

Tips for Conducting Emergency Evacuation Drills

An **Emergency Evacuation Drill** is an exercise performed to train staff and occupants and to evaluate their efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out emergency evacuation procedures.

Procedures to perform in order to obtain a successful evacuation drill:

PRIOR TO THE DRILL:

1. **Have a written plan.** Submit a copy of your written plan to West Metro Fire Rescue's Life Safety Division for approval prior to your drill. A copy of your approved written plan is required prior to scheduling an annual evacuation drill witness by West Metro Fire Rescue. Templates are available at westmetrofire.org
2. **Train on the plan.** Ensure employees and residents/occupants have a copy of the plan and have reviewed it. Ensure employees know their roles, responsibilities and plan procedures.
3. **Pre-drill assessment.** The drill coordinator should conduct a pre-drill assessment of the evacuation routes and assembly points. This assessment will verify condition of egress components and ensure that occupants may use these facilities in a safe manner. Ensure exit passageways are clear, free of obstructions and that exit doors work properly.
4. **Evaluation checklist.** Unless the facility has its own form, download the Fire and Evacuation Drill Evaluation Checklist from westmetrofire.org and use it during the drill.

CONDUCTING THE DRILL:

1. **Pre-drill notification.** Drill coordinators may or may not elect to notify occupants prior to a drill. The first drills may be announced. However, not all drills should be announced. Actual fires or other emergencies are not announced and the evacuation drill should reflect actual conditions expected to be encountered when possible.
2. **Initiating the drill.** The drill should be initiated by building fire alarm whenever possible. This ensures that the building occupants recognize the alarm and act accordingly, as well as ensuring all occupants are notified at the same time.

These steps must be taken prior to the fire alarm initialization:

- a. The drill coordinator must contact the fire alarm monitoring company and notify them of the upcoming drill.
 - b. The monitoring company must place the fire alarm system on "test" mode, which means they will not transmit the alarm to the fire department. Alternatively, the drill coordinator may contact the West Metro Fire Rescue Communication Center at (303) 969-0245 to provide the address of the facility and notify the dispatch center of the fire drill test and request verification that the alarm initiating the drill was received.
 - c. After the drill is complete, the monitoring company or dispatch center must be contacted to place the system back into normal status which means all received alarms will be processed accordingly as real emergencies.
3. **Drill modification.** Consider placing a cone or person at a chosen location to simulate a fire, causing occupants to find/use secondary escape routes.
 4. **Drill evaluation.** Depending on the size of the facility, one or more individuals may be used as evaluators as necessary to evaluate the facility's response to the drill. An example is to place an evaluator for each floor and/or each section within the building. The evaluators are provided with an evaluation checklist and mark items off as they are witnessed.
 5. **Drill conclusion.** Once the building has evacuated, all areas checked and all items evaluated, an "all clear" may be given and occupants allowed back in building.

AFTER THE DRILL:

1. **Evaluator discussion.** All evaluators used during the drill should meet to discuss their findings. Findings should include areas of the evacuation plan not met, areas of the plan that can be improved or modified to meet the needs of the facility as well as provisions of the evacuation that were performed well.
2. **Feedback with employees.** After the evaluator findings have been compiled and discussed, those findings should be shared and discussed with the rest of the employees. Additional training and/or drills may be necessary to improve upon deficiencies. This does not have to occur the same date of the drill, but should be done while the drill is still fresh in the minds of the employees.