



## **IGC EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Indiana Government Center (IGC) Emergency Evacuation Policy provides a guide to the evacuation of state agency employees and IGC visitors who have mobility-related impairments.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Indiana Government Center-based employees who have a mobility-related impairment, to visitors to Indiana Government Center who have a mobility-related impairment, and to those individuals who are responsible for the safe and orderly evacuation of individuals from Indiana Government Center.

Because evacuation activities impact all individuals in the affected building(s), it is recommended that all IGC employees and visitors familiarize themselves with this policy.

### **POLICY**

The Indiana Department of Administration seeks to provide for the safe and efficient evacuation of all IGC employees and visitors during times of emergency. While the Department of Administration has instituted this policy to secure the safety and security of all individuals at Indiana Government Center, all employees and visitors, regardless of mobility constraints, are expected to take personal responsibility for their own safety.

Compliance with the procedures listed in this policy is not compulsory, but is recommended for all individuals in need of evacuation assistance.

To facilitate the implementation of the policy in times of evacuation, prior to an evacuation emergency individuals with mobility impairments are encouraged to designate at least two (2) evacuation buddies. Buddies should discuss evacuation options with the individual with an impairment to determine the individual's evacuation needs and preferences. The buddies should also be able to speak to emergency responders about the individual's mobility limitations so appropriate evacuation decisions can be made.

## **EVACUATING FROM THE GROUND FLOOR AND BELOW**

All individuals on the ground floor and lower level of Indiana Government Center buildings should evacuate via the nearest accessible exit.

## **EVACUATING FROM UPPER LEVELS OF IGC BUILDINGS**

Because individuals have varying degrees of impairment, individuals vary in their need for emergency evacuation assistance and accommodation.

### **Evacuation of Individuals Who Are Ambulatory**

If danger is imminent and the individual with a mobility impairment is able to walk down stairs, it is advisable that they wait until the heavy traffic has cleared and then attempt to evacuate using the nearest stairwell. If the evacuee so determines, another building occupant should accompany the individual down the stairs to provide assistance.

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**Note:** Individuals who use respirators should be given priority assistance in emergencies involving smoke or fumes as their ability to breathe may be seriously jeopardized.

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If it is apparent that there is no immediate danger (no obvious smoke or fire), the individual may choose to stay in the building until emergency personnel arrive and determine the necessity to evacuate.

### **Evacuation of Individuals with Ambulatory Impairments**

The most recent advice from fire and building safety experts calls for individuals who use a wheelchair to remain in the evacuating building until emergency rescue personnel arrive and determine evacuation necessity. However, to facilitate an individual's evacuation, should one be necessary, the individual should move to a Designated Point of Removal. Emergency responders will be dispatched to the Designated Point of Removal to facilitate building evacuation. Whenever possible, the individual with an ambulatory impairment should not be left in the facility alone. IGC Designated Points of Removal are attached.

Professional emergency personnel, such as firefighters, are the most qualified personnel to complete a building evacuation. Professional emergency personnel will determine the best way to evacuate individuals with mobility impairments.

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**Note:** The individual with the ambulatory impairment is the authority on how he or she should be moved.

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### **Elevator Use During an Evacuation**

During an evacuation, elevators may only be used in Indiana Government Center buildings that are equipped with a sprinkler system. In compliance with building codes and with the approval of the local jurisdiction, the Indiana Department of Administration has configured elevators to go into Fire Recall Operation only when the smoke detector installed in each elevator lobby is activated. Elevators that have not been recalled due to smoke may be used by those with mobility impairments for the purpose of building evacuation.

When using an elevator during an evacuation, depress the elevator call button. If the call button does not remain lit after the button has been released, the elevators have entered Fire Recall Operation. Individuals must either use another elevator lobby or move to the Designated Point of Removal for evacuation rescue by an emergency first responder.

It is the choice of the individual with a mobility impairment to use the elevator for evacuation purposes.

### **Evacuation of Individuals with Vision Impairments**

Individuals with vision impairments should not be forced to evacuate the building. Individuals with vision impairments are responsible for their own safety.

### **Evacuation of Individuals with Hearing Impairments**

Emergency instructions should be verbalized for those with hearing impairments. Simple gestures or a short, explicit note are also advisable ways to communicate an emergency evacuation situation. For example: "Fire alarm: Exit south doors. Now!"

As the building evacuates it is appropriate for individuals who are not impaired to offer assistance to those with auditory impairments.