

Cedar Crest College

Special Assistance Needs and Disability Emergency Building Evacuation Plan

The content of this document is for informational purposes only. It is not intended for medical or legal advice.

This packet provides a general guideline of evacuation procedures for people with special needs and/or disabilities in case of fire and other building emergencies.

Students who require special assistance are encouraged to develop their own facilities evacuation plans and to identify their primary and secondary evacuation routes from each building they use.

For general information about access to Cedar Crest College, please contact Academic Services at 610/606-4628.

I. Individual Emergency Plans

- A. Develop familiarity with evacuation options. (Academic Services and the Director of Safety and Facilities can assist in this process)
- B. Seek evacuation assistants willing to help in case of an emergency.

NOTE: Most Cedar Crest College buildings have accessible exits at the ground level floor which can be used during an emergency. In other buildings, individuals should work with the College's Safety and Facilities Director to identify safe areas to stay during an emergency until rescue assistance arrives or to arrange for alternative methods of accessibility. **Elevators cannot be used during an emergency.**

II. Evacuation Guidelines

- A. The evacuation of a building during a fire alarm is required, regardless of cause.
- B. Individuals requiring special evacuation assistance in the event of an alarm should evacuate according to the terms of their plan and by following the directives of on-site emergency personnel.

C. The following are the Emergency Evacuation Guidelines for persons with special needs and/or disabilities. As standard practice:

1. **Persons with limited mobility:** Individuals who walk with canes, crutches, walkers, etc. and those who utilize wheelchairs should decide whether or not they can descend stairs or evacuate a building in an emergency with little assistance from others. If not, they should:

- a. Stay in place within their room or classroom, or
- b. Move to a safe area, per their evacuation plan.

2. **Persons who are blind or have low sight** - Persons who are blind/low sight can, with the assistance of others, evacuate a building using the stairs, if they are familiar with their immediate surroundings and frequently traveled routes and if stairs are safe to use. If a blind/low sight person is unfamiliar with the emergency evacuation route, he/she should either:

- a. Stay in place, within a room or classroom, or
- b. Move to a safe area, per the evacuation plan.

3. **Persons who are deaf/hard of hearing** - Emergency instructions can be given by writing a note to evacuate. Students with special needs and/or disabilities needing accommodations should contact Academic Services.

III. Evacuation Options

Persons with special needs and/or disabilities have four basic evacuation options:

- A. Horizontal evacuation: using building exits to the outside ground level or going into unaffected wings of multi-building complexes.
- B. Stairway evacuation: using steps to reach ground level exits from the building.
- C. Stay in Place: unless danger is imminent, remaining in a room with an exterior window, a telephone and a solid or fire resistant

door. If an individual requiring special evacuation assistance remains in place,

they should dial 911 immediately and report their

location to emergency services, who will in turn relay that information to on-site emergency personnel. If phone lines fail,

the individual can signal from the window by waving a cloth or other visible object.

D. Move to a safe area, per the evacuation plan.

If remaining in the room:

A. Notify others (if possible) that you are doing so.

B. Close the door to prevent smoke and fire entry.

C. If necessary, pack under the door with towels, blankets or other appropriate material.

D. Call 911 and report your location so that on-site emergency personnel can be informed and respond.

E. Move to the window with a brightly colored cloth to wave so that emergency personnel can see where you are. DO

NOT break the window unless absolutely necessary, since doing so could injure you or others and allow smoke to

enter the room.

IV. Developing a Plan for Evacuation

Note: Knowledge and preparation by both persons with special needs and/or disabilities and persons without disabilities is key to reducing the impact of emergencies. When developing a plan, safety needs should be determined on a case-by-case basis because they vary with each individual and building. Persons with disabilities utilizing Cedar Crest College's campus are asked to take responsibility in developing their personal emergency evacuation plans. The Director of Academic Services and the Director of Safety and Facilities will work with students to develop their plans and consult appropriate campus

resources.

A. General Tips for Developing a Plan

1. Make two plans --- one for use if you can be assisted by others and one if you are alone.
2. Ask others for input, such as community directors, staff, faculty, supervisors, and co-workers.
3. Contact Academic Services for assistance.
4. Choose two evacuation routes for each building.
5. Set up a buddy system (see "B").
6. Do not consider using elevators in your plan.
7. Consider alternative carry and/or communication methods, if necessary.
8. Think about your needs for preparedness kits, for example, disability related equipment, communication devices, service animal food, and three days worth of medication, if applicable.
9. Have a list of all your medications (name, dose, frequency, and name of doctor).
10. Attach written instructions to all disability related equipment.
11. Consider using door/window markers so emergency personnel will know your location.
12. Have easy access to emergency contact information at all times.
13. Participate in drills and review effectiveness of plan.
14. Share individual plans for a building with the Cedar Crest College Safety and Facilities Department and key persons who regularly work or live in the building.

