

# FIRE SAFETY AND EVACUATION PLANNING FOR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES AND NURSING HOMES



**West Metro  
Fire Rescue**

**West Metro Fire Rescue**

Life Safety Division

433 South Allison Parkway  
Lakewood, Colorado 80226  
(303) 989-4307  
Fax (303) 969-8908

# Emergency Preparedness and Planning for Groups I-1 and I-2

---

## **Scope**

Reporting of emergencies, coordination with emergency response forces, emergency plans and procedures for managing or responding to emergencies shall comply with the provisions of the 2015 International Fire Code, Chapter 4, Section 401.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide applicable facilities with guidance in preparing a fire safety and evacuation plan.

## **Approval**

Where required by this code, fire safety plans, emergency procedures and employee training programs shall be approved by the *fire code official*.

## **Emergency Responder Notification**

Notification of emergency responders shall be in accordance with Sections 401.3.1 through 401.3.3:

- **Fire events.** In the event an unwanted fire occurs on a property, the *owner* or occupant shall immediately report such condition to the fire department
- **Alarm activations.** Upon activation of a fire alarm signal, employees or staff shall immediately notify the fire department
- **Delayed notifications.** A person shall not, by verbal or written directive, require any delay in the reporting of a fire to the fire department.

## **Required plan implementation**

In the event an unwanted fire is detected in a building or fire alarm activates, the fire safety and evacuation plan shall be implemented.

## **Making a false report**

A person shall not give, signal or transmit a false alarm.

## **Emergency evacuation drills**

The sounding of a fire alarm signal and the carrying out of an emergency evacuation drill in accordance with the provisions of Section 405 shall be allowed.

## **Unplanned evacuation**

Evacuations made necessary by the unplanned activation of a fire alarm or by any other emergency shall not be substituted for a required evacuation drill.

## **Interference with fire department operations.**

It shall be unlawful to interfere with, attempt to interfere with, conspire to interfere with, obstruct or restrict the mobility of or block the path of travel of a fire department emergency vehicle in any way, or to interfere with, attempt to interfere with, conspire to interfere with, obstruct or hamper any fire department operation.

## **DEFINITIONS PER THE 2015 INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE:**

**Group I-1 Occupancy** This occupancy includes buildings, structures or portions thereof housing more than 16 persons, excluding staff, who reside on a 24-hour basis in a supervised environment and receive custodial care. Buildings in Group I-1 shall be classified as one of the occupancy conditions indicated below. This group shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Alcohol and drug centers
- Assisted living facilities
- Congregate care facilities
- Convalescent facilities
- Group homes
- Halfway houses
- Residential board and care facilities
- Residential board and custodial care facilities
- Social rehabilitation facilities

**Group I-2 Occupancy** This occupancy shall include buildings and structures used for medical care on a 24-hour basis for more than five persons who are not capable of self-preservation. This group shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Foster care facilities
- Detoxification facilities
- Hospitals
- Nursing homes
- Psychiatric hospitals

**Emergency Evacuation Drill** An exercise performed to train staff and occupants and to evaluate their efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out emergency evacuation procedures.

**Lockdown** An emergency situation requiring that the occupants be sheltered and secured in place within a building when normal evacuation would put occupants at risk.

**Special Needs Occupant** A patron, employee, student, resident, or tenant that has unique or unusual need regarding their mobility capacity. These special needs can include, but are not limited to, the physically disabled, hearing impaired, visually impaired, or mentally impaired.

### **Plan Availability and Distribution**

Fire safety and evacuation plans must be made available in the building at the front office/desk or near the fire alarm control panel. The plans must be available for reference and review by facility employees and copies shall be furnished to the Fire Marshal upon request. The plans are to be kept in a notebook and/or in protective coverings.

The plan must be distributed to the tenants and building service employees by the owner or owner's agent. Tenants shall distribute to their employees applicable parts of the fire safety plan affecting the employees' actions in the event of a fire or other emergency.

