

Evacuation Procedure

Individuals with Disabilities or Otherwise in Need of Assistance

Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU) is committed to creating a safe and secure environment for all students, faculty, and staff. The MSU Emergency Preparedness information has been developed to assist the University in meeting this goal. All students and employees are encouraged to regularly review the information provided and become familiar with suggested recommendations concerning disasters or emergencies that may impact the Minnesota State University, Mankato community.

Knowledge and preparation by both individuals needing assistance and those who do not is key to reducing the impact of emergencies. When developing a plan, safety needs should be determined on a case-by-case basis because it varies with each individual and building. [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 1973](#) and [Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990 \(ADA\)](#) provide that no qualified individual with a disability be denied access to or participation in services, programs, and activities at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Everyone has a responsibility to develop their own personal emergency evacuation plan, this includes individuals with disabilities or individuals who will need assistance during evacuation. The Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator or designee in each University will work to develop a plan and consult the appropriate building and safety personnel. A plan template can be found at: <http://nfpa.org/public-education/by-topic/people-at-risk/people-with-disabilities>.

Directors, managers, and supervisors should review the emergency evacuation procedures with staff, including informing all staff that if additional assistance may be needed, and individuals with disabilities should contact Minnesota State University, Mankato contact(s) below to request the type of assistance they may need.

University ADA Coordinator, (507) 389-2015, tara.sprengher@mnsu.edu

The University has ensured our campus digital environment is accessible and free from barriers for all members of the campus community. The University website (mnsu.edu), provides the basic aspects of prescribed accessibility standards in implementing a website design that meets the needs of all users.

Disability Law:

The [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) is the Bill of Rights for individuals with disabilities. The ADA has three titles affecting governmental entities. A website link is attached to each of the ADA titles listed below.

Title I: prohibits discrimination in all aspects of employment

Title II: prohibits State & Local governments from discrimination in providing public services, programs and activities.

Title III: public accommodations & commercial facilities

ADA titles require a public entity to make reasonable accommodations and/or modifications to individuals with disabilities to allow them to participate fully in public employment and public services.

Evacuation Planning:

Issues with the greatest impact on people with disabilities include:

- Notification
 - Deaf or hard of hearing
 - What if electric power supply is affected?
 - Telephone, TTY (teletypewriter) messages, text messages, door to door contact
- Evacuation
 - Including mobility, vision, hearing, or cognitive disabilities, mental illness
 - Ability to self-evacuate or be evacuated by others
 - Use of voluntary persons, but only is safe to do so
 - Use emergency exits having primary & secondary routes
 - Determine assembly point(s)
- Emergency Transportation
 - Accessible modes of transportation (lift-equipped)
- Sheltering
 - Emergency shelters, restroom accessibility
- Access to medications, refrigeration, and back-up power
- Access to mobility devices or service animals while in transit or at shelters
- Access to information

Evacuation Options:

Individuals with disabilities have four basic, possibly five, evacuation options:

- **Horizontal evacuation:** Using building exits to the outside ground level or going into unaffected wings of multi-building complexes;
- **Stairway evacuation:** Using steps to reach ground level exits from building;
- **Shelter in place:** Unless danger is imminent, remain in a room with an exterior window, a telephone, and a solid or fire-resistant door. If the 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 responders. The shelter in place approach may be more appropriate for sprinkler protected buildings where an area of refuge is not nearby or available. It may be more appropriate for an individual who is alone when the alarm sounds;

- **Area of rescue assistance:** Identified areas that can be used as a means of egress for individuals with disabilities. These areas, located on floors above or below the building's exits, can be used by individuals with disabilities until rescue can be facilitated by emergency responders; and/or

Evacuation Procedures for Individuals with Mobility, Hearing, or Visual Disabilities:

Individuals with disabilities should follow the following procedures:

- **Mobility disabilities (individuals who use wheelchairs or other personal mobility devices ("PMDs")):** Individuals using wheelchairs should be accompanied to an area of rescue assistance by an employee or shelter in place when the alarm sounds. The safety and security staff will respond to each of the areas of rescue assistance every time a building evacuation is initiated to identify the individuals in these areas and notify to emergency responders how many individuals need assistance to safely evacuate.
- **Mobility disabilities (individuals who do not use wheelchairs):** Individuals with mobility disabilities, who are able to walk independently, may be able to negotiate stairs in an emergency with minor assistance. If danger is imminent, the individual should wait until the heavy traffic has cleared before attempting the stairs. If there is no immediate danger (detectable smoke, fire, or unusual odor), the individual with a disability may choose to wait at the area of rescue assistance until emergency responders arrive to assist them.
- **Hearing disabilities:** Minnesota State University, Mankato's buildings are equipped with fire alarm horns/strobes that sound the alarm and flash strobe lights. The strobe lights are for individuals with who are deaf and/or hard of hearing. Individuals with hearing disabilities may not notice or hear emergency alarms and will need to be alerted of emergency situations.
- **Visual disabilities:** Minnesota State University, Mankato's buildings are equipped with fire alarm horn/strobes that sound the alarm and flash strobe lights. The horn will alert individuals who are blind or have visual disabilities of the need to evacuate. Most individuals with visual disabilities will be familiar with their immediate surroundings and frequently traveled routes. Since the emergency evacuation route is likely different from the common traveled route, individuals with visual disabilities may need assistance in evacuating. The assistant should

offer assistance, and if accepted, guide the individual with a visual disability through the evacuation route.

Severe Weather Evacuation Options:

Individuals in need of assistance during an evacuation have three evacuation options based on their location in their building:

- **Horizontal evacuation:** If located on the ground or basement floor, severe weather shelter areas are located throughout each floor;
- **Elevator evacuation:** If there are no safe areas above the ground floor, the elevator may be used to evacuate to the ground or basement levels; and/or
- **Shelter in Place:** Seeking shelter in a designated severe weather shelter and remaining there until the all clear is used.

Resources:

Americans with Disabilities Act: ADA.gov

Americans with Disabilities Act: [MN Mgmt & Budget](#)

Minnesota State Building Codes: [MN Building Codes](#)

National Fire Protection Assn: [People with Disabilities](#)

US Dept of Education: [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

Assn on Higher Education & Disability: [AHEAD](#)

US Dept of Labor: [Disability Employment Policy](#)