



# Stafford County Fire and Rescue Department Office of the Fire Marshal

1225 Courthouse Road, PO BOX 339, Stafford, VA 22555  
(540) 658-8648 · [www.staffordfirerescue.com/fm](http://www.staffordfirerescue.com/fm)



## Guidelines and Specifications for: **Fire Safety and Evacuation Plans**

### Applicable Codes and Standards:

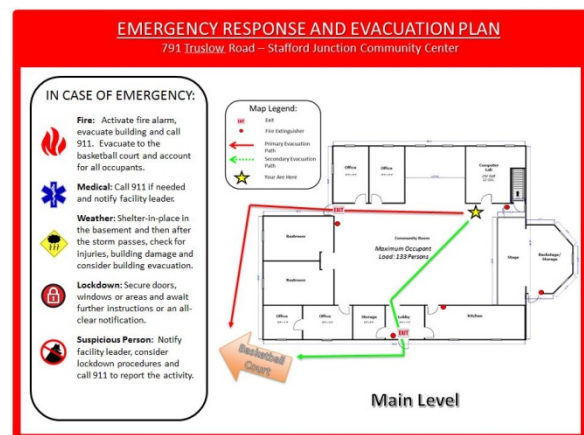
The Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code Section 403 and 404 requires that fire safety and evacuation plans be developed and posted for certain occupancies, such as places of assembly, educational, mercantile, institutional, residential, etc. These plans shall be reviewed and updated at least annually or as necessitated by changes in staff assignments, occupancy, or the physical arrangement of the building. These plans shall be available in the workplace for reference and review by employees, and copies shall be furnished to the fire marshal for review upon request.

### The Written Plan (Floor Plans and Procedures Document):

Effective emergency evacuation and fire safety depends on the development, communication and practice of a plan that is specific to the building. Simple, clear floor plans and procedures should be posted throughout the building including at each exit stairwell, elevator lobby, and large room or area. Fire Safety and Evacuation Plans shall at least contain the following information:

- 1) The **procedure for reporting a fire or other emergency** and the life safety **strategy** and procedures for notifying, relocating, or evacuating occupants.
- 2) **Emergency egress or escape routes** and whether evacuation of the building is to be complete or, where approved, by selected floors or areas only.
- 3) **Designated meeting point(s)** and procedure for **accounting for employees and occupants** after evacuation has been completed.
- 4) Identification and **assignment of personnel** responsible for emergency response or assistance to other occupants.
- 5) Procedures for employees who must remain to operate critical equipment before evacuating.
- 6) A description of the emergency voice/alarm communication system alert tone and preprogrammed voice messages, where provided.
- 7) **Site plan** indicating occupant assembly point(s), the location of fire hydrants and normal routes for fire department vehicle access.
- 8) **Floor plans** identifying the locations of the following:

- **Exits**
- **Primary** evacuation routes
- **Secondary** evacuation routes
- **Accessible egress routes** and areas of refuge (for handicapped occupants)
- **Portable fire extinguishers**, manual fire alarm boxes and fire department hose connections/valves.
- **Fire alarm panel**, annunciators and controls
- **Assembly point(s)** outside of the building



- 9) **A list of major fire hazards** associated with the normal use and occupancy of the premises, including maintenance and housekeeping procedures.
- 10) Identification and assignment of **personnel responsible for maintenance of systems and equipment** installed to prevent or control fires (such as Fire Alarms, Sprinklers, Kitchen Hood Suppression Systems, etc.).
- 11) Identification and assignment of **personnel responsible for maintenance, housekeeping and controlling fire hazard and other accident sources**.
- 12) Identification and assignment of personnel who can be **contacted for further information** or explanation of duties under the plan.



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## Use & Occupancy-Specific Requirements:

### **Assembly Occupancies (theaters, night-clubs, community centers, churches, gyms, etc.):**

**Seating Plan.** In accordance with Section 408.2.1 of the Fire Prevention Code, the fire safety and evacuation plans for assembly occupancies shall include the information required by Section 404.3 and a detailed seating plan, occupant load, and occupant load limit. Deviations from the approved plans shall be allowed provided the occupant load limit for the occupancy is not exceeded and the aisles and exit accessways remain unobstructed.

**Announcements.** In theaters, motion picture theaters, auditoriums and similar assembly occupancies in Group A used for non-continuous programs, an audible announcement shall be made not more than 10 minutes prior to the start of each program to notify the occupants of the location of the exits to be used in the event of a fire or other emergency. *Exception:* In motion picture theaters, the announcement is allowed to be projected upon the screen in a manner approved by the fire code official.