---

# Emergency Preparedness and Planning for Groups I-1 and I-2

---

## Plan Maintenance

Fire safety and evacuation plans must initially be approved by the Life Safety Division. The plans must be reviewed and updated by the facility annually or as necessitated by changes in staff assignments, occupancy or the physical arrangement of the building. Plans need to be resubmitted to the Life Safety Division only when *significant* changes to the plans have occurred.

Fire safety and evacuation plans shall be reviewed or updated by the facility annually or as necessitated by changes in staff assignments, occupancy or the physical arrangement of the building. The Life Safety Division does not need to re-review plans where changes in personnel/staff assignments, contact information or similar.

## FIRE SAFETY AND EVACUATION PLAN SUBMITTALS

Please submit plans for review to:

West Metro Fire Rescue's Life Safety Division  
433 South Allison Parkway,  
Lakewood, Colorado 80226  
Phone: (303) 989-4307  
Fax: (303) 969-8908  
Email: [codeenforcement@westmetrofire.org](mailto:codeenforcement@westmetrofire.org)

Hours: M-F 8:00am to 4:30pm (closed on holidays and holiday observances)

There is no charge for the review/approval of the fire safety and evacuation plans.

## FIRE SAFETY AND EVACUATION PLAN CONTENTS

The fire safety and evacuation plan is comprised of four (4) sections:

1. Cover page
2. Written plan
3. Floor plan(s) with evacuation routes shown
4. Site plan

**Cover Page** (An **Evacuation Plan Cover Sheet** template is available at [westmetrofire.org](http://westmetrofire.org))

The Cover Page must include the following information:

1. Name of business/facility.
2. Name, address, telephone numbers and email (if applicable) of the manager(s) of the tenant.
3. Name, address, telephone numbers and email (if applicable) of the building owner (if different than tenant).
4. Main occupancy classification of building.
5. Total square footage of occupancy (all floors, levels, mezzanines, etc.) and number of occupied floors above- and below-grade.
6. Identification and assignment of personnel who can be contacted for further information or explanation of duties under the plan.
7. Emergency contact information for key operational personnel and building owner's agent.

**Written Plan** (An **Emergency Operations Plan** template is available at [westmetrofire.org](http://westmetrofire.org))

# Emergency Preparedness and Planning for Groups I-1 and I-2

---

The written plan includes information regarding reporting fires/emergencies and occupant notification; evacuation and accountability of the evacuees; emergency response and crowd managements; and occupancy hazards.

## **Fire/Emergency Reporting and Occupant Notification**

- The preferred and any alternative means of reporting fires and other emergencies to the fire department or designated emergency response organization.
- The preferred and any alternative means of notifying occupants of a fire or emergency.
- A description of the emergency voice/alarm communication system alert tone and preprogrammed voice messages, where provided. The procedure for reporting a fire or other emergency.

## **Evacuation and Accountability**

- Emergency egress or escape routes and whether evacuation of the building is to be complete or, where approved, by selected floors or areas only.
- The life safety strategy and procedures for notifying, relocating or evacuating occupants, including occupants who need assistance.
- Procedures for accounting for employees and occupants after evacuation has been completed.

## **Emergency Response and Crowd Management**

- Procedures for employees who must remain to operate critical equipment before evacuating.
- Procedures for assisted rescue for persons unable to use the general means of egress unassisted.
- Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for rescue or emergency medical aid.
- Special staff actions including fire protection procedures necessary for residents and shall be amended or revised upon admission of any resident with special needs.

## **Occupancy Hazards**

- A list of major fire hazards associated with the normal use and occupancy of the premises, including maintenance and housekeeping procedures.
- Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for maintenance, housekeeping and controlling fuel hazard sources.
- Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for maintenance of systems and equipment installed to prevent or control fires.

