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**Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) Procedure**

**Introduction**

The aim of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is to provide people who cannot evacuate a building unaided during an emergency situation, with the necessary information and assistance to be able to manage their escape from the building whilst ensuring and that their evacuation does not impede other persons escape or safety. This procedure will also provide the School or Department concerned with the necessary information to ensure that the correct level of assistance is always available to ensure safe evacuation takes place. A PEEP maybe relevant to any person on the University’s premises that are either permanently or temporary impaired or disabled.

**Definitions**

**Impairment/Disability/Medical Condition**

This refers to those persons who have a permanent, temporary or progressive condition that is;

* Physical; *(e.g. mobility, asthma/breathing difficulty, heart condition, pregnancy)*
* Cognitive/psychological; *(e.g. specific learning difficulty, dyspraxia, autism, mental health condition, dexterity problems, epilepsy*
* Sensory *(e.g. visual, hearing)*
* Any combination of these that substantially affects a person’s ability to evacuate themselves unaided during an emergency situation/evacuation.

**Means of Escape**

This refers to a protected escape route that may consist of a corridor or stair enclosure which, once entered, will lead directly to a place of safety via an emergency exit.

The escape route is separated from the rest of a building by fire-resisting construction, providing a minimum fire resistance of 30 minutes. Access to the escape routes is by 'Fire Doors' which provide a minimum fire resistance of 30 minutes.

Once inside a protected escape route, you are deemed to be in a place of safety.

**Disabled Refuges / Safe Areas**

A refuge is an area normally sited within an enclosure such as a protected lobby, protected corridor or protected stairway, which provides a temporary safe area for people who will not be able to use stairways without assistance.

The refuge normally needs to be big enough to allow wheelchair use and to allow the user to manoeuvre into the wheelchair space without undue difficulty.

A means of communication is provided so that the person requiring assistance can make contact with those people who have been designated to provide assistance. This intercom (wall-mounted panel) connects to Security Officers in the Security Control Room who are automatically aware of the activation location, even on occasions where the intercom user cannot hear the Security Officer over the noise of a fire alarm, they are immediately a top priority.

**Evacuation Chairs (EVAC Chairs)**

Evac-chairs are specially designed chairs for the evacuation of a person down a stair enclosure in a controlled and safe manner.

Whilst they are primarily for the use of wheelchair users, they can also be of assistance to those with impaired mobility, chronic/asthmatic conditions etc.

They must only be operated by person(s) trained in their use.

**Buddy System**

The 'Buddy System' is a procedure whereby a carer, friend, colleague or assistant is allocated the responsibility of ensuring that the person, who may require assistance, is alerted of the need to evacuate a building and may assist that person in the evacuation.

Normally the person allocated this responsibility will be employed within the vicinity or work area of the person requiring assistance.

In order to maintain the continuity of the evacuation procedures more than one person may be nominated to undertake this responsibility.

**Responsibilities**

**Director of Campus Services**

The Director of Campus Services is the responsible person for all University owned buildings and has the responsibility for ensuring that the buildings are safe for occupants to use at all times.

**Deans / Directors**

Deans / Directorsare responsible for;

* Ensuring the requirements for resourcing and implementing PEEPs that have been identified and acted upon.
* Ensuring that staff and students with disabilities have a PEEP to ensure they can evacuate the buildings safely.
* Where occupancy of certain areas is shared between Schools/Departments, those persons responsible must cooperate and coordinate with Campus Services to ensure between them, that suitable provisions are made and the relevant staff informed, instructed and/or trained accordingly.
* Ensuring all PEEPs are reviewed at least annually and in the event of significant change. This is especially important in the case of progressive conditions.

**New Students**

* + New students to the University receive PEEPS information and inform the Health and Safety Team that they have a disability or medical condition that may require the development of a PEEP.
  + This information is then passed to the School Disability Coordinator.
  + Arrangements will be made at the earliest opportunity to develop the PEEP in consultation with the Student and Disability Services.

**Returning Students**

* Returning students to the University should contact School Disability Coordinator and notify them of any changes to their condition/impairment and should their teaching accommodation change.
* When required arrangements should be made at the earliest opportunity to review the PEEP.

**Staff**

* New members of staff complete an **Initial Emergency Evacuation Questionnaire** and identify they require a PEEP.
* This information is submitted to the Health and Safety Team.
* Arrangements will be made at the earliest opportunity to develop the PEEP.
* Should an existing member of staff sustain an injury or disability that potentially could delay/prevent safe evacuation unaided they should inform the Health and Safety Team who will review the information to ascertain whether a PEEP is required.

**Visitors**

On making themselves known to local staff (e.g. Reception) they will receive a **Fire Evacuation Procedure for Disabled People** information and guidance booklet on what to do in an evacuation. Fully written-up PEEPs are normally only provided for regular building users, unless there is a particular need.

