



High Rise Emergency Evacuation Drills

A Factsheet for Sunnyvale High Rise Owners and Managers

Emergency evacuation drills are required annually in high rise buildings in accordance with Section 405 of the California Fire Code and Title 19 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) §3.09. As long as all occupants of the building experience an emergency evacuation drill annually, the conducting of drills on selected floors in the building can occur on a staggered schedule.

All building staff and occupants should participate in drills.

Records should be kept to document emergency evacuation drills. The record should indicate the following:

1. Identity of the person conducting the drill.
2. Date and time of the drill.
3. Notification method used.
4. Staff members on duty and participating.
5. Number of occupants participating.
6. Special conditions simulated.
7. Problems encountered and corrective actions taken.
8. Weather conditions when occupants were evacuated.
9. Time required to complete the evacuation, lockdown, or shelter-in-place.

Conducting a Drill

In a fire drill, building occupants should duplicate as closely as possible the actions they would take if a fire occurred. Total evacuation of a high rise building is not necessary, and could even be dangerous. Drills involving selected portions of the building more accurately simulate the likely conditions during a fire emergency.

Emergency evacuation drills should be initiated by experienced building staff activating the fire alarm system. Immediately prior to the drill, the building's fire alarm monitoring company should be notified to prevent a Fire Department response to the building. When the drill is completed, notify the monitoring company that the building is returned to normal operations.

During a drill, tenants and staff should follow the established fire emergency procedures as set forth in the building's fire safety and evacuation plan.

Keep in mind that during an emergency, people tend to perform those behaviors that they have practiced.

Announced vs. Unannounced

Emergency evacuation drills may be pre-announced to building staff or occupants, or they may be unannounced. Consideration of the building occupants and the use of the building may determine which type of drill is most appropriate.

Critique the Drill

After each drill, evaluate the fire and life safety systems, staff performance, tenant participation and make changes as necessary to improve future events. Ask for input from building staff and tenants regarding the evacuation process and drill coordination.

Suggested evaluation topics:

- Could building occupants clearly hear and understand the alarm and any additional instructions?
- Was the evacuation completed in an orderly and expedient manner?
- Did floor wardens guide occupants to safety, complete floor checks and report to building staff or the Fire Safety Director upon completion of the evacuation?
- Were disabled persons assisted in their response procedures?
- Were elevators avoided by occupants during evacuation?

Related Information

Client Assistance Memos

#1200 High Rise Fire Emergency Planning Requirements

#1201 Floor Wardens

#1204 High Rise Tenant Safety

#1205 Alternate Fire Evacuation

Fire Safety Teaching Guide:

#1203 High Rise Floor Wardens

For More Information

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