



# TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

## Operating Policy and Procedure

### **HSCEP OP: 75.33, TTUHSC El Paso Emergency Evacuation Policy**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Operating Policy and Procedure (HSCEP OP) is to provide TTUHSC El Paso with an effective and efficient building evacuation guideline in the event of or the threat of a fire, explosion, or hazardous material related emergency where partial or total evacuation of a building is necessary. The policy provides an outline of responsibilities of personnel for an effective safe evacuation.

Fire-related emergency evacuation can be described as a means to withdraw from a building in an organized way for protection. Fire, explosion, and/or hazardous material related evacuations are most likely accompanied with the simultaneous activation of the fire alarm system.

Whereas general emergency evacuations may NOT be accompanied with the action of the fire alarm system except in cases of extreme emergency. They are events that may necessitate prompt action with more information for the evacuee including taking your personal belongings and leaving the campus. Means of general emergency evacuation notification may include StatAlert, cell phones, computers, digital boards and land line phones.

**REVIEW:** This HSCEP OP will be reviewed in March of every numbered year by the senior director of safety services, with recommendations and revisions forwarded through the managing director of physical plant and support services to the chief operating officer and vice president of operations by March 30.

### **POLICY/PROCEDURE:**

These guidelines are intended to establish the procedures to be adopted in the event of any emergency, which may require partial or total evacuation of buildings within TTUHSC El Paso.

#### **I. Building Evacuation:**

TTUHSC El Paso buildings that are equipped with a fire alarm system provide audio and visual notification automatically in the event of a fire. The fire alarm system may have to be activated manually for some evacuation emergencies including small fires, chemicals spills and the threat of fire or explosion. Fire alarm notification devices are easily distinguishable and all building occupants are expected to promptly respond by following the departments building evacuation policy.

TTUHSC El Paso employees should establish two (2) separate ways out of the area, floor and building. In multi-story buildings, unless unusual conditions dictate otherwise, the primary evacuation route is the nearest stairway and out the nearest exit leading to the outside of the building. Specific departmental evacuation routes have been developed and are available by your department unit safety officer (USO).

In the event of a fire alarm, building occupants should:

- A. Leave the area closing all doors once everyone in that area has evacuated. Doors should be closed but not locked.

- B. Follow the exit signs and exit the building using the exit stairwell enclosure.
- C. Re-assemble at the pre-designated assembly area outside of the building.
- D. USO or evacuation coordinator should account for those not present and report necessary information to the incident commander (IC).

Evacuees should be guided by designated USO or evacuation coordinator to proceed away from the building clear of danger, avoid impeding the movement of emergency responders, and proceed to their pre-determined evacuation assembly point.

## II. **Building Re-Entry:**

Evacuated buildings should only be reentered after Texas Tech police department (TTPD) or IC gives the ALL CLEAR signal; a long whistle sound and hand signal. Staff and evacuees are NOT to assume they have permission to reenter otherwise.

IC may extend reentry for as long as is necessary. Therefore, departments should be prepared to implement their Continuity of Operations Policy (COOP).

## III. **Elevators:**

TTUHSC El Paso elevators are NOT designed nor are they intended as means of egress during a fire-related emergency, unless supervised by emergency forces including El Paso fire department, or TTPD. Elevators may be permitted as means of egress in non-fire related evacuations under the supervision of the IC.

## IV. **Special Needs Populations:**

Individuals who may require staff assistance during building evacuations are “special needs populations.” Departments should police and account for special needs populations during and after building evacuations. Follow these precautions:

- A. Elevators may NOT be available as means of egress unless properly supervised (see elevator section).
- B. Enclosed stairwells identified as “EXIT” should be employed whenever possible.
- C. Slower moving individuals in stairwells should walk along the right-side of the stair against the rail to allow faster moving individuals to pass on the left.
- D. Stairwell landings are designated as refuge areas. Landings are the flat surface areas of the stairs. Special needs populations that cannot evacuate the building via the stairs may be staged at the stairwell landings accompanied by designated TTUHSC El Paso staff.
- E. Designated staff members(s) shall report the location and refuge area status to the IC when necessary.
- F. Overcrowded landings: special need populations may be safely staged outside an enclosed stairwell with designated TTUHSC El Paso staff assistance and be visible, provided the atmosphere is safe, and the location and status are periodically reported to the IC. Maintain this position until relieved of responsibility or relocated by emergency forces.