**Temporary or Short Term Disabilities**

It is the responsibility of Line Managers (staff) or the Programme Leader (students) to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that a person suffering from a temporary injury or illness that renders the individual being unable to self-evacuate during an emergency (for example; recovering from operation or other treatments, sports injury, broken limbs, pregnancy) completes the **Initial Emergency Evacuation Questionnaire** that will inform Health and Safety Centre staff who will liaise with the individual and issue a PEEP if necessary.

**Writing the PEEP**

Following receipt of the **Initial Emergency Evacuation Questionnaire** a member of the Health and Safety Team will liaise with the staff/student and complete an appropriate PEEP questionnaire to assist with the development of the final PEEP.

The relevant PEEP will be submitted to the Line Manager or School Disability Coordinator, who will be supported by the Health and Safety Team, should further specialist advice be required.

Given the unique characteristics of buildings, those persons requiring a PEEP who regularly use different buildings must have a separate PEEP developed for each building.

If assistance with an escape is required, the extent of such assistance should be identified in the PEEP i.e. the number of assistants and the methods to be used. These assistants may need training that will be provided by the Health and Safety Team.

**Evacuation in an Emergency**

**Assisting persons with mobility issues**

There are a number of considerations where persons with mobility issues, that prevent them from evacuating unaided, are located above the ground floor. In the following cases, the Health and Safety Advisor will be able to give advice and will assist with identifying disabled refuges.

**Disabled Refuges**

A disabled refuge is a designated temporary safe space where any person who cannot evacuate unaided can wait for assistance. It is an area that is both separated from a fire by fire resisting construction i.e. fire doors, and provides a safe route to final exit such as the head of a protected stairway or a lobby.

All refuge areas are clearly signed and of sufficient size to accommodate both people using it as a refuge and any people passing through on their way out of the building.

The majority of refuges have two-way voice communication installed between the refuge and the Security Control Room. The locations of all designated refuges within the University can be obtained from the Health and Safety Centre on request.

A refuge is merely the first stage in the evacuation procedure for disabled persons; a specific procedure is then required to ensure that persons are able to be evacuated, if necessary, from the refuge under safe and controlled conditions. This may require the use of an Evac-Chair.

The University has recently launched a web based monitoring system called Safe Zone. This free downloadable app is ideally suited for inclusion within PEEP’s as it provides an additional method of summoning assistance in an emergency evacuation. It is recommended that all individuals requiring a PEEP are made aware of the app and that it is included within current and future PEEP’s. The app can be downloaded by visiting [www.safezoneapp.com.](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/news-events/news/2015/01/northumbria-university-is-first-in-europe-to-roll-out-free-safety-app/)

**Lifts**

Lifts cannot be used in an emergency evacuation, this includes passenger, goods and platform lifts. Any lift used for evacuation purposes must be either a “fire-fighting lift” or an “evacuation lift and there are no lifts with this designation in any University building.

**Means of Escape Routes**

A PEEP should contain details of the means of escape routes the person might be expected to use. Clear unobstructed routes and floor layouts should be considered at the planning stage.

Wherever possible evacuation routes should be sought so that the evacuating person can move freely into an adjacent fire compartment (this will normally be achieved by passing through a set of corridor fire doors) without having to negotiate steps or stairs.

Where possible, alternative escape routes should also be identified in case the main route becomes inaccessible during the emergency.

It is especially important to ensure that locks, doors and other devices are all able to be operated by the evacuating persons. It is not acceptable to have a route if the door furniture is inaccessible.

**Sharing the final PEEP**

A copy of the PEEP will be shared, when required, as follows:

* Security or Support Services staff
* School Disability Coordinator
* Your carer(s) or volunteer worker(s), if applicable
* Any person assigned specific duties in providing assistance to you under the PEEP (this may include relevant members of staff where necessary)
* The University’s Health and Safety Team (Records are held in the Health and Safety Centre).

Each team will evaluate the PEEP to determine and mitigate any potential risk and decide if further reasonable adjustments are required to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the individual identified.

**Deaf and Hearing Impaired persons**

Generally, those with a hearing impairment will be working alongside hearing colleagues/students and will not require special equipment, providing they have been made aware of what to do in the event of a fire. They will be able to see and understand the behaviour of those around them.

However, a deaf or hearing impaired person working, studying or living alone in University halls of residence may need an alternative method of being alerted to an emergency, for example, a visual indicator or vibrating pager system.

**Blind and Partially sighted persons**

Both Staff and Students with a visual impairment should be offered orientation training arranged by their School/Department, and, where applicable, this must include alternative ways out of the building. If a blind or partially sighted person uses a guide dog it is important that the dog is also given ample opportunity to learn these routes.

**Data Protection Notice (GDPR)**

Personal information collected for the PEEP process will be used to fulfil the University's PEEP procedure and its legal obligations. Completed checklists will be retained after completion until the named individual leaves Teesside University. The completed assessment may be shared with members of staff with a role identified within the procedure or those with whom the risk or the control of risk is shared. Consent will be requested prior to sharing.

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