



Safety and Risk Management

Faculty Emergency Response

Throughout VCU, thousands of students attend classes over the course of the day. Many times, especially in the evenings, classroom instructors are the only VCU staff on the scene when emergencies occur. It is therefore critical that the faculty be aware of and comfortable with their role in such situations. Like any effective plan for dealing with emergencies, preparations taken in advance of the emergency are the key to minimizing danger and loss. Each new class of students needs to be informed of procedures for reporting emergencies, evacuation plans, and exit routes from buildings. This includes pointing out locations of emergency phones, fire alarm pull stations, and fire extinguishers.

Assessing Risk:

In addition to being aware of emergency procedures and informing students of emergency plans at the beginning of each term, faculty must also be aware of any students with special needs. Instructors need to assess their classes to determine if any students will require special assistance in emergency situations. Again, planning in advance will help prevent confusion and chaos once emergencies occur. Students requiring assistance during emergencies include anyone with conditions that affect ability to detect alarms, identify exit routes, or evacuate by established exit paths. Once identified, students requiring assistance can be informed of the plan of action they will follow during emergencies.

Emergency Assistance for Fire Alarms:

Disabled persons should be instructed to proceed to the nearest exit or stairwell. They should be instructed to remain in the stairwell while help is summoned. A volunteer may stay as long as possible or until assistance arrives. Faculty should note the exact floor level where the disabled person is left waiting, and should personally locate Richmond Bureau of Fire or VCU Police personnel immediately upon exiting the building. Fire or police personnel should be notified of the exact stairwell and floor level where the disabled person is waiting.

Uniformed fire personnel respond to every fire alarm on campus. Once notified, fire personnel will make immediate efforts to rescue the disabled individual.

Please make sure that once in the stairwell, disabled persons are not blocking traffic down the stairwell. In addition, the stairwell doors **MUST** be shut. If the disabled person cannot be taken to a stairwell, or if leaving them there creates a traffic jam, they should be instructed to proceed to the closest room next to the stairwell. They should be instructed to remain in the classroom with the door closed. The exact room number needs to be given to fire personnel immediately upon exiting the building.

Always reassure the disabled person that help is being summoned and should arrive as soon as possible.



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Power Failures:

In cases of power failure where the building must be evacuated, disabled persons should be instructed to remain in the stairwell while help is summoned. A volunteer may stay as long as possible or until assistance arrives. Faculty should note the exact floor level where the disabled person is left waiting, and should personally contact the VCU police by emergency telephone. The VCU police should be notified of the exact stairwell and floor level where the disabled person is waiting.

Always reassure the disabled person that help is being summoned and should arrive as soon as possible.

Remember, planning in advance for such contingencies will greatly reduce risk.