FIRE DRILL FAQ’S

Q. Why do we have fire drills?
A. To familiarize occupants with the sound of the alarm system, practice evacuation procedures, and monitor alarm systems for malfunctions.

Q. Do I have to leave the building during an alarm?
A. Yes. All occupants must evacuate university buildings any time a fire alarm system is activated. Do not become complacent, treat every alarm as an emergency and leave the building immediately.

Q. How often are fire drills conducted on campus?
A. Fire drills are scheduled using requirements specified in the N.C. Fire Code. Buildings receive fire drills according to their occupancy type. Examples of these types are: Academic/Support Buildings are considered Business Occupancy and therefore receive fire drills on an annual basis. Assembly Occupancies such as gymnasiums, theaters, large meeting spaces, etc. receive fire drills on a quarterly basis. Residential Occupancies are required to receive quarterly fire drills, while Day Care (Educational) Occupancies conduct fire drills on a monthly basis.

Q. How long does a fire drill normally last?
A. The duration of most fire drills is 5-15 minutes. Drill times can vary building to building, depending on many factors such as speed of evacuation, building size, or alarm malfunctions. To help speed up this process, the Occupational Safety & Health Department asks each individual to evacuate promptly which helps ensure minimal disruption to work and class schedules.

Q. Where do I need to go once outside the building?
A. Each building/department should establish an evacuation assembly area, outside and away from the building (at least 50 feet). This area should be in a location that will not interfere with arriving emergency vehicles/personnel. In addition, areas should establish an inclement weather evacuation point.

Q. If the alarm has stopped, can I go back inside?
A. Once the alarm as stopped, occupants should wait for approval to re-enter the building. Occupational Safety & Health personnel or other designated individuals will advise occupants when they may return.

Q. What if someone in my area is mobility impaired and cannot leave the building?
A. Mobility impaired individuals should be especially diligent in pre-planning their escape routes. Many university buildings now feature Areas of Rescue Assistance where mobility impaired individuals can go to alert emergency responders of their location and await assistance with evacuation. Keep in mind, elevators should not be used during fire alarms. If you know/suspect that an employee, student or visitor may still be inside during an actual alarm, please alert arriving emergency personnel immediately.

If you have additional questions, please contact the Occupational Safety & Health Department at 262-4007 ext. 1.

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