B. Buddy System

1. Buddies need to be willing and capable of assisting in an evacuation.
2. Persons with disabilities and buddies must be able to contact each other quickly.
3. Designate at least two buddies.
4. Persons with disabilities should train buddies when their plans are completed.

IV. Tips for Persons with Special Needs and/or Disabilities in an Evacuation

A. General Guidelines for an Emergency

1. Obtain the disaster supplies kit that has been prepared ahead of time, as designed in your individual plan.
2. Call emergency personnel, if possible.
3. Determine need to evacuate or stay in place.
4. If evacuating, inform emergency personnel of area headed to and type of assistance needed.
5. If unable to contact emergency personnel, move to planned designated area.
6. Ask others to notify emergency personnel of need for assistance.
7. If trapped, get the attention of others by calling out or striking objects together to make noise.
8. Be careful of falling things as you leave a building.
9. Follow the directives of the Cedar Crest College Safety and Facilities Department, Allentown Police and Fire departments, and any other on-site emergency personnel. The Cedar Crest College Safety and Facilities department and the Allentown Police and Fire departments will decide whether evacuation is necessary and will communicate that decision to the individual.

B. Tips for Persons who use Wheelchairs

1. Preparedness kits should include:
 - a. Heavy gloves for making your way over glass or debris.
 - b. Extra battery for electric wheelchairs.
 - c. Patch kit for punctured wheels.
 - d. Flashlight.

2. In addition, individuals may want to:

- a. Store a lightweight manual wheelchair, if available.
- b. Arrange and secure furniture and other items to provide barrier free paths of travel.
- c. In tornadoes and hurricanes once in a safe and protected place, lock wheels, bend over your knees and cover your head.
- d. If you are in bed or out of your wheelchair, seek cover under the bed, a desk, or a table.

C. Tips for Deaf or Hard of Hearing Individuals

1. Preparedness kits should include:
 - a. Pen and paper and a flashlight to communicate in the dark.
 - b. Extra hearing aid batteries.
 - c. Batteries for TTY and light phone signaler.
 - d. Request both audible and visual smoke alarms in your room.

D. Tips for Persons who are Blind/Low Vision

1. Disaster supply kits should include:

- a. Extra folding white cane.
- b. Heavy gloves for feeling your way over glass or debris.
- c. Colored cape or poncho worn for visibility by others.

2. When preparing your evacuation plan ask for information in alternate formats, if needed, such as building evacuation instructions. You should know where the nearest telephones and alarm boxes are located, how to describe your location, and where emergency medical kits are located. You should also consider marking emergency supplies with large print or Braille, if helpful, and you should check to make sure that evacuation signage is adequately marked for your needs. Practice your evacuation route periodically both with your service animal and white cane.

E. Tips for Persons with a Service Animal

- a. Include instructions in your plan for service animals.
- b. Some dogs fear metal grated steps. If your evacuation route has these kinds of steps, get your dog accustomed to the route.
- c. If the only stair rail is on your left side where a service dog should typically be, accustom the dog to heeling down the right side if you do not intend to work the dog on the steps.
- d. Be cautioned that if a dog typically stops at each new flight others behind you may panic. Heeling the dog may be safer in some instances.

F. Tips for Persons with Learning Disabilities

1. When making your plan for evacuation:
 - a. Ask for information in alternate formats, if needed.
 - b. Review general building evacuation guidelines and ask questions if you do not understand something.

- c. See if your evacuation routes have signage that is easy to follow.
- d. Ask someone to guide you during an evacuation if you feel you need help.
- e. Ask someone to write down information if you have a hard time understanding oral directions.
- f. Practice your evacuation route(s) regularly.

G. Tips for Persons with Limited Communication

- 1. Determine how you will best communicate with others during an emergency.
- 2. Consider having evacuation and emergency instructions written down on a card, carried at all times and placed in an easy to see location.
- 3. Have batteries for communication equipment in preparedness kit.

H. Tips for Persons with Psychological Disabilities

- 1. Your preparedness kit should include at least three days worth of needed medication, if necessary.
- 2. When developing plan, consider strategies to reduce the stress of emergencies.

I. Tips for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

- 1. When you plan for an evacuation:
 - a. Review general building evacuation guidelines and ask questions if you do not understand something.
 - b. Request evacuation and emergency information in alternate formats if needed.