## **Floor Plans**

The floor plan portion of the fire safety and evacuation plan must identify the locations of the following:

- Locations of all exits, exit stairs and exit corridors.
- Primary evacuation routes from all spaces (delineate primary routes in a different manner than secondary routes)
- Secondary evacuation routes from all space (delineate secondary routes in a different manner than primary routes)
- Identify accessible egress routes and all areas of refuge<sup>6</sup>
- Exterior areas for assisted rescue
- Locations of manual fire alarm boxes (pull stations)
- Locations of portable fire extinguishers

## Emergency Preparedness and Planning for Groups I-1 and I-2

---

- Location of hose valve/standpipe stations
- Location of all fire alarm annunciators and controls

### **Site Plans**

The last portion or site plan portion of the plan must indicate the following:

- Building footprint showing all exits and the evacuee assembly point (multiple points permitted if facility is large)
- The locations of fire hydrants
- The normal routes of fire department vehicle access (fire lanes)

## **ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

**An approved fire safety and evacuation plan** in accordance with Section 404 shall be prepared and maintained for Group I occupancies.

**Group I-1 occupancies shall comply with Sections 403.8.1.1 through 403.8.1.7:**

### ***Fire safety and evacuation plan***

The **fire safety and evacuation plan** shall include special employee actions, including fire protection procedures necessary for residents, and shall be amended or revised upon admission of any resident with unusual needs.

### ***Fire Evacuation plan***

The **Fire Evacuation plan** shall include a description of special staff actions. In addition to the requirements of Section 404, in Group I-1 Condition 2 occupancies shall include procedures for evacuation through a refuge area in an adjacent smoke compartment and then to an exterior assembly point.

### ***Fire safety plans***

A copy of the **fire safety plan** shall be maintained at the facility at all times. Plans shall include the following in addition to the requirements of Section 404:

1. Location and number of resident sleeping rooms.
2. Location of special locking or egress control arrangements.

### ***Employee Training***

Employees shall be periodically instructed and kept informed of their duties and responsibilities under the plan. Such instruction shall be reviewed by employees at intervals not exceeding two months. A copy of the plan shall be readily available at all times within the facility.

### ***Resident Training***

Residents capable of assisting their own evacuation shall be trained in the proper actions to take in the event of a fire. The training shall include actions to take if the primary escape route is blocked. Where the resident is given rehabilitation or habilitation training, methods of fire prevention and actions to take in the event of a fire shall be part of the rehabilitation training program. Residents shall be trained to assist each other in case of fire to the extent their physical and mental capabilities permit them to do so without additional personal risk.

### ***Drill Frequency***

In addition to the evacuation drills required in Section 405.2, employees shall participate in drills an additional two times a year on each shift. Twelve drills with all occupants shall be conducted in the first year of operation. Drill times are not required to comply with Section 405.4.

---

## Emergency Preparedness and Planning for Groups I-1 and I-2

---

### ***Drill times***

Drill times are not required to comply with Section 405.4.

### ***Resident Participation in drills***

Emergency evacuation drills shall involve the actual evacuation of residents to a selected assembly point and shall provide residents with experience in exiting through all required exits. All required exits shall be used during emergency evacuation drills.

**Exception:** Actual exiting from emergency escape and rescue windows shall not be required. Opening the emergency escape and rescue window and signaling for help shall be an acceptable alternative.

### ***Emergency evacuation drill deferral***

In severe climates, the *fire code official* shall have the authority to modify the emergency evacuation drill frequency specified in Section 405.2.

## **NURSING HOME SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

Group I-2 occupancies shall comply with Sections 403.8.2.1 through 403.82.3 as well as 401 and 404 through 406:

### ***Fire evacuation plans***

The fire safety and evacuation plans required by Section 404 shall include a description of special staff actions. Plans shall include all of the following in addition to the requirements of Section 404.

1. Procedures for evacuation of patients with needs for containment or restraint and post-evacuation containment, where present.
2. A written plan for maintenance of the means of egress.
3. Procedures for a defend-in-place strategy.
4. Procedures for a full-floor or building evacuation, where necessary.

