General Evacuation Procedures: University Buildings

BEFORE A FIRE

1. Know the location of
   - All fire alarm pull stations
   - The nearest exit and at least one alternate exit in your area
   - The evacuation re-assembly area for your building (please refer to emergency information signs near building exits)

2. Know the location of fire extinguishers in your area. Contact Environmental Health and Safety at (269) 387-5590 for fire extinguisher training. Fire extinguishers are used to extinguish small fires (trashcans, cloth, small appliances, etc.). Only if the fire is small and you have received fire safety training should you try to extinguish it.

3. Call 911 if you need special assistance during an evacuation.

IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE

1. Sound the Alarm. Pull the nearest fire alarm pull station. The fire alarm will sound throughout the building. It will not alert either the Fire Department or in some cases the WMU Department of Public Safety. Generally, pull stations are located near egress points: entrances to stairwells and exit doors.

2. Evacuate. Follow the evacuation procedure described below under "When the Fire Alarm Sounds."

3. Call Public Safety. Dial 911 on any campus phone from a safe location to notify the WMU Department of Public Safety that there is a fire in your building. If using a cell phone, please dial (269) 387-5555.

WHEN THE FIRE ALARM SOUNDS

1. Automatically Assume There is a Fire. When the fire alarm rings, follow these evacuation procedures:
   - Close doors. If time permits, close doors as you exit. This helps confine the fire and protect your possessions from smoke damage.
   - Leave the building. Evacuate the building quickly by using the nearest stairway and exit. Walk - do not run out of the building.
• **DO NOT USE ELEVATORS** – if you need assistance, dial 911 and tell Public Safety your location. They will notify the Fire Department that you need assistance.
• **Go to your re-assembly area.** Let your professor, supervisor, or the emergency/building coordinator know you are there.
• **Do not** go back into the building until the Fire Department or Public Safety says it is safe to do so.

2. **Specific Responsibilities for Classroom or Laboratory Instructor:**

   • Each instructor should select one or two students to lead the class safely out of the building and to the re-assembly area. The instructor should bring up the rear of the class. Evacuate the building quickly by using the nearest stairway and exit.
   • If it is safe to do so, check any adjoining areas such as restrooms on the way out of the building to be certain that everyone in the area is aware of the alarm.
   • At the re-assembly area, take attendance.

3. **Specific Responsibilities for the Emergency/Building Coordinator's Office:**

   Once you have evacuated, dial 911 from a safe location on a campus phone to notify the WMU Department of Public Safety that the fire alarm is ringing in your building. If using a cell phone, please dial (269) 387-5555.

**IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO LEAVE**

**Feel Doors Before Opening.** Before opening any door, feel the metal doorknob or the back of the door. If it is hot, do not open the door. If it is cool, open the door slightly; if heat or heavy smoke is present, close the door and stay in the room. Seal the cracks around the door with towels or other materials. If a telephone is available, dial 911 and let Public Safety know your location and that you are unable to exit. Open the windows and keep the doors closed. Hang an object (like a jacket or shirt) out the window to attract the Fire Department's attention.

**FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT**

1. **Keep Fire Doors Closed.** Stairway and hallway fire doors confine smoke if they are closed and help protect you until you can get outside. Fire doors are never to be blocked open.

2. **Report Damaged or Missing Fire Equipment.** To maintain all fire equipment in operating condition, immediately report any damaged or missing fire equipment to Environmental Health and Safety at (269) 387-5590.

**Evacuation Guidelines for Individuals with Disabilities**

WMU recognizes that all emergency situations are unique. These guidelines are not meant to be the only plan you may use, but instead can serve as a starting point for
your own plan. Situations may change and even the most thoroughly thought out plans could have to adapt to meet those changes. Please take this into account when you are developing your individual evacuation plan.

All building occupants should familiarize themselves with primary and alternate routes of evacuation. Thinking ahead and planning is especially important for persons with disabilities who may need more time or assistance during an evacuation.

If you have a temporary or permanent disability that might prevent your prompt and safe evacuation from a building, please take the following planning steps:

**Planning Steps:**
1. Study and remember the features of the building you are in - including accessible exit routes, stairways, phone locations, and other building safety items like fire alarm pulls.
2. Identify nearest, safest route to exits, stairwells or other safe areas that can provide protection from smoke or fire.
3. Locate building phones, fire alarm pull stations, police call boxes or cell phones that can be used to call WMU Police at (269) 387-5555 in the event of an emergency.
4. Be prepared to give your name, building, location, and type of emergency to the dispatcher.
5. Consider recruiting the assistance of friends, coworkers, colleagues or others to escort or assist you during an evacuation. Provide individuals you have recruited advice regarding the best way to assist you.

**During an Evacuation:**
1. Immediately leave the building.
2. Exit the building using the nearest, safest exit route identified in your planning steps.
3. If you are unable to exit the building, seek refuge in the safe area identified in your planning steps.
4. Call (269) 387-5555 and let them know that you are proceeding to the stairwell or safe area designated in your planning steps.
5. Advise others who may be assisting you to continue to evacuate once you have reached your safe area. Remind them to immediately tell emergency responders where you are located in the building.

If you have questions about developing planning steps, students should contact Disability Services for Students at (269) 387-2116, and employees should contact Institutional Equity at (269) 387-6316.

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