

University Health & Safety Arrangements: Chapter 30



Evacuation of disabled people and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

Key word(s):	PEEPs, disabled people, fire safety, emergency evacuation
Target audience:	Heads of School Administration, Line managers of staff with disabilities, Disability Advisory and Support Service, staff and students with disabilities.

Note.

“Senior Managers” are responsible for health and safety within their specified areas or as a consequence of their activities, and for any additional activities as agreed and delegated to them (eg where they accept responsibility for day-to-day safety arrangements for staff who have other line managers, for reasons of geographical or other convenience). They may be Deans, Heads of School, Directors of Institutes, Directors and Heads of Service in non-academic areas, the University Librarian, the Directors of the Manchester Museum and the Whitworth Art Gallery, and their equivalents.

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General Principles:

1. Many people with disabilities are able to evacuate safely without assistance or with minimal help from others. Some individuals may require further assistance and the implementation of a formal plan of action for exiting a building during an emergency. This is called a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) and it is tailored to the individual's needs.
2. PEEPs may be required for staff, students or visitors with mobility, sight and/or hearing impairment, and may be required in other circumstances. Those with short term injuries and/or health conditions (eg broken leg) may also require a temporary PEEP.
3. When writing a PEEP, it is essential to invite and facilitate active participation by the disabled person, and to discuss their individual abilities and specific needs. Once their needs are identified, a PEEP can be developed and shared as necessary, to enable an individual's safe evacuation. The detail of any PEEP will vary from person to person.
4. Staff and students, and sometimes visitors, will use many different buildings, and their timetables and routines will vary from academic year to year, and from semester to semester. The detailed fire arrangements in each building also vary. For these reasons, PEEPs should usually aim to develop generic skills and knowledge rather than focus on individual buildings. In circumstances where someone remains in a single building, specific fire safety arrangements can be included in the PEEP.
5. University buildings are fitted with equipment to enable the early detection of the signs of fire, and sensitive alarm systems.
6. Most University buildings have designated "Refuge Points". A refuge point is a place of relative safety; typically providing protection against the spread of heat, smoke and flames for 30 minutes. They are usually located on stair landings and fire exit stairs, and have this sign for identification purposes:



7. Across the University campus a large number of Refuge Points are equipped with a two way radio system. This will enable Fire Evacuation Marshals (FEMs) and Security staff attending an alarm to communicate with person(s) in the refuge point about the nature of the emergency and whether there is a need to evacuate further. Building FEMs are trained to sweep refuge points as they evacuate the building and report to Security or Fire and Rescue personnel. Most PEEPs should also consider other means of communication eg storing the contact number for Security in an individual's mobile phone to enable

communication with Security during any alarm activation, although mobile phone signal strengths in key buildings should be checked first.

Responsibilities

8. **Staff who have declared a disability:** it is the responsibility of a disabled staff member's line manager to ensure a PEEP is completed. Once completed it is the staff member's responsibility to notify their line manager if they think their PEEP should be reviewed (e.g. in the light of experience) or needs amending due to a change in circumstances. Where a line manager has noted changes in a disabled staff member's condition and that member of staff has not approached him/her to discuss such changes, the line manager should prompt a discussion with the staff member to discuss any additional requirements. Any changes to the building that may affect safe evacuation should be discussed and appropriate action taken to enable the disabled member of staff to evacuate safely. In any event the PEEP should be reviewed on an annual basis and the outcome recorded.
9. **Students who have declared a disability:** it is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure a PEEP is completed for all teaching/research activities. The Head of School may delegate the process to any member of their team, including the student's own tutor or supervisor. School Disability Support Coordinators or staff with safety responsibilities may be able to assist in complex cases. Once completed, the student should be asked to notify their contact about any relevant changes so that the PEEP can be reviewed and updated. Where a student's contact has noted changes in a disabled student's condition and the student has not approached him/her to discuss such changes or any changes or work taking place in the building that affect safe evacuation the student's contact should prompt a discussion with the student to discuss any additional requirements. All PEEPs should be reviewed on an annual basis and the outcome recorded. For disabled students in University Halls of Residence, the Accommodation Office notifies the DSE Health & Safety Officer of students declaring disabilities when they apply for hall places. PEEPs are then prepared by the Pastoral Staff, with assistance from the DSE Health & Safety Officer and others.
10. In order to ensure a co-ordinated approach, any student contact who becomes aware that a student may need a PEEP should check with the student that they are in contact with the Disability Advisory and Support Services and, if not, encourage them to make that contact.
11. **Visitors:** Visitors are a more difficult group to identify and make individual arrangements for. Where invited onto the premises, the person making the invitation (the host) is responsible for discussing the need for a PEEP. Examples of how schools have approached this are given in guidance at: <http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/toolkits/fire/peeps/>
12. Those managing areas open to the public (for example, Manchester Museum), or inviting visitors to attend for clinical appointments (for example, in Carys Bannister Building) should have local arrangements describing how they will evacuate disabled visitors.

