



## 1.6 University of Georgia Evacuation Chair Program Guidelines

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### Policy Statement

The University of Georgia (UGA) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all faculty, staff, students, parents, and visitors to the University. To that end, the objective of the UGA Evacuation Chair Program is to establish a campus-wide oversight and to develop appropriate guidelines to ensure consistency in purchasing, placement, training, maintenance, and departmental oversight of evacuation chairs on UGA properties.

Use of evacuation chairs will be in compliance with the responsibilities and procedures outlined in this program. This program applies to individuals trained on the proper use of evacuation chairs; departments with evacuation chairs currently in place; and departments that are considering, or in the process of purchasing, evacuation chairs.

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### Reason for policy

The University of Georgia (UGA) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all faculty, staff, students, parents, and visitors to the University. To that end, the objective of the UGA Emergency Evacuation Chair Program is to develop appropriate guidelines to ensure consistency in purchasing, placement, training, maintenance and testing, accountability and departmental oversight of emergency evacuation chairs on all UGA properties.

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### Procedures

#### Scope

Use of emergency evacuation chairs will comply with the responsibilities and procedures outlined in this program and consistent with local, state and federal guidelines. The UGA emergency evacuation chair program will apply to individuals trained in the proper use of an emergency evacuation chair, campus volunteer emergency assistants and first responders; campus departments with emergency evacuation chairs currently in place; and departments that are considering, or in the process of purchasing, emergency evacuation chairs. The program is not intended to include individuals who procure emergency evacuation chairs without reporting their existence to the UGA Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) and/or campus departments who utilize emergency evacuation chairs in their building without having volunteers trained on their use.

#### Self-Reporting by UGA Employees and Students

UGA OEP encourages proactive planning by the entire University community for emergency situations. It is recommended that any person with a disability who needs assistance with alerting, evacuation, and sheltering in the event of emergency, self-identify and complete an emergency assistance referral form (EARF). Campus-wide notifications are sent each fall and spring semester via an Arch News email in an attempt to notify individuals with disabilities that assistance can be obtained to help the individual with a personal emergency plan for building emergencies. Additionally, the UGA Disability Resource Center (DRC) and the UGA Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) collaborate with OEP to promote the availability of these services.

Additional information on self-reporting and to review the full University guidelines on assisting individuals with disabilities during emergencies. **Responsibility**

The UGA OEP will coordinate with the UGA Disability Resource Center, the UGA Equal Opportunity Office, the UGA Fire Safety Office, the Athens-Clarke County Fire and Emergency Services Department and the UGA Human Resources Department regarding the use, placement and testing of all campus emergency evacuation chairs.

*Additional OEP responsibilities include:*

- Maintain a campus-wide inventory of all known emergency evacuation chairs ○ Provide information to the University community on the preferred emergency evacuation chair and purchasing information in the UGAMart system
- Coordinate with Building Safety and Security Representatives (BSSRs) in University buildings to ensure that the BSSRs are informed of any new emergency evacuation chair additions to their building
- Provide technical assistance on the location for the emergency evacuation chair within a building ○ Provide one emergency evacuation chair training class a year (or more by request) for campus emergency evacuation chair users
- Coordinate with building representatives who will check and ensure that the emergency evacuation chair in their building is operational through a brief deployment of the chair
- Perform yearly checks of all emergency evacuation chairs in campus buildings to ensure that the devices are still located in the same location and are intact (it is not OEP's responsibility to ensure that each chair is operational)
- Provide updates to the Emergency Evacuation Chair Guidelines document
- Maintain an updated campus-wide emergency evacuation chair map on the OEP website ([www.prepare.uga.edu](http://www.prepare.uga.edu)) that depicts the locations of the emergency evacuation chairs housed in campus buildings

*UGA Disability Resource Center responsibilities include:*

- Coordinate with OEP and appropriate Building Safety and Security Representatives personnel regarding individuals who may need assistance with a personal emergency plan for their building
- Provide assistance in marketing the Emergency Evacuation Chair program and guidelines

*UGA Building Safety and Security Representatives and/or Site Coordinator responsibilities include:*

- Assist with the identification of individuals who may need assistance during emergency situations
- Identify and coordinate Volunteer Emergency Evacuation Assistants for their building
- Coordinate emergency evacuation chair training for Volunteer Emergency Evacuation Assistants
- Provide updates to their Building Emergency Action Plan relative to assisting individuals with disabilities during emergencies

- Provide assistance in marketing the Emergency Evacuation Chair program and guidelines
- Receive training on how to use the emergency evacuation chair

