair option, but this may not be the best option for the safety for their staff. In addition, consider the type of chair that is most feasible for staff to maneuver.

Evacuation chairs should be stored in strategic locations in the facility. Areas where chairs are stored should be clearly labeled. For information about training and protocols related to using evacuation chairs go to page 20.

**Section 6: Evacuation Bag**

An evacuation bag holds items that can be useful for physical and mental safety following an evacuation. The bag would be prepared in advance, placed in a designated area(s) close to exits, and brought out by staff while evacuating. For more information see evacuation bag protocols on page 20.

Bags might include the following:

- Water bottles
- First aid kit
- Flash light
- Noise cancelling headphones
- List of emergency contacts
- Calming fidgets

\(^{17}\) https://evacuationslyde.com/evacuation-chairs-slyde-medical-sled-pro-con/
- Calming items to hold (this could be as simple as a small stone)
- Portable charger for electronics
- Calming techniques tip sheets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building and Equipment Checklist</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your organization include people with disabilities with assessing building accessibility for emergency evacuation?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your organization have all emergency exits clearly labeled?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are emergency signs in tactile format?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are emergency signs in picture based format?</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your organization have picture-based emergency instructions posted?</td>
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<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are emergency instructions in at least 14 point font with accessible color contrast?</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do your emergency alarms display both visual and audio cues?</td>
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<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do lights on emergency alarms flash between 1 and 2 times per second?</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your organization have fire extinguishers within 50 feet of staff to use it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there clear paths to a safe exit?</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there clear, accessible paths to meeting locations?</td>
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<td>Are clear paths regularly being checked?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will your organization use an evacuation chair?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>If so, is the evacuation chair stored near an emergency exit?</td>
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<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will your organization use an evacuation bag?</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 3: Evacuation Policy and Protocol Template

In Parts 1 and 2, we have discussed considerations for creating evacuation policies and preparing your building for evacuation. In this section, we’ve included a sample protocol that can be adapted by your agency.

Section 1: Policy

(Insert agency name) values safety for all and this means creating evacuation plans that are accessible and inclusive of all people, including people with disabilities. (Insert agency name) defines safety as including both physical and emotional safety, so evacuation protocols take into account these various forms of safety, including taking a trauma-informed approach.

Section 2: Protocol

Building and Equipment Readiness:

Signage

(Insert staff member) is responsible to ensure that emergency exits and doors that can be confused as emergency exits are properly labeled with accessible signs. Signs will be:

- Fully accessible and ADA compliant including being tactile and having both written and picture based communication
- Hung at accessible heights in appropriate locations according to ADA standards

(Insert staff member) is responsible for posting accessible evacuation instructions in the office. Instructions should be posted in the following locations:

Instructions will be reviewed and updated every (insert amount of time).
Emergency Alarms

(Insert staff member) will ensure that emergency alarms have both visual and audio cues, and strobes on the alarms flash between 1 and 2 times per second. Emergency alarms will be tested every (insert amount of time- we recommend 2 months). (Insert staff member) will let staff and interns/volunteers know ahead of time when alarms will be tested and address any concerns raised.

(For residential services) (Insert staff member) will notify consumer/clients when alarms will be tested and address any concerns raised.

(For office services) Staff who work with consumers/clients will notify their consumer/clients when alarms will be tested and address any concerns raised.

Clear Paths

(Insert staff member) is responsible for checking once a day to ensure that all internal and external paths of travel are clear in the case of an emergency. This includes ensuring that ramps and curb cuts are clear of ice and snow. If snow removal is needed, (insert staff member) will follow existing operations protocol.

Fire Extinguishers

(Insert staff member) will purchase (insert number) of (insert type of fire extinguisher) fire extinguishers for the office. Fire extinguishers will be placed (locations). (Insert staff member) will be responsible for making sure that the pressure is adequate and that there is no damage to fire extinguishers (frequency). Plans with the fire department will be made every year to inspect and certify fire extinguishers.

(Designated staff or all staff) will be trained to use a fire extinguisher. (Insert staff member) will create and post instructions for when and how to use first extinguishers.

Evacuation Chair (if agency decides to purchase evacuation chair)

(Insert staff member) will purchase (insert number) of evacuation chairs for the organization. They will be stored (insert location). (Insert staff member) will review the condition of the evacuation chair(s) every (insert amount of time).
The following staff have agreed to assist with evacuation chairs:

- Staff A
- Staff B
- Staff C
- Staff D

This list and will be reviewed and updated (insert frequency).

(Insert staff member) will coordinate training for staff on how to properly handle an evacuation chair (frequency of training) and communicate when applying securements.

**Evacuation Bag**

(Insert staff member) will purchase and maintain the contents of the evacuation bag.

