

# THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

## *Employee Summary*

### 1. **Reporting of Emergencies and Alarms:**

Emergency response for all police, fire, and medical emergencies will be initiated by calling 9-1-1. Personnel discovering an actual fire should activate the building alarm along with calling 9-1-1.

All alarms sounding in a building are to be reported via 9-1-1 as soon as possible. If discernable advise the 9-1-1 operator if the alarm is the building evacuation alarm or the trouble alarm which is a single, continuous, ringing bell outside the building's mechanical room

### 2. **Building Evacuation:**

**In the event of a decision to evacuate a University building because of Fire, Bomb Threat, or other confirmed life threatening circumstance the following procedure will be followed.**

Once it has been determined a dangerous or life threatening condition Exists. Evacuation will be announced by the sounding of the emergency evacuation bells, horns or fire alarm. These bells, horns, or alarms sound continuously for several minutes and can therefore be easily distinguished from the class change bells in academic buildings.

All university personnel are expected to promptly respond to the emergency evacuation alarm and to follow the emergency evacuation plan for the building in which they are located.

Unless unusual conditions dictate otherwise, the best evacuation route is the nearest stairway and out the nearest exit.

Building code requirements result in stairways being the safest locations in a building in the event of a fire. Stairways are routinely checked for people needing assistance by the firefighters.

Elevators should not be used as a means of evacuation. The high potential for electrical or mechanical malfunctions coupled with the increased risk of smoke inhalation makes elevators an unsafe means of evacuation. Individuals on elevators when the alarm bells sound are advised to exit at the first opportunity and evacuate via the nearest stairway.

## Emergency Evacuation Procedures (cont.)

Evacuees should not stop immediately after exiting the building, but proceed well away from the building so as to be clear of any danger and to not impede the movements of emergency response personnel and/or equipment. Evacuees should proceed to their pre-determined *Evacuation Assembly Point*.

The **Evacuation Assembly Points** for \_\_\_\_\_ are:  
(Building/Department Name)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (Inclement Weather Site)

Classroom instructors are expected to interrupt class activity and advise students to evacuate the building. Students are obligated to follow emergency procedures in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. Provisions of the Ohio Revised Code as referenced in the University Operating Manual similarly obligate faculty.

Disabled students and personnel (e.g., persons with physical, visual, or hearing impairments, etc.) have the primary responsibility for requesting assistance. It is suggested that instructors/supervisors determine, in advance, if any students/personnel require assistance during an emergency. If assistance is requested, the instructor should so advise the class without making any specific individual arrangements. Should the evacuation alarm sound, the instructor/supervisor should request assistance to move students/personnel with physical disabilities to the nearest enclosed stairway or designated evacuation point. Other arrangements can include: assisting a blind or visually impaired person from the building, informing a deaf student that an alarm is sounding. Instructors/supervisors must inform emergency officials of the location (s) of disabled students/personnel.

Unless specifically requested and considered advisable by those providing the assistance, **moving persons in wheelchairs down a stairway is not recommended.** One individual should remain with the disabled person, if this can be done without unreasonable personal risk. Others should evacuate the building and advise of the location of the persons remaining in the building so that the emergency personnel may complete the evacuation. Elevators should not be used to move persons with disabilities.

**Silencing of the alarm should not be considered an all-clear signal.** The building should not be reentered unless indicated safe by Fire Officials or University Public Safety Personnel at the scene.

3. **Tornado Warning:**

Identified by the sounding of the emergency sirens for three minutes followed by seven minutes of silence, a tornado warning indicates a tornado has been sighted by ground observers or has been confirmed by Doppler radar within Franklin County.

All university personnel are expected to promptly respond to the sounding of the sirens and to take the following precautions:

In most university buildings the safest area is the basement. If a basement is not available, occupants should move to the central portion of the building on the lowest floor possible, away from outside walls and glass. Large, unsupported roof structures, as typically found in auditoriums and gymnasiums, should be avoided.

The Tornado Safe Area(s) for \_\_\_\_\_ are:  
(Building/Department Name)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Personnel should anticipate the tornado warning will extend for a significant period of time, perhaps thirty (30) minutes or longer. A battery-operated radio turned to any local AM or FM station will provide current weather information.

