Fire Safety and Evacuation Plans

Updated November 2017

Chapter 4 of the 2015 Seattle Fire Code requires that fire safety and evacuation plans be developed for a variety of occupancies. This bulletin outlines the general requirements of these plans. Additional provisions are also required for some occupancies.

Occupancies Requiring Plans

**Group A**
- Assemblies with more than 100 persons.

**Group B**
- Business occupancies having an occupant load of 500 or more persons or more than 100 persons above or below the lowest level of exit discharge. Also, buildings having an ambulatory care facility.

**Group E**
- Educational.

**Group F**
- Factory/industrial buildings having an occupant load of 500 or more persons or more than 100 persons above or below the lowest level of exit discharge.

**Group H**
- Hazardous processes.

**Group I**
- Institutions such as hospitals, care facilities, corrections facilities.

**Group M**
- Retail stores and markets having an occupant load of 500 or more persons or more than 100 persons above or below the lowest level of exit discharge.

**Group R-1**
- Residential (transient) such as hotels, boarding houses.

**Group R-2**
- College and university buildings and Assisted living and residential care facilities licensed by the State of Washington.

Additional occupancies or uses which require plans are:
- High rise buildings.
- Covered malls exceeding 50,000 square feet in aggregate floor area.
- Underground buildings.
- Buildings with an atrium and having an occupancy in group A, E or M.
- Structures under construction, alteration and demolition (see section 403.11.5 of the 2015 Seattle Fire Code for requirements).

Fire Safety and Evacuation Plans

Fire evacuation plans shall include the following:

1. Emergency egress or escape routes and whether evacuation of the building is to be complete or, where approved, by selected floors or areas only.

2. Procedures for employees who must remain to operate critical equipment before evacuating.

3. Procedures for assisted rescue of persons unable to use the general means of egress unassisted.

4. Procedures to account for employees and occupants after evacuation has been completed.

5. Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for rescue or emergency medical aid.

6. The preferred and any alternative means of notifying occupants of a fire or emergency.

7. The preferred and any alternative means of reporting fires and other emergencies to the fire department or designated emergency response organization.

8. Identification and assignment of personnel who can
Fire safety and evacuation plans should be reviewed or updated annually or as necessitated by changes in staff assignments, occupancy, or the physical arrangement of the building.

**Make the Plan Available**

Fire safety and evacuation plans should be kept available in the workplace for reference and review by employees, and copies should be furnished to the Fire Department upon request.

The fire safety and evacuation plans should be distributed to building tenants by the building owner. Tenants should distribute to their employees those parts of the fire safety plan that affect the employees’ actions in the event of a fire emergency.

**Emergency Evacuation Drills**

Occupancies that are required to complete a fire safety and evacuation plan are also required to conduct emergency evacuation drills to practice the plan. The schedule on which these drills should be conducted is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Participation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>All Occupants</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Quarterly/shift</td>
<td>Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>R-1</td>
<td>Quarterly/shift</td>
<td>Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>R-2</td>
<td>Quarterly/shift</td>
<td>Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Rise</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Employees</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Plan Maintenance**

LEGAL DISCLAIMER: This Client Assistance Memo (CAM) should not be used as a substitute for codes and regulations. Individuals are responsible for compliance with all code and rule requirements, whether or not described in this CAM.
Record Keeping
Records of emergency evacuation drills should be maintained and should include:

1. Identity of the person conducting the drill.
2. Date and time of the drill.
3. Notification method used.
4. Staff members participating.
5. Number of occupants participating.
6. Special conditions simulated.
7. Problems encountered and corrective actions taken.
8. Weather conditions when occupants evacuated.
9. Time required to accomplish complete evacuation.

In buildings that have a fire alarm system, emergency evacuation drills should be initiated by activating the fire alarm system. Buildings whose alarm systems are monitored by an offsite monitoring company should notify the company immediately prior to the drill to prevent a Seattle Fire Department response. When the drill is completed, notify the monitoring company that the building has returned to normal operations.

Employee Training
Employees should be trained in the fire emergency procedures described in the fire evacuation plan. Employees should receive training in the contents of the fire evacuation plan and their duties as part of their new employee orientation and at least annually thereafter. Records should be kept which document this training.

Employee training should include the following:

- Fire prevention training—information on the fire hazards to which they are exposed and instruction in how to prevent fires.
- Becoming familiar with the fire alarm and evacuation signals, their duties in the event of an alarm, evacuation routes, areas of refuge, assembly areas, and procedures for evacuation.
- Any employees assigned firefighting duties should be trained to know the locations and proper use of portable fire extinguishers, and the protective clothing or equipment required for its safe and proper use.


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