

Fire Safety (From Campus planning website)

UWG BUILDING EVACUATION ASSEMBLY POINTS

Fire Safety

Background:

Loss of life and property from fire is preventable. Architectural designs such as fire-resistant construction and sprinkler systems can reduce these losses to almost zero; however, the building's contents offset some of this protection. Also, only a few buildings have the benefit of total sprinkler system protection. It is therefore incumbent upon the occupants to take effective, proactive measures to reduce the risk of fire.

Fire Safety Responsibilities:

Faculty and staff shall conduct the following inspections of all areas for which they are responsible. Deans and directors are encouraged to ensure all of their areas are covered and should make direct assignments to their employees to provide total coverage. Additionally, emergency evacuation and escape routes must be evaluated and tested.

Fire Safety Inspection Items:

All areas of buildings, including basements, storage rooms, mechanical/electrical rooms, attics, closets and all regularly occupied areas must be inspected.

Combustible Solids

- Excess combustible materials, including paper, cloth, cardboard, plastic, packing materials, wood, etc. must be either recycled or discarded.
- Computer boxes and other hardware shipping containers need to be recycled or discarded.

Flammable and Combustible Liquids

No more than ten gallons of flammable and combustible liquids may be kept in a fire area unless they are kept in a certified Flammables Storage Cabinet. Excessive stocks of flammable and combustible liquids or waste liquids must be removed and disposed of through RM/EHS. It is possible to arrange for increased storage capacities, to check on options, contact RM/EHS.

Electrical Safety

- Inspect all receptacles/electrical outlets for overloading. Since the advent of the personal computer and its peripheral hardware, electrical receptacle overloading has become a serious, universally pervasive problem. A receptacle may have up to two surge suppressors or outlet strips plugged in to it, provided each strip is properly grounded and has its own 15-ampere overload protection.
- Inspect all cords for damage. Pay particular attention to where the cord attaches to the plug and at the other end to the equipment. If the jacket is separated from the plug or the equipment, the cord must be repaired or replaced. If the jacket of the cord is deteriorated, cracked or broken, the cord must be replaced.
- Inspect plugs for damage. If the plug is a grounded plug, make sure the ground prong is present. Replace all plugs that fail inspection.
- If a three-prong to two-prong adapter is used because the receptacle is not a three-prong receptacle, make sure the adapter is properly grounded. If in doubt, have an electrician from Facilities check it for you.
- Inspect cords to insure they do not transverse walkways or pathways. Cords must not be run under rugs in areas of foot or wheeled traffic, because the repeated pressure on the cords will damage their insulation, thus exposing their conductors. Special protective strips are available that protect cords subjected to traffic.

- Inspect cords to ensure they do not pose a tripping hazard.
- Minimize or eliminate the use of extension cords. If extension cords must be used, ensure they are of adequate wire size to handle the load and protected from damage. All precautions that apply to cords in general, apply to extension cords.
- Inspect electrical circuits present in wet or damp areas to ensure they are Ground-Fault Circuit Isolation (GFCI) protected. If they are not, either submit a work order to Facilities to correct the problem or notify RM/EHS about the problem.

Smoke, Heat and Duct Detectors

- If detectors are battery operated (which are forbidden in commercial buildings and residence halls) change the batteries. This is a good time to replace any you have in your home, as well.
- The Fire Department, a qualified Fire Safety Engineer or a licensed Electrician will inspect detection and alarm systems to determine they are fully functional. Those failing inspection will be quickly repaired or replaced.

Evacuation:

It is important that personnel know what to do in case of a fire. While it would seem obvious that one would simply leave the burning building, there are still many individuals who would delay their departure to do some last-minute task. Few people understand or appreciate how quickly a fire can grow and become out of control. In as little as two minutes, a fire can become an inferno. Flashover greatly expands the area that is burning and the smoke may make escape impossible.

Escape Routes

- Escape route placards must be posted in areas that are conspicuous and available to all personnel located in the affected area.
- Make certain that the escape route placard is oriented in such a fashion that directions are all relative to the observer's position (i.e. left on the drawing is left to the observer, etc.). Otherwise, it is tremendously confusing to have to try and figure out which way to go and impossible in an actual emergency.
- Ensure that the escape routes shown on your evacuation placards are current and correct. Make certain that none of them require egress through spaces that may be locked. Normally the primary escape route is the shortest, unless it does not lead to an acceptable area outside of the building (like between buildings, enclosed courtyards, etc.).
- Check the alternate escape route as well. Apply all of the above considerations.
- Familiarize all personnel with these routes.
- If evacuation is necessary, escort visitors from the building since they will not be familiar with the escape routes.

What to When the Fire Alarm Sounds

- Stop whatever you are doing and immediately evacuate the building.
- If you find your primary route of evacuation blocked by fire or smoke, take the alternate escape route.
- Report to a pre-arranged point of assembly and remain there until told by competent authority that it is safe to re-enter your building.

- Treat every alarm as if it is a fire, even if you know that it is a drill.
- If you are trapped by smoke, lower your face to the floor to find oxygen and get out of the building.

Evaluating Personnel Fire Response Performance

- Appoint a member (or members) of your group to be the fire safety representative(s) for your unit.
- Conduct at least two fire drills, one announced and one unannounced.
- The fire safety representative(s) will time how long it takes to completely evacuate the area, check area for total evacuation (including restrooms), move mobility impaired individuals to protected areas to await professional evacuation, and conduct a muster at the assembly location to determine if anyone is missing.

Conclusion:

Fire safety is a year-round responsibility. It is also everyone's responsibility. Eliminating the accumulation of combustibles and observing proper electrical safety throughout the year can greatly enhance our fire safety posture. Finally, ensuring everyone knows how to do his or her part, rounds out the program to ensure its maximum effectiveness. Risk Management/Environmental Health and Safety is prepared to provide you the support necessary to achieve this goal.