Personnel should not leave shelter until a period of at least ten (10) minutes has elapsed without the sounding of the alert sirens, or the local news media announced an “all clear”.

Classroom instructors are expected to interrupt class activity and advise the students to move to the safest area available. Should the allotted class time expire during the warning the instructor should encourage the students to remain in the safe area until the all clear is given.

Persons with disabilities should be provided assistance, if requested, on the same basis as described in section 2.5 for building evacuations.

The advisability of moving a disabled person from one floor to another as previously discussed applies equally to a tornado warning. It is recommended persons in wheelchairs be assisted to the safest area on the same floor. The decision to remain with a disabled person would be the option for any individual providing assistance.

Elevators should not be used to move disabled persons during a tornado warning as the potential for electrical malfunction is considered to be too high to warrant the risk.

#### 4. Bomb Threat

A person may become aware of a bomb threat by a telephone call, e-mail, letter, etc.. The person shall notify the University Police by dialing 9-1-1 after getting as much information as possible.

After notifying the police, the person should then notify his or her supervisor, Department Chairperson/Director and Department Emergency Coordinator as quickly as possible.

A decision will be made to determine if a building evacuation is warranted. If it is warranted, evacuation should take place as outlined in the Emergency Evacuation Procedure.

#### 5. Suspicious Package, Letter or Substance

Recent events have generated concern regarding the possibility of potentially dangerous substances being carried through the mail. Such threats can frequently be controlled by screening of materials and by following the procedures listed below. The University Police and Office of Environmental Health and Safety have plans in place to deal with these types of threats. Following the procedures below will activate those plans and promote the highest level of safety while minimizing the disruption associated with these incidents.

Characteristics of Suspicious packages Mail and package delivery to each department should be screened for suspicious letters and/or packages. Some common features of threat letters/packages include the following, but the presence of one or more of these elements does not always mean that the package is suspicious. In the final analysis, this evaluation depends upon the judgment of the individual screening the mail.

Potential elements of suspicion:

- Fictitious, unfamiliar or no return address
- Hand written or poorly typed address
- Address to a title only or an incorrect title
- Mailed from a foreign country
- Excessive postage
- Excessive string or tape on package
- Misspelling of common words
- Restrictive markings such as "Confidential", "Personal", etc.
- Excessive weight and/or feel of a powdery or foreign substance
- Discoloration or stains

Do Not Open or Handle. Suspicious letters and packages should not be opened and should not be handled any more than is absolutely necessary. If there is nothing leaking from the suspicious item leave it alone and call University Police at 292-2121. Keep others away from the area.

Letter or Package Claiming Contamination. If you open a letter/package with information that claims to have contaminated you; but there is no substance seen or felt in the envelope or on the letter, the chances are that you have not been contaminated. Call University Police at 292-2121 and tell them exactly what has happened. They will dispatch the appropriate personnel to your location to follow-up on your possible exposure and to document what has taken place.

Secure the area until the OSUPD arrives. Do not handle the suspicious item any more and do not let anyone else handle the item.

Letter or Package with a Foreign Substance. If you open a letter/package that claims to have contaminated you or there is some sort of foreign substance in the envelope or package, place the letter back into the envelope/package and close it back up. The person that opened the envelope/package and anyone who came in contact with the envelope/package or its contents after it was opened should immediately leave the room and wash their hands with soap and water. Remove any clothing that has the substance on it and place the contaminated clothing in a plastic trash bag. Then wash your hands with soap and water. Call University Police at 292-2121 to report the letter and tell the dispatcher you have opened the envelope/package, there is a substance inside, and what you have done up to that point.

The Risk will be Evaluated and Further Measures Taken If Necessary. The OSU Police and the Office of Environmental Health and Safety can evaluate the risk to those in the room at the time of potential exposure as well as any impact on the remainder of the building. Based upon that risk assessment, further emergency measures may be implemented as necessary. If the risk is found to be minimal, other areas of the facility will not be disrupted and any necessary actions to return the area involved to normal activity will begin as soon as possible.

If you have questions, feel free to contact OEHS at 292-1284 or the OSUPD at 292-2121.

Additional information concerning fire, weather, or other emergencies can be obtained by visiting the Environmental Health and Safety Web page at [www.ehs.ohio-state.edu](http://www.ehs.ohio-state.edu).