


Safety Services Guidance



Evacuation of disabled visitors

Key word(s) : PEEPs, disabled visitors,

Target audience : Event organisers, any member of staff inviting visitors onto University premises,

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Introduction

1. Visitors to the University of Manchester come for a variety of reasons, including attendance at conferences, presentations and ceremonies; students from other institutions sitting examinations in the University's buildings; prospective students and their parents; those attending for job interviews or work experience; library users; contractors, etc. Some may be present for one-off, short periods of time and have little knowledge of the building and its systems, whilst others may use our facilities again and again, and, for example; become familiar with the building layout, sound of the alarm, or day of the weekly test. Some parts of the University are more likely to have disabled visitors than others.
2. No single guidance document can cover this wide range of scenarios but risk assessments can be used to identify the specific needs of visitors and to develop personal emergency escape plans (PEEP) where appropriate. Some practical examples are given below.

Responsibilities

3. Visitors with disabilities are a difficult group to identify and make individual arrangements for. Where 'invited' onto the premises, the person making the invitation (the host) or the event organiser should use their publicity material to encourage disabled visitors to make themselves known at an early stage, so that steps can be taken to manage any emergency evacuation. Events will range from formal conferences to small-scale, informal meetings between colleagues. The information provided will need to be tailored to the event style; it could be incorporated into event advertising material, formal letters of invitation, discrete notices at reception and registration desks, and similar.
4. When a disability is declared prior to the visit, the host or organiser should inform their School Safety Advisor so that they can work together on the arrangements that can reasonably be put in place. This may include deciding upon a more suitable or accessible venue, or ensuring a member of University Staff is responsible for the safe evacuation of the visitor.
5. If a disability becomes apparent during the course of a visit, the host or event organiser should consider what can be done to ensure a safe evacuation, should it become necessary: As a minimum, the disabled person should be assisted to the nearest refuge point (usually on a protected stair or fire exit route) with a means of communication to Security.

Arrangements

6. A “one off” visit may not necessitate a personalised PEEP. Decisions must be taken on a case by case basis. If a written PEEP is required, eg for regular visitors, an example form is provided at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=20478>
7. Visitors with sight or hearing disabilities will usually require assistance, so they should be accompanied by someone who can provide the necessary information about what is happening and guide them towards their exit.
8. Where evacuation chairs or mats are provided in buildings, the host or event organiser must ensure that they are aware of the location of the equipment and that those trained to use the chair or mat are aware of the location of the visitor should an emergency evacuation become necessary. A two way flow of communication is essential.
9. Where facilities are commonly used (e.g. examinations halls, refectories etc), appropriate signage will already be displayed at the normal entrances to indicate any horizontal evacuation routes, location of refuge(s), and any other particular arrangements or means of summoning assistance.
10. In addition, events organisers could consider producing laminated cards for visitors which show the same information. The card could be issued at the start of the visit, and returned when leaving. This could also form part of a meeting or conference checking in and out procedure.
11. Open access to many of the University buildings presents special challenges in identifying those with mobility difficulties. Visitors with mobility difficulties should be encouraged to make themselves known to both building attendants at reception (if appropriate) and to their host so that arrangements can be put in place to facilitate the disabled visitors’ safe and swift evacuation from the building should this become necessary.
12. Whilst some visitors to the University may declare their disability prior to the visit, the disabilities of many visitors may not become apparent until their time of arrival at the University. It is therefore necessary to establish the principles by which those involved can carry out the risk assessment and develop the necessary procedures. These principles include:
 - a. Identifying those visitors who wish for, or may need assistance
 - b. Devising a means of knowing where they are at the time of any emergency
 - c. Ensuring the visitor is aware of their own responsibility in making themselves known to staff who may offer assistance.
 - d. Designating those who can provide the necessary assistance.
 - e. Giving training, information and any other necessary help to those who may support the disabled visitor.

Examples

13. The following are examples of where arrangements for disabled visitors have been formalised.

Example 1 : Manchester Museum - open to the public; unknown and unpredictable numbers of visitors with disabilities.

Front of House staff on site at all times during opening hours to assist visitors and are trained in the evacuation of disabled people using evacuation chairs.

Front of House staff are trained on the correct use of refuge points and on when to move visitors from protected areas in the event of fire.

Example 2: Carys Bannister Building - a research and clinical setting, people with sight impairments selected to attend. Disabled visitors of known numbers and appointment times.

Clinic areas for this group are located on the ground floor. In the event of an emergency, staff are instructed to assist any individual to a place of safety outside, and if appropriate, into the nearest building not under alarm conditions.

**Example 3: Open Days and ad hoc events
Pariser Building UCAS open day – organisers notified the School Safety Advisor in advance that a wheelchair user was attending.**

Organiser sought advice from the Fire Evacuation Co-ordinator and Trainer and undertook a risk assessment, considering which areas of the building would be open to the visitor. Site staff were advised about how to evacuate the visitor to the nearest refuge point, to stay with them and phone Security to find out if they needed to move. Fire Evacuation

Example 4: Unexpected visitor with evacuation needs

A visitor to a staff member arrives in a wheelchair. The person inviting them to the University should carry out a dynamic risk assessment, move meetings or other commitments to ground floor facilities if practicable to do so, and ensure they know the location of the nearest refuge point(s). They should check that the visitor is able to reach the refuge point, and a member of University Staff should stay with them to contact Security about the need to evacuate.

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