*Volunteer Emergency Evacuation Assistants responsibilities include:*

- Aid individuals in their buildings who may need extra assistance during an emergency situation, particularly evacuations
- Receive training on how to use the emergency evacuation chair ○ Provide assistance in marketing the Emergency Evacuation Chair program and guidelines
- Coordinate with BSSRS and/or OEP staff for a replacement in the event that the individual can no longer serve in the Volunteer Emergency Evacuation Assistant role for their building

### **Evacuation Chair Purchase**

A department or unit interested in obtaining an evacuation chair for their building or area should contact OEP by calling (706) 542-5845 or via e-mail at [prepare@uga.edu](mailto:prepare@uga.edu) to submit their request. OEP will coordinate with the

requesting department to provide the department with an overview of the UGA evacuation chair program guidelines, discuss potential building locations for the evacuation chair, and discuss training of departmental staff who volunteer to receive evacuation chair training.

Requesting departments are financially responsible for the evacuation chair equipment purchase, installation, and any maintenance according to the manufacturer's guidelines. In addition, requesting departments must agree to purchase the evacuation chair from the preferred UGA vendor through the UGAMart purchasing system.

### **Existing Evacuation Chairs**

UGA departments that have purchased an emergency evacuation chair prior to the implementation of the UGA Emergency Evacuation Chair Program Guidelines should provide OEP with the specific location(s) of their department emergency evacuation chair(s) within their building. Also, the department should provide information to OEP regarding the trained Volunteer Emergency Assistants in the building. This information will allow OEP to include all emergency evacuation chairs in a campus-wide inventory, provide campus and local emergency responders with the emergency evacuation chair locations, and will enable the specific locations of all building emergency evacuation chairs to be available via an online map to the University community.

For UGA departments who already have an existing emergency evacuation chair and wish to purchase a new emergency evacuation chair, a trade-in program is available through the preferred UGA emergency evacuation chair vendor. OEP, in coordination with the manufacturer, will evaluate older chairs for replacement; however, based on the manufacturer's suggestions, evacuation chairs require very little maintenance and do not have a set replacement time.

For additional details on the trade-in program or to request an evaluation of the department's current emergency evacuation chair, contact OEP at [prepare@uga.edu](mailto:prepare@uga.edu) or 706.542.5845.

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

OEP strives to support University departments and units with homeland security and emergency planning technical assistance, training, and equipment. On very rare occasions when OEP funding is available to assist a UGA department who exhibits a strong need and priority for the purchase and installation of an evacuation chair, OEP will provide the initial funding to purchase the evacuation chair and associated equipment contingent upon the requesting department's participation in an agreement to provide for the sustainment of the evacuation chair.

The purpose of the memorandum of understanding, signed between OEP and the requesting department, is to provide a clear understanding of OEP's intentions to provide the requesting department with an evacuation chair and to highlight the requesting department's responsibilities and future costs associated with the operation, training, and maintenance associated with evacuation chair ownership. The agreement begins when the evacuation chair is installed and will extend as long as the evacuation chair is in service with the requesting department. If at any time administrators associated with the requesting department determine that the department can no longer support the operation of the evacuation chair, the evacuation chair will be returned to OEP for reassignment or appropriate disposal.

### **Evacuation Chair Placement, Signage, and Housing**

Many evacuation chairs have been placed in University buildings prior to the creation of formalized guidelines by OEP. As a result, several of the evacuation chairs were placed in locked cabinets with small hammers attached to "break glass for emergency use." OEP, in consultation with other UGA departments, removed the glass doors (and hammers) out of safety concerns and with the intent to promote better access to the evacuation chairs for practice and to facilitate the actual use of the emergency evacuation chairs during an emergency.

It is recommended that evacuation chairs be placed in a visible area in a stairwell, or in a hallway near a stairwell, that is utilized daily with signage placed above the actual emergency evacuation chair and outside the nearest stairwell

doors. It is not recommended that evacuation chairs be placed in emergency exit only stairwells as building occupants will likely not be acquainted with the placement of the evacuation chairs stored in an area where they do not frequent. Additionally, storing emergency evacuation chairs in locked cabinets, storage closets, or other areas where potential users may not be able to quickly find and use the emergency evacuation chair is not recommended.

Instructions for operating the standard model emergency evacuation chair are located with each emergency evacuation chair. Each laminated instruction card provides simple and easy to follow guidance on how to utilize the emergency evacuation chair.