The evacuation bag must always include:

- Item A
- Item B
- Item C
- Item D

The evacuation bag(s) will be stored in (locations). (Insert staff member) will check the contents of the bag (insert frequency).

**Creating Accommodation Plans:**

(Insert agency name) is committed to making sure that evacuation is accessible for all. This includes making plans for emergency drills evacuation accommodations ahead of time.

**For Staff**

Staff can request reasonable accommodations specific to emergency drills and evacuations. Staff will not need to disclose disability in order to receive
accommodations. Staff will not be discriminated against for requesting accommodations. Staff may request accommodations by filling out the evacuation accommodations request form and requesting to speak with (insert staff member - e.g. HR). HR will speak with you about your request and make a plan. Requests will be kept confidential and HR will speak with you to create a plan about who you would like to tell to be able to obtain assistance. HR will keep your request and plan filed. If you need a change made to your request, speak with HR.

**For Interns/Volunteers**
Similar policy as above except the staff member who is responsible may be different. For example, instead of HR it may be a volunteer coordinator.

**For Clients, Consumers, or Residents**
(If agency decides to ask for evacuation accommodations of consumer/clients. Residential services should ask consumer/clients about accommodation needs.)

Consumers/clients can request reasonable accommodations specific to emergency drills and evacuations. Consumer/clients will not need to disclose disability in order to receive accommodations. Consumer/clients will not be discriminated against for requesting accommodations. Consumer/client may request accommodations by filling out the evacuation accommodations request form and requesting to speak with (insert staff member). (insert staff member) will speak with you about your request and make a plan. Requests will be kept confidential and (insert staff member) will speak with you to create a plan about who you would like to tell to be able to obtain assistance. (Insert staff member) will keep your request and plan filed. If you need a change made to your request, speak with (insert staff member).

All individuals who received accommodations for emergency drills or evacuations may meet individually with (insert staff member) to provide feedback on their individual plan.
Training and Emergency Drills:

Staff and Interns

(Insert staff member) will be responsible for coordinating training for staff (and if applicable, interns/volunteer) on emergency evacuations. Initial training to new staff/interns will be provided by (insert how training to new staff/interns will be provided). Refresher trainings will be provided (frequency - at least once a year).

Training will include:

- Review of protocols
- Review of evacuation pathways
- Coping with potential reactions to emergencies
- Tips for assisting others
- If applicable, use of fire extinguishers
- If applicable, use of evacuation chairs

If you need accommodations to participate in trainings speak with (insert staff member). If you have feedback about improvements in training speak with (insert staff member).

(Insert number) of emergency drills will be held every (insert amount of time). (Insert staff member) will let staff know when emergency drills will be held. (Agency) recognizes that emergency drills may be especially difficult for some people. If you have concerns and/or would like to request an accommodation speak to (insert staff member) prior to the drill.

Consumers/ Clients

(If agency is training consumer/clients which is recommended for residential facilities.)

(Insert staff member) will be responsible for coordinating training for new consumer/clients on emergency evacuations. Initial training to new consumer/clients will be provided by (insert how training to consumer/clients will be provided). Refresher trainings will be provided (frequency - at least once a year).
Training will include:
- Review of protocols
- Review of evacuation pathways
- Coping with potential reactions to emergencies

If you need accommodations to participate in trainings speak with (insert staff member). If you have feedback about improvements in training speak with (insert staff member).

(Insert number) of emergency drills will be held every (insert amount of time). (Insert staff member) will let staff know when emergency drills will be held. (Agency name) recognizes that emergency drills may be especially difficult for some people. If you have concerns and/or would like to request an accommodation speak to (insert staff member) prior to the drill.

**Emergency Evacuation Process:**

**Communication with Emergency Responders**

(Insert staff member) will contact local first responders (list closest first responders) to (insert process E.g obtain assistance with identifying refuge area and planning for evacuation or to notify them of location of refuge area and that a copy of this information is in the fire panel).

**Evacuating:**

When alarms are activated, proceed as calmly as possible to emergency exits. Alert those around you to evacuate with you. If you are meeting with consumer/clients or other visitors evacuate with them. (Insert staff member) is responsible for assisting those in the waiting room with evacuation. Do not take time to collect belongings unless there are essential belongings (e.g. medications, communication board, etc.) and it’s safe to do so.
If you notice someone who needs assistance with evacuating ask if assistance is needed and how you can provide assistance.

If alarms are not activated (e.g. staff notices a small fire that has not yet activated alarms) staff should pull alarms and alert staff to the emergency. Evacuation should proceed as above. (If agencies decide that staff may try to extinguish a small, contained fire protocols will be included. This should include the following language: Staff should always alert other staff and make sure emergency responders are being contacted before extinguishing fires. Only attempt to extinguish small, contained fires. When in doubt evacuate and allow first responders to extinguish the fire.)