V. **Texas Tech Police (TTPD)**

During a building evacuation TTPD assumes incident command until arrival of emergency forces and/or responsibilities are relinquished, transferred or terminated.

The first local emergency responder to arrive at the scene of an emergency situation will serve as the IC until relieved by a more senior or more qualified individual. The IC will establish an incident command post (ICP), provide an assessment of the situation to local officials, identify response resources required, and direct the on-scene response from the ICP.

VI. **Evacuation**

Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the TTPD who will prepare and maintain Annex E (Evacuation) as part of the Campus Emergency Preparedness Policy. Emergency tasks to be performed include:

- A. Identify areas where evacuation has been called for-- or may in the future be necessary -- and determine the amount of the population at risk.
- B. Perform evacuation policing for known risk areas to include route selection and determination of traffic control requirements.
- C. Develop simplified policing guidelines for ad hoc evacuations.
- D. Determine emergency public information requirements.
- E. Perform evacuation policing for special needs facilities (e.g., clinic, classrooms).

TTPD will route traffic away from building and make room for emergency responders. During inclement weather, TTPD will determine if there is a need to relocate people to a covered location or protected location from the elements. If this is the case, TTPD may request safety team members to assist organizing the move of evacuees. Generally, special needs populations will be moved first.

VII. **Fire Drills**

Fire drills are conducted to test employees on correct procedures and allow observation of the facility egress system during simulated emergency conditions. The TTUHSC El Paso fire marshals will identify and correct all fire drill deficiencies. Fire evacuation drills are generally conducted each calendar year. TTUHSC El Paso employees should know two separate ways from their work area for evacuation purposes. Employees should leave the building using the stairs to the designated area outside. Elevators are not intended for emergency egress. **Faculty, staff, and students are required to participate in fire drills.**

**Exceptions:**

- A. Patients and visitors are not required to evacuate for fire drills.
- B. Personnel actively involved with direct patient care or laboratory experiments that require constant attendance are also excused from the drill.
- C. It is acceptable for an employee to remain for incoming telephone calls and to supervise patient waiting areas.
- D. Personnel actively involved in face-to-face treatment, movement or conference with a patient. Activities such as phone calls, dictation, and note writing, where there is no direct interaction with the patient, **are not included in this definition.** Patients waiting in exam

rooms should be notified of the fire drill and allowed to remain in the exam room during the drill.

USO, Department Manager, or other designated person will complete “**Business Occupancy Fire Drill Report Form**” after a fire drill is conducted. The completed form will be submitted to the Safety Office for Joint Commission documentation. (See attachment “B”)

**See Attachment A for Additional Roles and Responsibilities:**

## **TTUHSC El Paso Emergency Evacuation Policy**

### **Attachment A: Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **I. Facilities Operations and Maintenance (FOM) Special Systems Personnel**

FOM special systems personnel are responsible for the operations of the building fire alarms and fire suppression systems. FOM special systems personnel ensure the systems are inspected accordingly and repairs are conducted when needed. During alarm activations:

- FOM special systems personnel receive announcements that the alarm has been activated
- FOM special systems personnel physically go to the building and check the fire panel at the location where the alarm was activated
- FOM special systems personnel will also ensure that those systems that are inactivated/shut-off during the alarm will be reset; including elevators, HVAC air and exhaust, and doors
- FOM special systems personnel communicate with the TTPD when everything has been reset and report that it is clear for people to re-enter the building
- If FOM special systems personnel encounter that emergency services are required; they communicate with the TTPD and advise them of the situation, and request that emergency services be called in.

#### **II. FOM Support Personnel**

FOM support personnel assist FOM special systems personnel to find the location where the alarm was activated and assist evacuation of the building. This may include reporting to an assigned location and holding doors open for people to egress quickly. Once the location is found, FOM support personnel will reset it as quickly as possible if the alarm cause is not a fire-related emergency.