- c. Make sure that your evacuation routes have signage that is easy to follow.
- d. Ask someone to guide you during an evacuation if you feel you need help.
- e. Practice your evacuation route(s) regularly.

J. Tips for Persons with Medical Conditions That May Impact Your Ability to Evacuate a Building or Follow Emergency Instructions

1. Medical conditions include, for example, pregnancy, respiratory or cardiac problems.
2. Ask for assistance walking down stairs.
3. Remember to bring medication or inhalers when evacuating.
4. Consider taking rest periods during evacuation, if possible.

V. Tips for Assisting Persons with Special Needs and/or Disabilities in an Evacuation

A. General Guidelines

1. Ensure that egress routes are clear and properly marked.
2. Participate in and help identify gaps in evacuation plans during practice drills.
3. Provide adequate notice that a potential danger exists and that evacuation should begin.
4. Offer assistance, but let the person explain what help is needed.
5. Do not carry a person except in the most extreme of circumstances.
6. Be aware that a service animal's sense of direction may become confused during an emergency.
7. Do not abandon the person after exiting a building. Lead to a safe place with others.

B. Assisting Persons who Use Wheelchairs

1. Be familiar with areas of refuge and location of evacuation equipment for wheelchair users.
2. If the person is unable to speak clearly, look for a sign on the chair with printed instructions.
3. Only in situations of extreme danger should untrained people attempt to carry a person in a wheelchair.
4. Prior to moving the person, check for life-support equipment.
5. Be aware that wheelchairs have parts not designed to handle the stress of lifting.
6. If you and/or others cannot safely carry a person up/down stairs, don't. Instead:
 - a. Position the person in the safest place possible.
 - b. Alert emergency personnel of person's location.

C. Assisting Deaf or Hard of Hearing Persons

1. Provide a flashlight from their preparedness kit so they can signal their location and to help with lip reading in the dark.
2. Get the attention of the person before speaking and look at him when speaking.
3. Use facial expressions and hand gestures to communicate.
4. Use short sentences.
5. Use written notes to indicate emergency and instructions, for example, "Fire! Go out rear door now!"

6. Check to be sure you are understood.

7. Be patient. The person may have difficulty understanding the urgency of your message.

8. Be aware that the person may not be able to hear oral commands issued by authorities.

9. When out of danger, offer to make phone calls if a TTY is not available.

D. Assisting Persons who are Blind/Low Vision

1. During an emergency, announce your presence when entering the person's area.

2. Offer your elbow. Do not grab the person's arm or hand.

3. Communicate throughout the evacuation by describing in advance physical barriers or action to be taken such as, "Take two steps down."

E. Assisting Owners of Service Animals

1. Do not pet or offer food or water without the permission of the owner.

2. Plan for the service animal to be evacuated with the owner.

3. In the event that you are asked to handle the service animal while assisting the individual, hold the leash and not the harness, if present.

F. Assisting Persons with Learning Disabilities

1. During an evacuation, be patient.

2. Give instructions slowly and clearly.

3. Offer to accompany them as their sense of direction may be limited.

4. Encourage the person to practice their evacuation route(s) regularly.

G. Assisting Persons with Limited Communication

1. Look for an instruction card on the person.
2. During an evacuation, give clear instructions.
3. Maintain eye contact with the individual to insure all directions are heard and understood.

H. Assisting Persons with Psychological Disabilities

1. Understand that the person may have difficulty concentrating, handling stress, and initiating personal contact.
2. Help reduce stress during an emergency by offering to escort the person through the evacuation.
3. Give clear and simple instructions.

I. Assisting Persons who are Developmentally Disabled

1. Be aware that they may be unable to understand the emergency and could become disoriented or confused about the proper way to react.
2. During an evacuation, give instructions slowly and clearly.
3. Encourage the person to practice their evacuation route(s) regularly.

J. Assisting Persons with Medical Conditions

1. Offer assistance walking down stairs.
2. Find ways to reduce the person's stress, exertion, and exposure to dust or smoke.
3. Remind the person to bring medication or inhalers.

4. Allow rest periods during evacuation if possible.

K. Assisting Persons with Mobility Limitations - Non Wheelchair Users

1. Do not interfere with person's movement.
2. Clear displaced and fallen obstacles from egress routes.
3. If the stairs are crowded, you may act as a buffer.

VI. Campus Resource Contact Information

A. Safety and Facilities

Ext. 3450

Plant Building

B. Academic Services

Ext. 4628

Curtis 109

C. Health Services

Ext 3476

Curtis Hall

D. Residence Life

Ext. 3352

Allen House