### ***Fire safety plans***

A copy of the plan shall be maintained at the facility at all times. Plans shall include all the following in addition to the requirements of Section 404:

1. Location and number of patient sleeping rooms and operating rooms.
2. Location of adjacent smoke compartments of refuge areas.
3. Path of travel to adjacent smoke compartments.
4. Location of special locking, delayed egress or access control arrangements.
5. Location of elevators utilized for patient movement in accordance with the fire safety plan, where provided.

### ***Emergency evacuation drills***

Emergency evacuation drills shall comply with Section 405.

#### **Exceptions:**

1. The movement of patients to safe areas or to the exterior of the building is not required.
2. Where emergency evacuation drills are conducted after visiting hours or where patients or residents are expected to be asleep, a coded announcement shall be an acceptable alternative to audible alarms.

## **FIRE SAFETY, EVACUATION AND LOCKDOWN PLANS**

**Fire evacuation plans.** Fire evacuation plans shall include the following:

1. Emergency egress or escape routes and whether evacuation of the building is to be complete by selected floors or areas only or with a defend-in-place response.
2. Procedures for employees who must remain to operate critical equipment before evacuating.
3. Procedures for the use of elevators to evacuate the building where occupant evacuation elevators complying with Section 3008 of the *International Building Code* are provided.
4. Procedures for assisted rescue for persons unable to use the general *means of egress* unassisted.
5. Procedures for accounting for employees and occupants after evacuation has been completed.
6. Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for rescue or emergency medical aid.
7. The preferred and any alternative means of notifying occupants of a fire or emergency.
8. The preferred and any alternative means of reporting fires and other emergencies to the fire department or designated emergency response organization.
9. Identification and assignment of personnel who can be contacted for further information or explanation of duties under the plan.
10. A description of the emergency voice/alarm communication system alert tone and preprogrammed voice messages, where provided.

**Fire safety plans.** Fire safety plans shall include the following:

1. The procedure for reporting a fire or other emergency.
2. The life safety strategy including the following:
  - a. Procedures for notifying occupants, including areas with a private mode alarm system.
  - b. Procedures for occupants under a defend-in-place response.
  - c. Procedures for evacuating occupants, including those who need evacuation assistance.
3. Site plans indicating the following:
  - a. The occupancy assembly point.
  - b. The locations of fire hydrants.
  - c. The normal routes of fire department access.
4. Floor plans identifying the locations of the following:
  - a. Exits.
  - b. Primary evacuation routes.
  - c. Secondary evacuation routes.
  - d. Accessible egress routes.
    - i. Areas of refuge.
    - ii. Exterior areas for assisted rescue.
  - e. Refuge areas associated with smoke barriers and horizontal exits
  - f. Manual fire alarm boxes.
  - g. Portable fire extinguishers.
  - h. Occupant-use hose sections.
  - i. Fire alarm annunciators and controls.



## Emergency Preparedness and Planning for Groups I-1 and I-2

---

5. A list of major fire hazards associated with the normal use and occupancy of the premises, including maintenance and housekeeping procedures.
6. Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for maintenance of systems and equipment installed to prevent or control fires.
7. Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for maintenance, housekeeping and controlling fuel hazard sources.

**Lockdown plans.** Where facilities develop a lockdown plan, it shall be in accordance with Sections 404.2.3.1 through 404.2.3.3.

**Lockdown plan contents.** Lockdown plans shall be *approved* by the *fire code official* and shall include the following:

1. **Initiation.** The plan shall include instructions for reporting an emergency that requires a lockdown.
2. **Accountability.** The plan shall include accountability procedures for staff to report the presence or absence of occupants.
3. **Recall.** The plan shall include a prearranged signal for returning to normal activity.
4. **Communication and coordination.** The plan shall include an *approved* means of two-way communication between a central location and each secured area.