#### **III. Department Administrator/Manager/Supervisor**

The department administrator/manager/supervisor play a key role in the safety of their employees and visitors. It is the responsibility of the department administrator/manager/supervisor to assign the USO, safety team, and department evacuation coordinator for the department. The department administrator/manager/supervisor will:

- Ensure that their department participates in trainings and annual fire drills
- Assign someone from the department to conduct the "roll call", to account for everyone that evacuates the building. This count needs to be provided to the TTPD. The list will be given to the fire department once they arrive on site. Along with the count, a list of those missing and their possible location must be provided to the fire department.

#### **IV. Department Unit Safety Officers (USO)**

The department USO is responsible for assisting the department administrator/manager/supervisor in implementing and managing the safety program within their department. The duties of the USO during a fire alarm are as follows:

- The USO must be the last one to evacuate the department.

- The USO must assess the area(s) by closing all room doors, once verified that the room is vacant.
- The USO will assist the department evacuation coordinator with the identification of those patients, visitors, and staff that are non-ambulatory and guide those individuals closer to the emergency exit.
- The USO will be responsible for conducting the accountability roll call, as outlined in this procedure, and reporting to TTPD either the “all clear” or the locations of any persons who remain in the structure.
- The USO will coordinate their department’s fire emergency response training that includes, yearly participation in fire drills, review of fire response procedures within department at least once yearly, and assuring that employees complete emergency response fire response training. (See OP 75.16, Attachment C)
- USO’s shall attend the emergency evacuation and fire extinguisher training class presented by the Department of Safety Services.

V. **Departmental Fire Wardens**

Fire wardens are those members of the department intended to support the USO in the case of an alarm activation and subsequent evacuation. As the USOs are not always in their usual work spaces and often cover more than one floor, there are times when their assigned evacuation responsibilities are not carried out. The fire wardens are individuals who are normally in their work space and are familiar with the departmental exit strategy. In order to ensure the quickest evacuation of the space, the fire wardens shall be responsible for sounding the alarm in their immediate work areas, conducting a sweep of these areas, and closing all doors as they complete their evacuation safety sweep. The fire warden will report to their respective USO, confirming that the evacuation sweep has been conducted and advising of any known persons who may have remained in the building.

- Each department shall designate at least two (2) persons to act as fire wardens.
- Fire wardens shall receive department specific exit strategy orientation from their USO.
- Fire wardens shall also attend the emergency evacuation and fire extinguisher training class presented by the Department of Safety Services.

VI. **Department Evacuation Coordinators**

Department evacuation coordinators will be identified by wearing a blue-colored vest. Their responsibility is to assist those individuals who cannot evacuate safely down the staircase during a fire emergency. Whether these individuals are patients, visitors or staff members, they need to be moved to an area of refuge by the nearest emergency exit. This applies to all individuals located on floors above or below the first floor.

Once everyone that can evacuate has done so, all non-ambulatory staff, patients, visitors, and staff will be moved into the protection of the exit stairways by the evacuation coordinator. When individuals have been moved into this area of refuge, the evacuation coordinator must remain with them until the fire department personnel have provided instruction that it is safe to leave them there.

- Each department shall assign a backup evacuation coordinator, in order to ensure this function is completed when the primary is either out of the area or off-duty. The evacuation

coordinator shall report to the departmental USO.

- The evacuation coordinator will have a two-way radio for use to communicate with the USO who will remain outside the building once their evacuation responsibilities are completed. The evacuation coordinator will let the responsible USO know how many people are located within each area of refuge and whether they will need assistance to evacuate. This information will be relayed to the TTPD, who will be serving as the IC for the emergency.
- The evacuation coordinators will be responsible for conducting weekly checks on the radios for accountability and monthly radio checks to test functionality. These monthly tests will be coordinated through Department of Safety Services.
- Evacuation coordinators shall attend the emergency evacuation and fire extinguisher training presented by the Department of Safety Services.

VII. **Safety Team Member**

The safety team member provides direction and assistance to staff, patients, and visitors during fire alarms, bomb threats, chemical spills, or hostage situations; basically whenever a building needs to be evacuated. They may also provide crowd control while outside during an event.