(If alarms do not contact emergency services directly) (Insert staff member) is responsible for contacting emergency services.

In addition to alarms, (agency name) has decided to send additional notification to staff and interns/volunteers. (Insert staff member) is responsible for sending out notification to staff about the emergency. They will send out a (text message/email) to all staff and interns/volunteers with the following message:

(Insert message)

______________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Refuge Area
(Insert location) has been identified as the refuge area. The refuge area is an area where anyone in the building who is unable to evacuate downstairs can wait for first responders. Elevators will not work during an emergency. (Insert staff member) will wait in the refuge area to coordinate support.
Evacuation Bag
(If agency has evacuation bag) (Insert staff member or the first staff to evacuate, etc.) will be responsible for bringing the evacuation bag(s) outside during an emergency.

Evacuation Chair
(If agency has evacuation chair) Staff who require assistance with evacuation chair should meet staff who are volunteering with evacuation chairs at (location). When applying securements for the evacuation chair staff will communicate with the person being secured to:

- Confirm what the individual can do themselves
- Let the individual know what you will be doing
- Determine if the individual is comfortable with what you are doing

If it is safe and possible to bring mobility devices (e.g. cane, walker) other staff may assist with bringing these devices. Staff should also make every effort possible to assist service animals to evacuate.

Meeting Location
Staff will meet at (insert location). (Agency name) recognizes that some people may need a quieter location. If someone needs to go to an alternate meeting area, (plan: specific location, staff will go to any nearby location that is quiet.). If a consumer/client needs to go to an alternate meeting area staff should accompany consumer/clients. Staff should let (insert staff member) know they are at the alternate meeting location if possible.

(Insert staff member) is responsible for communicating with first responders on the scene. If staff have important information to relay to first responders they should let this staff person know (e.g. someone was unable to evacuate, a service animal is still in the building, etc.)

If the situation is one where people will not be immediately returning to the building (Insert staff member) will take attendance to account for the staff present.
If the Executive Director is not present during the evacuation (insert staff member) is responsible for notifying the Executive Director of the emergency when it’s safe to do so.

After evacuation, if it is unsafe for people to come to the office, staff who are expecting consumers/clients and other visitors should notify them if possible to let them know not to come in. (Insert staff member) will provide a message to the public through (method such as social media or website) in the event of an office closing.

**Evening/Weekend/Overnight Policy**
(Insert here the protocol you develop for hours when there are fewer staff available.) Staff should contact (insert staff member e.g. Executive Director and other identified leadership or supervisors) to let them know about the emergency and obtain additional support once it’s safe to do so.

**Post Crisis:**
(Agency name) recognizes that emergencies can result in a range of reactions from those involved. Staff working with consumer/clients will check in with their consumer/client after an emergency and discuss self-care and resources. Supervisors will check in with supervisees after an emergency and discuss self-care and resources.

For emergencies that require an agency-wide crisis response, (insert staff member) will coordinate to provide resources at (agency name).

**Updating Policy and Protocol**
(Agency name) welcomes feedback for improving evacuation protocols. To provide input contact (insert staff).
(Insert staff member) will be responsible for ensuring that evacuation protocols are reviewed after emergencies and at least (insert frequency) to ensure that they are kept up-to-date with best practices.
PART 4: APPENDIX

The appendix includes the following handouts which can be adapted and copied:

- Request for Evacuation Accommodations-Staff, Interns, and Volunteers
- Request for Evacuation Accommodations-Clients, Consumers and Residents
- Assisting with Evacuation Tip Sheet
Request for Evacuation Accommodations- Staff, Interns, & Volunteers

Please Note: Staff are not required to disclose the nature of their disability to receive an accommodation. Providing this information will not impact employment.

Date: ______________        Date for Renewal: ______________

Staff Member Making Request:

Last Name: ______________________  First Name: _________________________

Email Address: ________________________   Phone: ________________________

Department: _____________________      Supervisor: _________________________

Please Check off the Accommodation(s) You Are Requesting

___ Evacuation Materials in Alternate Format  ___ Transporting Medications
___ Assistance with Stairs  ___ Assistance with Service Animal
___ Evacuation Chair  ___ Noise Cancelling Headphones
___ Alternate Notification of an Emergency  ___ Support with Calming Exercises
___ Other (please describe below)
Please list any other information that would be helpful to best accommodate you in an emergency:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Do you need any accommodations for practice drills?  _____ Yes  _____ No

