



## Conducting Emergency Evacuation Drills

February 2013

**PURPOSE** To provide information for facilities in performing a successful emergency evacuation drill.

**SCOPE** Any facility/occupancy within the Colorado Springs City limits wishing to conduct an emergency evacuation drill.

### DEFINITIONS

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

### PROCEDURES

The following procedures should be performed in order to obtain a successful evacuation drill.

#### *PRIOR TO DRILL*

- 1) **Have a plan.** The facility should have a fire safety and evacuation plan established prior to conducting an evacuation drill. In fact, most facilities/occupancies are required to have a fire safety and evacuation plan per the Colorado Springs Fire Code. The purpose of the drill is to ensure the established fire safety and evacuation plan is effective and meets the needs of the occupants. Without a plan, facilities conducting an emergency drill have nothing to gauge the drills effectiveness.

For information on developing a fire safety and evacuation plan, review the documents found at this link <http://www.springsgov.com/Page.aspx?NavID=1094> under the "FIRE SAFETY AND EVACUATION PLANS" heading.

- 2) **Train on the plan.** Although conducting an emergency evacuation drill is considered "training on the plan", an emergency evacuation drill is the practical portion of the plan. Ensure employees have a copy of the plan and have at least reviewed it. Otherwise, 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. An example of this would be to ensure exit passageways are clear, free of obstructions and exit doors work properly.
- 4) **Evaluation checklist.** Unless the facility has its own form, download the Fire Drill Evaluation Checklist (<http://bit.ly/13YUyMZ>) to help evaluate the effectiveness of 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 all drills shouldn't 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.  
However, certain steps must be taken prior to fire alarm initiation.
  - 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" which means they will not transmit the alarm to the fire department. Alternatively, the drill coordinator may contact the Emergency Services Dispatch Center at 444-7000; 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 facilities response to the drill. An example is to provide an evaluator for each floor and/or each section within the building. These 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 the 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 occur while the drill is still "fresh" in the minds of the employees.

For questions or additional guidance regarding evacuation drills, please contact the Division of the Fire Marshal.