**Training frequency.** The training frequency shall be included in the lockdown plan. The lockdown drills shall not substitute for any of the fire and evacuation drills required in Section 405.2.

**Lockdown notification.** The method of notifying building occupants of a lockdown shall be included in the plan. The method of notification shall be separate and distinct from the fire alarm signal.

**Maintenance.** Fire safety and evacuation plans shall be reviewed or updated annually or as necessitated by changes in staff assignments, occupancy or the physical arrangement of the building.

**Availability.** Fire safety and evacuation plans shall be available in the workplace for reference and review by employees, and copies shall be furnished to the *fire code official* for review upon request.

**Distribution.** The fire safety and evacuation plans shall be distributed to the tenants and building service employees by the *owner* or *owner's agent*. Tenants shall distribute to their employees applicable parts of the fire safety plan affecting the employees' actions in the event of a fire or other emergency.

# Emergency Preparedness and Planning for Groups I-1 and I-2

---

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS

Emergency evacuation drills complying with Sections 405.2 through 405.9 shall be conducted not less than annually where fire safety and evacuation plans are required by Section 403 or where required by the *fire code official*. Drills shall be designed in cooperation with local authorities.

### Frequency

Required emergency evacuation drills shall be held at intervals specified in Table 405.2 (below) or more frequently when necessary to familiarize all occupants with the drill procedure.

Group or Occupancy	Frequency	Participation
Group A	Quarterly	Employees
Group B <sup>b</sup>	Annually	All Occupants
Group B <sup>b,c</sup> (Ambulatory care facilities)	Annually	Employees
Group B <sup>b</sup> (Clinic, outpatient)	Annually	Employees
Group E	Monthly <sup>a</sup>	All Occupants
Group F	Annually	Employees
Group I -1	Semiannually on each shift	All Occupants
Group I -2	Quarterly on each shift <sup>a</sup>	Employees
Group I -3	Quarterly on each shift <sup>a</sup>	Employees
Group I -4	Monthly on each shift <sup>a</sup>	All Occupants
Group R -1	Quarterly on each shift	Employees
Group R -2 <sup>d</sup>	Four annually	All Occupants
Group R-4	Semiannually on each shift <sup>a</sup>	All Occupants

- In severe climates, the *fire code official* shall have the authority to modify the emergency evacuation drill frequency
- Emergency evacuation drills are required in Group B buildings having an *occupant load* of 500 or more persons or more than 100 persons above or below the *lowest level of discharge*.
- Emergency evacuation drills are required in ambulatory care facilities in accordance with Section 403.3
- Emergency evacuation drills in Group R-2 college and university buildings shall be in accordance with Section 403.10.2.1. Other Group R-2 occupancies shall be in accordance with Section 403.10.2.2.

### Leadership

Responsibility for the planning and conduct of drills shall be assigned to competent persons designated to exercise leadership.

### Time

Drills shall be held at unexpected times and under varying conditions to simulate the unusual conditions that occur in case of fire.

### Record Keeping

Records shall be maintained of required emergency evacuation drills and include the following information:

1. Identity of the person conducting the drill
2. Date and time of the drill
3. Notification method used
4. Employees on duty and participating
5. Number of occupants evacuated
6. Special conditions simulated
7. Problems encountered
8. Weather conditions when occupants evacuated
9. Time required to accomplish complete evacuation

# Emergency Preparedness and Planning for Groups I-1 and I-2

---

## **Notification**

Where required by the fire code official, prior notification of emergency evacuation drills shall be given to the fire code official.

## **Initiation**

Where a fire alarm system is provided, emergency evacuation drills shall be initiated by activating the fire alarm system.

## **Accountability**

As building occupants arrive at the assembly point, efforts shall be made to determine if all occupants have been successfully evacuated or have been accounted for.

## **Recall and reentry**

An electrically or mechanically operated signal used to recall occupants after an evacuation shall be separate and distinct from the signal used to initiate the evacuation. The recall signal initiation means shall be manually operated and under the control of the person in charge of the premises or the official in charge of the incident. Persons shall not reenter the premises until authorized to do so by the official in charge.