**Audible Announcements in Night Clubs.** Audible announcements shall be made to the occupants no longer than 10 minutes prior to the start of the entertainment and at each intermission to notify the occupants of the location of the exits to be used in the event of a fire or other emergency.

**Occupant Load Count in Night Clubs.** In accordance with Section 408.2.3.2 of the Fire Prevention Code, upon request of the fire code official, the owner or operator, or both, will be required to keep a running count of the occupant load to provide to the fire code official during performance hours of operation, entertainment hours of operation, or both.

### **Educational Occupancies (day cares, schools, etc.):**

**First Drill.** The first emergency evacuation drill of each school year shall be conducted within 10 days of the beginning of classes.

**Unique Drills.** Emergency evacuation drills shall be conducted at different hours of the day or evening, during the changing of classes, when the school is at assembly, during the recess or gymnastic periods, or during other times to avoid distinction between drills and actual fires.

**Outdoor Assembly Areas.** Occupant assembly points shall be designated and shall be located a safe distance from the building being evacuated so as to avoid interference with fire department operations. The assembly areas shall be arranged to keep each class separate to provide accountability of all individuals.

### **Hazardous Material Occupancies (Group H-1 through H-5):**

**Plans and Diagrams.** Plans and diagrams shall be maintained in approved locations indicating the approximate plan for each area, the amount and type of Hazardous Production Materials (HPM) stored, handled and used, locations of shutoff valves for HPM supply piping, emergency telephone locations and locations of exits.

**Maintenance.** Plans and diagrams shall be maintained up to date and the code official and fire department shall be informed of all major changes.

**Emergency Response Team.** Responsible persons shall be designated the on-site emergency response team and trained to be liaison personnel for the fire department. These persons shall aid the fire department in preplanning emergency responses, identifying locations where HPM is stored, handled and used, and be familiar with the chemical nature of such material. An adequate number of personnel for each work shift shall be designated.

**Emergency Drills.** Emergency drills of the on-site emergency response team shall be conducted on a regular basis but not less than once every three months. Records of drills conducted shall be maintained.

### **Institutional Group I-1 Occupancies (large assisted living and rehabilitation facilities, etc.):**

**Staff Procedures.** The fire safety and evacuation plan shall include special staff actions including fire protection procedures necessary for residents and shall be amended or revised upon admission of any resident with unusual needs.

**Staff Training.** Employees shall be periodically instructed and kept informed of their duties and responsibilities under the plan. Such instruction shall be reviewed by the staff at least every two months. A copy of the plan shall be readily available at all times within the facility.

**Resident Training.** Residents capable of assisting in their own evacuation shall be trained in the proper actions to take in the event of a fire. The training shall include actions to take if the primary escape route is blocked. Residents shall be trained to assist each other in case of fire to the extent their physical and mental abilities permit them to do so without additional personal risk.

**Drills.** Emergency evacuation drills shall be conducted at least six times per year, two times per year on each shift. Twelve drills shall be conducted in the first year of operation.

**Drill Participation.** Emergency evacuation drills shall involve the actual evacuation of all residents to a selected assembly point.



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## **Institutional Group I-2 Occupancies (hospitals, nursing homes, etc.):**

**Patient Movement.** During emergency evacuation drills, the movement of patients to safe areas or to the exterior of the building is not required.

**Coded Announcement.** When emergency evacuation drills are conducted after visiting hours or when patients or residents are expected to be asleep, a coded announcement is allowed instead of audible alarms.

## **Institutional Group I-3 Occupancies (jails, detention centers, etc.):**

**Staff Training.** Employees shall be instructed in the proper use of portable fire extinguishers and other manual fire suppression equipment. Training of new staff shall be provided promptly upon entrance on duty. Refresher training shall be provided at least annually.

**Staffing.** Group I-3 occupancies shall be provided with 24-hour staffing. Staff shall be within three floors or 300 feet horizontal distance of the access door of each resident housing area. In I-3 occupancies with special locking arrangements, the arrangement shall be such that the staff involved can start the release of locks necessary for emergency evacuation or rescue and initiate other emergency actions within two minutes of an alarm.

**Key Identification.** Keys necessary for unlocking doors installed in a means of egress shall be individually identifiable by both sight and touch.

