

April 2024

EVACUATION DRILL



It's that time of year again in the County of Riverside, time to practice safe evacuation procedures in case of a fire or emergency at your facility. If you've been with the County for a while you probably remember the drill, but practice makes perfect and in the event of a real fire or emergency at your facility you may only get one chance. When was the last time you walked around your office or building and observed fire precautions? Do you remember where the fire extinguishers are? The fire alarm activation points? Do you know what kind of audio or visual cues are in operation around your office? If you have co-workers with physical limitations, do you have a plan in place to assist them with safe evacuation? Over the next few weeks you have a golden opportunity to answer these questions and many more. Pull out your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and familiarize yourself with the evacuation procedures for your office or facility.

WHY EVACUATE ?

There are a number of reasons to evacuate a County facility. The most obvious is when a fire threatens the safety of the occupants. Other reasons may include the threat of toxic fumes from chemical spills affecting the building, bomb threats when there is enough information to believe it is not a hoax, evacuation drills, or when the building may have been damaged by a strong earthquake.



WHEN NOT TO EVACUATE:

There may be situations where it is more dangerous to leave the building than it is to stay inside. An example might be a toxic cloud that is passing by outside. In situations such as these, take appropriate measures (such as shutting off the ventilation system and closing doors and windows) and tell employees to stay inside.

WHEN TO EVACUATE:

Evacuations may be initiated in several ways:

- Activation of the building fire alarm system (not all buildings have such a system, but for those that do, evacuation should begin immediately without questioning whether it is a false alarm or not).
- Use the public address system or "face to face" directions.
- Spontaneous evacuation in response to an observed emergency.
- Facility Manager or a Supervisor's request to evacuate.

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HOW TO EVACUATE A BUILDING SAFELY:

When an evacuation becomes necessary, you should:

- Calmly and quickly proceed to the nearest safe exit.
- Instruct clients or visitors who are present to exit with you.
- Use only the EXIT stairways. (NOTE: Using stairs can be hazardous if you wear high-heeled shoes. You should keep a spare pair of “stair shoes” near your workstation).
- Never use an elevator during an evacuation unless told to do so by the emergency response personnel. Elevators may malfunction and trap their passengers during a fire or following an earthquake. At the time of the evacuation announcement, you will not know how long it will be before you will be allowed to reenter the building. For that reason, you should take all necessary possessions with you—if time allows (purse, keys, eyeglasses, medication, jacket etc.). If time allows, turn off equipment that could become a hazard.

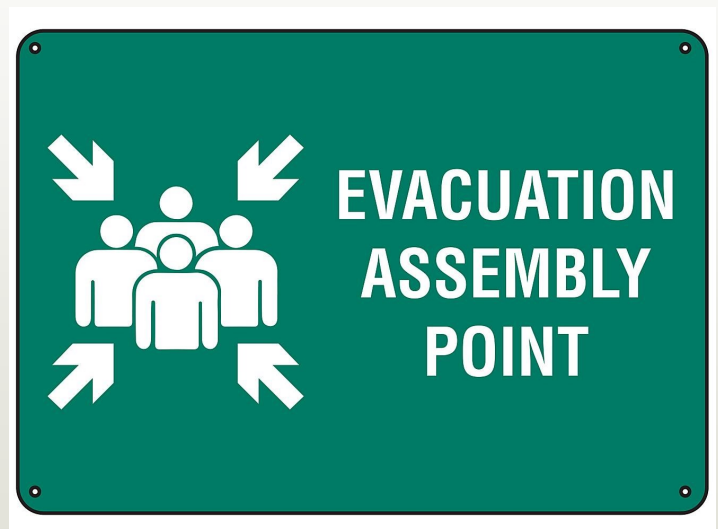
KNOW YOUR EMERGENCY EXITS:

Most people are only aware of how they entered the building and will therefore, use the same route to leave. In an emergency, it may be necessary to use an alternate route. Learn the location of ALL exits from your work area or building, and practice an evacuation on your own, to find out where exits lead. Be aware of ALL available exits in the event the regular exits become unusable. All County buildings are required to have a floor plan posted with the exits clearly indicated.



EVACUATION ASSEMBLY AREA:

Each County facility should have a designated evacuation assembly area. These are usually located away from the building in a parking lot. The assembly area may be sectioned off to allow for an orderly assembly according to floor or department. Once the evacuation order is given, proceed directly to the evacuation area and remain there until told to do otherwise. Consult your Emergency Action Plan to locate the evacuation assembly area for your facility.



Distracted Driving

Distracted driving has become a deadly epidemic on our roads. Cell phone use — specifically, texting, talking, and social media use — has become the most common distraction. Other risky actions include adjusting the radio or GPS, applying makeup, eating and drinking. By driving distracted, you're robbing yourself of seconds that you may need to avoid a close call or deadly crash.

Drive Responsibly

In 2021, distracted driving killed 3,522 people. April, which is national Distracted Driving Awareness Month, is a good time to regroup and take responsibility for the choices we make when we're on the road. Follow these safety tips for a safe ride:

- Need to send a text? Pull over and park your car in a safe location.
- Designate your passenger as your “designated texter” to respond to calls or messages.
- Do not scroll through apps while driving. Struggling not to text and drive? Put the cell phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of the vehicle until you arrive at your destination.

The Consequences

During a portion of Distracted Driving Awareness Month, from April 4 through 8, you may see increased law enforcement on the roadways as part of the national paid media campaign Put the Phone Away or Pay. This campaign reminds drivers of the deadly dangers and the legal consequences – including fines – of texting behind the wheel.

Take Action

- Remind your friends and family: If you're in the driver's seat, it's the only thing you should be doing. No distractions.
- If your driver is texting or otherwise distracted, tell them to stop and focus on the road.

Ask your friends to join you in pledging not to drive distracted. You could save a life. Share your pledge on social media to spread the word — #JustDrive.

Driving Distractions Study

Driver distractions are the leading cause of most vehicle collisions and near collisions. According to a study released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI), 80 percent of collisions and 65 percent of near collisions involve some form of driver distraction. The distraction occurred within 3 seconds before the vehicle crash!

According to the NHTSA and VTTI study, the principal actions that cause distracted driving and lead to vehicle collision are:

Within 3 seconds of

- Using Electronic Device
- Reaching for something
- Looking at something outside
- Applying Makeup
- Eating