13. **Individuals who have not declared a disability:** there is no requirement for any person to disclose information about a disability to the University. If a disability is reasonably apparent, but has not been formally disclosed, the line manager, student contact or host should prompt a discussion with the individual to discuss his/her evacuation needs and formulate a PEEP accordingly. In cases where the disability is not reasonably apparent, a line manager, student contact or host may become aware that an individual requires additional support and assistance to evacuate a building safely in an emergency. Such information may be obtained through their routine communications with the individual; observation during practice evacuations; the induction process, or referrals from HR, Occupational Health or safety personnel. Once aware that additional support may be required, the line manager, student contact or host should prompt a discussion about a PEEP with the individual concerned.
14. **Short-term injuries and/or health conditions:** line managers, student contacts, and hosts should consider putting in place a temporary PEEP, following the principles outlined above, when a staff member, student, or visitor is suffering from a short term injury and/or health condition which may affect that individual's safe evacuation from a building.
15. The **Disabled Person** "owns" their PEEP, and should liaise with their line manager, student contact or host to keep it under review and up to date, if there are any changes in their condition before the annual review, the disabled person should discuss with their contact.
16. Many PEEPs identify buddies or helpers. These can be recruited from a cohort of students, friends, someone assigned to the disabled person to assist them, or staff working with a disabled individual.
17. Security staff and fire evacuation marshals do not have specific additional responsibilities in relation to evacuating those with disabilities, as they are charged with other duties in the event of a fire alarm activation.

Practical steps to developing a PEEP

18. All disabled individuals should be asked to complete a PEEP questionnaire. PEEP questionnaires are designed to obtain basic information about the disabled person, their whereabouts on campus, and their need for assistance. [Student PEEP questionnaire](#), [Staff PEEP questionnaire](#). For a PEEP form for visitors, see [guidance](#) link to sample PEEP. <http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/toolkits/fire/peeps/>
19. The **first objective** of any PEEP is to assist or move the disabled person to the nearest place of relative safety this may be Refuge Point or in some buildings evacuation lift. This will usually be on the same floor, and not involve movement down stairs. Once at the Refuge Point, the disabled person and/or their helpers can communicate further with those responding to the fire alarm activation. They may be able to remain there, whilst Security investigate the cause of the activation and reset the alarm or will be evacuated by staff using the evacuation lift.

20. For those who are ambulant and able to walk downstairs unaided (for example, people with sight or hearing impairment), the PEEP may provide information and guidance on, for example:

- (i) alarms systems and the expected responses;

enabling the disabled person's confidence to wait a few minutes for crowding on stairs to reduce;
arrangements for lone working; and
requesting assistance to locate the nearest exit route e.g. by guiding them by the hand or arm.

21. For those with mobility impairments, PEEPs may require helpers or buddies to assist individuals to reach a safe refuge and to facilitate communications with Security staff.

22. The **second objective** of a PEEP is to move the disabled person from the Refuge Point to the assembly point outside of the building. This would be necessary if:

- the disabled person finds that the Refuge Point (or the route to it) is compromised by smoke, heat or flames and they are unable to turn around to find another Refuge Point on the same floor; or
- Security staff investigating the alarm activation notifies the disabled person (or someone with them) that they are at risk and need to be moved.

23. This second stage can be challenging, and those preparing PEEPs will normally need to involve the **PEEPS working group**. This group comprises representatives from the Estates & Facilities Fire Team, the Disability Advisory and Support Service and Safety Services. Initial contact should be made through the Fire Training & Evacuation Co-ordinator who will convene the group as appropriate, to provide advice and support on such matters as the physical adjustments that may be required, or where the use of specific evacuation aid equipment is required.

Training

24. For information about writing PEEPs, or training in the use of fire evacuation aids (such as ResQmats, evacuation chairs, deaf alerter pagers, etc), contact the Fire Training & Evacuation Coordinator)
<http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/contactus/>

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