Safety team member will:

- A. Encourage everyone to walk and not run as they exit the building
- B. Encourage people to use the hand rails when using stairs to exit a building
- C. Direct faculty, staff, students and visitors to their assigned assembly areas.
- D. Assist those evacuating, maintain order while exiting and in the assembly area.

In the assembly area, the safety team member will:

- A. Instruct individuals not to sit on parked cars, if indicated
- B. Provide assistance to faculty, staff, students and visitors who may need special assistance while outside.
- C. Encourage faculty, staff, students, and visitors NOT to pull out of parking space while evacuees are in the parking lot.
- D. Assure that no one re-enters the building once they have evacuated.
- E. Work with TTPD in assisting them with what they request. This could be to move people away from the building, to transfer people from one location to another during inclement weather.
- F. Assist Individuals to reenter the building once the whistle has been blown by TTPD, indicating reentry to the building is safe.

VIII. **Faculty, Staff, and Students**

Faculty, staff and students are required to:

- Stop what they are doing once the fire alarm is activated, and proceed to the nearest exit and evacuate the building

- If not ambulatory, go to the nearest exit and wait there until the evacuation coordinator and fire department arrives and assists with evacuation
- Once outside the building, go to their assembly location and ensure that they are accounted for.
- For their own safety, get to know where all the exits that lead outside are located.
- Know the meaning of R.A.C.E. (Rescue, Alarm, Confine, Extinguish/Evacuate)
- Know the meaning of P.A.S.S. (Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep)
- Know the location of their nearest fire extinguisher
- Participate in fire drills

IX. **Accountability**

The need to verify that each area of the structure has been evacuated is critical to emergency response operations. If there is a known life hazard within the structure, the emergency response tactics will be adjusted to address that concern. Having knowledge that the building has been swept as part of the evacuation and that no persons are known to remain in the structure allows the focus to be on fire extinguishment or hazard mitigation. This requires that an accountability system be in place to report either an “all clear” condition or to identify locations where persons remain in the structure, such as in the areas of refuge with the evacuation coordinators. Due to the nature of day-to-day departmental operations, individual persons may be difficult to account for; however, the evacuation sweeps conducted by the fire wardens and USOs should be able to identify that individual floors of a building have been checked and are all clear (or that persons remain in areas of refuge).

In order to provide this accountability to the emergency response units, the following system shall be implemented:

- Upon completion of the emergency egress sweeps by the USOs and/or fire wardens, the USO shall report to the respective assembly area. They shall then conduct a roll call of those departments under their responsibility. The departments shall be contacted face-to-face with the fire wardens, and via the two-way radio for the evacuation coordinators, requesting an “evacuation status”. The response shall be either **“all clear”** or **“X number of persons at XYZ location”**
- In circumstances where more than one departmental USO is present at an assembly area, the senior USO shall be responsible for the accountability roll call
- The Department of Safety Services, or TTPD after-hours, shall then conduct an accountability check with each USO/assembly area to determine the evacuation status of each department, floor by floor. The overall building status report will then be relayed to TTPD IC, and any other emergency response units on the scene.

The goal is to have the accountability roll call completed within 10 minutes of the alarm condition.

**Texas Tech University Health Science Center El Paso  
Business Occupancy Fire Drill Report Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Observers Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Building: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Activation:

- Smoke Detection       Pull Station  
 Voice Command       Drill       Other

<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Staff Response</b>			
1. Did personnel act promptly to the alarm?			
2. Were staff familiar with activation of alarm?			
3. Were staff familiar with the floor evacuation policy?			
4. Were corridors and passageways clear of obstructions to facilitate effective evacuation?			
5. Were staff knowledgeable of refuge/safe areas?			
6. Did staff respond according to R.A.C.E.?			
7. Were all doors closed once rooms were deemed vacant?			
<b>Building Egress</b>			
1. Was staff able to exit from all egress doors?			
2. Was the audible alarm heard in all areas?			
3. Are strobe lights operational and visible in all areas?			
4. Are all EXIT signs operational and clearly visible?			
5. Are egress exits clearly identified?			

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Monitor: \_\_\_\_\_