_____ Noise cancelling headphones  _____ Opt out of participating in drills

_____ Practice coping with alarms  _____ Practice drill without alarms

_____ Detailed instructions of drill procedure  _____ Other (please describe below)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Confidentiality:
Would anyone else other than HR (or designated administrator) need to know about the request in order to assist?  _____ Yes  _____ No

If so, who would need to know? (e.g. staff with training on evacuation chair, all staff)
________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

How would you like this information shared with other staff?
________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Plan: Document how the plan will be carried out (E.g. “Any staff who evacuates with me will know to help with calming exercises. All staff can be notified of this need.” “Insulin is kept in a small fridge in my office. If I’m not in my office during the evacuation, my officemate can bring it out for me if they are in the office.”):

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Please list any other information that would be helpful to best accommodate you to prepare for an emergency:

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Emergency Contact Information:

Name: ___________________________ Phone Number: _______________________

Staff Signature ___________________ Administrator Signature __________________
Request for Evacuation Accommodations- Clients, Consumers, & Residents

Please Note: Clients, consumers, or residents are not required to disclose the nature of their disability to receive an accommodation. Providing this information will not impact services.

Date: ______________        Date for Renewal: _______________

Client/Consumer Making Request:

Last Name: ______________________     First Name: _________________________

Email Address: ________________________   Phone: ________________________

Case Manager/Point Staff Person: _________________________

Please Check off the Accommodation(s) You Are Requesting

___ Evacuation Materials in Alternate Format  ___ Transporting Medications
___ Assistance with Stairs    ___ Assistance with Service Animal
___ Evacuation Chair                 ___ Noise Cancelling Headphones
___ Alternate Notification of an Emergency    ___ Support with Calming Exercises
___ Other (please describe below)
Please list any other information that would be helpful to best accommodate you in an emergency:

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

Do you need any accommodations for practice drills? _____ Yes _____ No

_____ Noise cancelling headphones  _____ Opt out of participating in drills

_____ Practice coping with alarms  _____ Practice drill without alarms

_____ Detailed instructions of drill procedure  _____ Other (please describe below)

__________________________________________________________________

Confidentiality:
What staff would need to know about the accommodations needed in order to assist?
(e.g. staff with training on evacuation chair, all staff)

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

How would you like this information shared with staff?
Plan: Document how the plan will be carried out (E.g. “Any staff who evacuates with me will know to help with calming exercises. All staff can be notified of this need.” “Insulin is kept in a small fridge in my room. If I’m not in my room during the evacuation, my case manager can bring it out for me if they are in.”):

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Please list any other information that would be helpful to best accommodate you to prepare for an emergency:

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Emergency Contact Information:

Name: ________________________       Phone Number: _____________________

Consumer Signature: __________________

Administrator Signature: __________________
Assisting with Evacuation Tip Sheet for Staff

People have a range of reactions during emergencies. This can include feelings of confusion, fear, or anxiety. Some may be prone to sensory overload or experience PTSD symptoms. During evacuation, these feelings may cause someone to freeze, become agitated, or otherwise unable to evacuate. The following handout provides a few tips that anyone can try in order to help another person cope with reactions that are arising, so that they can evacuate. It is important to combine this handout with opportunity to practice.
Assisting with Evacuation

General principle when assisting someone is to ask if they need assistance. Do not make assumptions about a person’s ability. Do not assume someone needs help, ask how they would like you to assist them.

You may notice that someone freezes, becomes agitated or otherwise is having difficulty evacuating.

Here are some tips to try to help someone:

*Please note that everyone is different and therefore some methods will work for some and not others. We provide a few different ways to try to help.

1. Get their attention. You could try:
   - Moving in front of them, so they can see you
   - Verbally letting them know you are there
     ○ “Kelly, it’s me Susan. I am right in front of you. Do you know that I am in front of you? If you know that I am here can you say yes or nod your head?”

2. Find out what will help the person.
   ○ “Jason, we need to move to the next room. How can I help you to do that?”
   ○ “What do you need right now so that you feel safe?”
   ○ “Will it help if I talk to you as we move?”
3. If they are unable to respond try grounding exercises.

**Grounding Exercises**

1. Deep breathing.
   - Encourage the person to let their breath reach into their belly. You can ask them to push their belly out (this forces the breath into the belly) and demonstrate using your own belly.
   - It may be helpful to have them imagine swallowing a bowling ball and that it lands in their stomach and you want to see that bowling ball.

2. Getting them to move:
   - Encourage the person to stand up or wiggle a finger or move their tongue in their mouth.
     - You can demonstrate a movement and have them imitate it.
     - You can demonstrate a noise and have them imitate it.

*Continue to check in as you are moving to the safe location and once you are there continue to use the techniques above to help the person be grounded and reduce stress.*