## **Residential Group R-1 Occupancies (hotels, large boarding houses, transient housing, etc.):**

**Evacuation Diagram.** A diagram depicting two evacuation routes shall be posted on or immediately adjacent to every required egress door from each hotel, motel or dormitory guestroom.

**Procedures.** Upon discovery of a fire or suspected fire, hotel, motel and dormitory employees shall perform the following duties:

- Activate the fire alarm system, where provided
- Notify the public fire department.
- Take other actions as previously instructed

**Plan Information.** Information shall be provided in the fire safety and evacuation plan to allow guests to decide whether to evacuate to the outside, evacuate to an area of refuge, remain in place or any combination of the three.

**Drills.** Emergency evacuation drills shall be held quarterly on each shift or more frequently where necessary to familiarize all occupants with the drill procedure.

## **Residential Group R-2 Occupancies (apartment buildings, dormitories, non-transient housing, etc.):**

**Resident Plan.** A fire emergency guide shall be provided to each occupant which describes the location, function and use of fire protection equipment and appliances accessible to residents, including fire alarm systems, smoke alarms, and portable fire extinguishers. The guide shall also include an emergency evacuation plan for each dwelling unit.

**Notice.** A copy of the emergency guide shall be given to each tenant prior to initial occupancy.

## **Residential Group R-4 Occupancies (group homes, small assisted living or rehabilitation facilities, etc.):**

**Staff Procedures.** The fire safety and evacuation plan shall include special staff actions, including fire protection procedures necessary for residents, and shall be amended or revised upon admission of a resident with unusual needs.

**Staff Training.** Employees shall be periodically instructed and kept informed of their duties and responsibilities under the plan. Such instruction shall be reviewed by the staff at least every two months. A copy of the plan shall be readily available at all times within the facility.

**Resident Training.** Residents capable of assisting in their own evacuation shall be trained in the proper actions to take in the event of a fire. The training shall include actions to take if the primary escape route is blocked. Residents shall be trained to assist each other in case of fire to the extent their physical and mental abilities permit them to do so without additional risk.

**Drill Frequency.** Emergency evacuation drills shall be conducted at least six times per year, two times per year on each shift. Twelve drills shall be conducted in the first year of operation.

**Drill Participation.** Emergency evacuation drills shall involve the actual evacuation of all residents to a selected assembly point and shall provide residents with experience in exiting through all required exits. All required exits shall be used during emergency evacuation drills. Exiting from windows shall not be required.



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## Evacuation Drills:

In accordance with Section 405 of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code, emergency evacuation drills complying with the provisions listed below shall be conducted at least annually or in many cases more frequently when required by the Code. Drills shall include the actual evacuation of occupants unless otherwise authorized.

1. **Purpose.** Emergency evacuation drills shall be held to familiarize occupants with the evacuation plans and procedure.
2. **Leadership.** Responsibility for planning and conducting the drills shall be assigned to a competent person(s) designated to exercise leadership. Staff training for emergency response plans and actions shall also be provided as necessary.
3. **Time.** Drills shall be held at unexpected times and under varying conditions to simulate the unusual conditions that occur in case of fire.
4. **Records.** Records shall be maintained of required emergency evacuation drills and include the following information:
  - Identity of the person conducting the drill, date, and time of the drill
  - Notification method used and staff members on duty and participating
  - Number of occupants evacuated
  - Special conditions simulated
  - Problems encountered
  - Weather conditions when occupants were evacuated
  - Time required to accomplish complete evacuation
5. **Notification.** *Prior notification of the emergency evacuation drill is required. Notification shall be made by calling the Stafford County Emergency Communications Center at 540-658-4440.*
6. **Initiation of Evacuation.** Where a fire alarm system is provided, emergency evacuation drills shall be initiated by activating the fire alarm system. Drills for other emergencies such as weather or lockdown, shall be distinctly different and practiced separately from evacuation drills.
7. **Accountability.** As building occupants arrive at the assembly point, efforts shall be made to determine if all occupants have been successfully evacuated or have been accounted for.
8. **Recall & Reentry.** An electrically or mechanically operated signal used to recall occupants after an evacuation shall be separate and distinct from the signal used to initiate the evacuation. The recall signal initiation means shall be manually operated and under the control of the person in charge of the premises or the official in charge of the incident. No one shall reenter the premises until authorized to do so by the official in charge.

## Sample Emergency Response Plans:

The following pages are an emergency response plan template that can be used to help develop the site-specific plan. Additional information about preparing an emergency response plan is available at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) and a copy of the sample document is available electronically at: <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/89518>