

Appendix 1. Disabled Employees and Disabled Visitors.

Definitions

1. Ambulant disabled people

Disabled people who are able to walk but who may depend on prostheses (artificial limbs), orthoses (callipers), sticks, crutches or walking aids

2. Disabled people

People with a physical, hearing or sight impairment which affects their mobility or their use of buildings

3. Refuge

Area that is enclosed with fire-resisting construction (other than any part that is an external wall of a building) and served directly by a safe route to a storey exit, evacuation lift or final exit, thus constituting a temporarily safe space for disabled people to await assistance for their evacuation

Note: Refuges are relatively safe waiting areas for short periods. They are not areas where disabled people should be left alone indefinitely until rescued by the fire brigade, or until the fire is extinguished.

4. Firefighting Lift

A lift designated to have additional protection, with controls that enable it to be used under the direct control of the fire service in fighting a fire.

NOTE

The firefighting lift is a development of the type of lift known as a fireman's lift. Although existing firemen's lift installations may be replaced, firemen's lifts should not be used in new installations. Only lifts complying with the code of practice can be designated firefighting lifts.

Evacuation of Disabled Persons

The following procedure is temporary and simple. It is to be set in place pending consultation with, plus an assessment of, disabled persons to establish Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans and Standard Emergency Evacuation Plans.

The Temporary Evacuation Procedure for Disabled Persons

When a person has been identified as being disabled, the evacuation procedure to be initiated is as follows:

- 1) If the disability is slight and the person can safely evacuate down the staircase an assistant is to be appointed to help them as necessary to evacuate from the building and is to accompany them to the evacuation assembly area.
- 2) For a person having a severe disability that necessitates their being assisted out of the building one or more assistants must be appointed to give that assistance
- 3) The lobby to the staircase or the landing of the stair will be the refuge for the assistants to help the disabled person reach in the event of a fire alarm operation.
- 4) The Security receptionist is to be pre-notified of the disabled persons on the floor, the degree of their disability, and the staircase landing refuge to where they will be taken in the event of a fire alarm operation. This information is needed for the Fire Evacuation Co-ordinator who will initiate the evacuation procedure for disabled persons in an alarm situation.
- 5) Evacuation of disabled persons is to commence on the first operation of the fire alarm.
- 6) When the disabled person is in the refuge he/she, or the assistant, is to contact the Fire Evacuation Co-ordinator by mobile telephone and report their situation.
- 7) The staircase is protected from a fire in a floor by a minimum one-hour fire-resisting construction. The Fire Evacuation Coordinator will use his resources to assist in the evacuation of the disabled person as reliance cannot always be placed on the fire brigade attending the building and assisting disabled persons to evacuate – strike situation.
- 8) When the staircase has cleared down from the floor above, the assistants must help the disabled person according to their needs to evacuate down the staircase and out of the building. For a severely disabled non-ambulant person it may be necessary to get them seated and to assist them down gently step by step. Further advice cannot be provided until their Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan is prepared.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for employees and regular visitors

Where employees and regular visitors to a building require a plan, they should be provided with an individual plan. The plan must be tailored to their individual needs and is likely to give detailed information on their movements during an escape.

Standard plans for occasional visitors

A standard plan is used where there are visitors or casual users of the premises who may be present infrequently or on only one occasion. The provision of standard PEEPs takes account of the following:

- The disabled person's movements within the floor;
- The operational procedures within the floor;
- The types of escape that can be made available;
- The building systems, e.g. the fire alarm; and
- The existing egress plan.

Standard evacuation plans are written procedures that can be used as options for disabled people to choose from. They are held at the reception point within the floor and are advertised and offered to people as part of the entry/reception procedures.

This is an extension of the process of signing into a building and being given a visitor badge with the escape procedures on the back of it. A disabled person requiring assisted escape is offered options for their assistance and is given suitable instructions.

It is understood by most people that when a fire alarm is activated they must all leave the building by the nearest exit, as quickly as possible, and reach a place of ultimate safety. The management of the floor and the building is required to keep escape routes clear and free from obstruction and to ensure that exits are readily available for use on quick-release devices which also offer protection from unwanted or illegal entry. However, everyone using a building for whatever purpose should also take some responsibility for their own safety wherever possible.

This responsibility also applies to disabled people, therefore disabled people can be expected to identify themselves when they are informed of the availability of a choice of evacuation plan and co-operate by giving any information necessary for the safe execution of the plan.

Note: Full detailed advice on the evacuation of disabled persons may be found in British Standard: BS 5588: Part 8: Code of practice for means of escape for disabled people.