## **EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

Where fire safety and evacuation plans are required by Section 403, employees shall be trained in fire emergency procedures based on plans prepared in accordance with Section 404.

### ***Frequency***

Employees shall receive training in the contents of the fire safety and evacuation plans and their duties as part of new employee orientation and not less than annually thereafter. Records shall be maintained.

### ***Employee training program***

Employees shall be trained in fire prevention, evacuation and fire safety in accordance with Sections 406.3.1 through 406.3.4:

#### ***Fire Prevention Training***

Employees shall be apprised of the fire hazards of the materials and processes to which they are exposed. Each employee shall be instructed on the proper procedures for preventing fires in the conduct of their assigned duties.

#### ***Evacuation Training***

Employees shall be familiarized with the fire alarm and evacuation signals, their assigned duties in the event of an alarm or emergency, evacuation routes, areas of refuge, exterior assembly areas and procedures for evacuation.

#### ***Fire Safety Training***

Employees assigned fire-fighting duties shall be trained to know the locations and proper use of portable fire extinguishers or other manual fire-fighting equipment and the protective clothing or equipment required for its safe and proper use.

#### ***Emergency Lockdown Training***

Where a facility has a lockdown plan, employees shall be trained on their assigned duties and procedures in the event of an emergency lockdown.

## HAZARD COMMUNICATION

This section is applicable where hazardous materials subject to permits under Section 5001.5 are located on the premises or where required by the *fire code official*. To check to see if a facility also has an annual hazardous materials permit, please contact the Life Safety Division.

### ***Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)***

Material safety data sheets for all hazardous materials shall be either readily available on the premises as a paper copy; or where *approved*, shall be permitted to be readily retrievable by electronic access.

### ***Identification***

Individual containers of hazardous materials, cartons or packages shall be marked or labeled in accordance with applicable federal regulations. Buildings, rooms and spaces containing hazardous materials shall be identified by hazard warning signs.

### ***Training***

Persons responsible for the operation of areas in which hazardous materials are stored, dispensed, handled or used, shall be familiar with the chemical nature of the materials and the appropriate mitigating actions necessary in the event of a fire, leak or spill. Responsible persons shall be designated and trained to be liaison personnel for the fire department. These persons shall aid the fire department in preplanning emergency responses and identification of the locations where hazardous materials are located, and shall have access to Material Safety Data Sheets and be knowledgeable in the site emergency response procedures.

### ***Hazardous Materials Inventory Statement***

Where required by the *fire code official*, each application for a permit shall include a Hazardous Material Inventory Statement (HMIS).

### ***Hazardous Materials Management Plan***

Where required by the *fire code official*, each application for a permit shall include a Hazardous Materials Management Plan (HMMP). The *fire code official* is authorized to accept a similar plan required by other regulations.

### ***Facility closure plans***

The permit holder or applicant shall submit to the fire code official a facility closure plan to terminate storage, dispensing or use of hazardous materials.

## Evacuation Map/Diagram Posting

Although the fire code does not require the evacuation map to be posted for such facilities/occupancies, the Life Safety Division provides some guidance in terms of where the maps should be posted.

- The evacuation diagrams posted within a facility should include a location for “You Are Here” that is unique for each location of the diagram.
- Ensure the diagram is displayed/oriented/turned in such a way that quickly allows the viewer to determine which direction to exit. In other words, if the viewer faces the map and lays it flat, the elements seen left of the viewer within the facility will actually be shown to the left of the “You Are Here” on the diagram. An example of this would be if the viewer is holding the diagram in front of them and the diagram shows an exit immediately to the right of the viewer, the viewer should be able to turn their head to the right and see the exit.

Post diagrams in prominently traveled areas (e.g., hallways, stairwells, dorm rooms, drinking fountains etc.). Unusual building layouts require more evacuation maps to be posted.