Additionally, in an effort to make the emergency evacuation chairs more recognizable in campus buildings, OEP offers standard signage that is placed above the storage location for each emergency evacuation chair. OEP will provide the standard signage for each new emergency evacuation chair purchase and recommends the standard signage for all campus emergency evacuation chair storage locations. Furthermore, in some locations on campus, it may be advisable for an additional emergency evacuation chair signs to be placed on the outside of a stairwell door which leads to the stairwell storage location for the emergency evacuation chair. OEP will assist building personnel in determining the appropriate location for additional signage.

### **Maintenance and Inspections**

OEP recommends that building personnel check emergency evacuation chairs for functionality once a year to ensure that each device is operational. This check should involve removing the chair from the storage hook or cabinet, deploying the chair as you would if it were needed for an actual emergency.

Also, personnel should check to make sure that appropriate signage is posted and the instructions for use remain available near the emergency evacuation chair. OEP will conduct a yearly check of each unit in campus buildings to confirm the emergency evacuation chair location, perform a brief visual inspection, and check to make sure the appropriate signage and instruction cards are in place.

Building personnel should immediately contact OEP if the emergency evacuation chair, signage or the laminated instruction cards are damaged or missing from the emergency evacuation chair storage area. The UGA Police will be contacted to file a report for any stolen or damaged emergency evacuation chairs.

### **Training:**

Specific building personnel responsible for the emergency evacuation chair, BSSRs, and classroom instructors (for student use) are responsible for identifying several building staff members who will volunteer to complete a brief training on how to use an emergency evacuation chair. Students may volunteer at their instructor's request to assist another student with a disability during an emergency, but it is preferred (unless exigent circumstances exist) that faculty and staff trained volunteers actually deploy and operate an emergency evacuation chair to help any individual who needs mobility assistance during an emergency.

OEP will coordinate classes on how to use an emergency evacuation chair once a year on campus for volunteers who are located in buildings where emergency evacuation chairs are housed. Campus personnel may attend the free class on a volunteer basis in order to learn the safe and appropriate method to aid an individual who may need evacuation assistance during an emergency. Additional classes may be scheduled by request for specific buildings on campus.

### **Evacuation Response Options for Individuals with Mobility Issues**

All persons, including those with disabilities, are required to evacuate a facility anytime the fire alarm system is activated. People without disabilities should exit the building using the nearest exit. Elevators should never be used in the event of a fire without explicit authorization by fire or police personnel. Depending upon the facility and type of disability, people may have the following evacuation options:

- *Horizontal evacuation* is defined as using building exits to the outside ground level or moving into unaffected wings of multi-building complexes.
- *Vertical or stairway evacuation* involves using steps to reach ground level exits from the building. It is important to remember that stairway evacuations of individuals who use wheelchairs may be hazardous to disabled individuals, rescuers, and others attempting to evacuate and should not be attempted by untrained personnel unless there's no other alternative. Evacuation chairs are located in several buildings on campus and may be an option with appropriate training and assistance. Individuals with mobility impairments who are able to walk independently or with assistance may be able to negotiate stairs.
- *Stay in Place* – Unless danger is imminent, remain in a room with an exterior window, a telephone, and a solid or fire-resistant door. With this approach, the person may keep in contact with emergency services by dialing 911 and reporting his or her location directly. UGA Police Emergency Communications will immediately relay this location to on-site emergency personnel, who will determine the necessity for evacuation. Phone lines are expected to remain in service during most building emergencies. If the phone lines fail, the individual can signal from the window by waving a cloth or other visible object. The Stay in Place approach may be more appropriate for sprinkler protected buildings or buildings where an “area of refuge” is not nearby or available. It may also be more appropriate for an occupant who is alone when the alarm sounds. A “solid” or fire-resistant door can be identified by a fire label on the door-jamb and frame. Non-labeled 1-3/4 inch thick solid core wood doors hung on a metal frame also offer good fire resistance.
- *Area of Refuge* – With an evacuation assistant, an individual with a disability who may need evacuation assistance may move to an area of refuge away from obvious danger. The evacuation assistant will then go to the building evacuation assembly point and notify the on-site emergency personnel of the location of the person with a disability. Emergency personnel will determine if further evacuation is necessary. Usually, the safest areas of refuge are pressurized stair enclosures common to high-rise buildings, and open-air exit balconies. Other possible areas of refuge include: fire rated corridors or vestibules adjacent to exit stairs, and pressurized elevator lobbies. Many campus buildings feature fire rated corridor construction that may offer safe refuge. Taking a position in a rated corridor next to the stair is a good alternative to a small stair landing crowded with the other building occupants using the stairway.

#### **Records Management:**

Emergency Evacuation chair information will be maintained in the following manner:

- A listing of emergency evacuation chair locations will be maintained by OEP. Any changes in locations or new purchases should be reported immediately to OEP. ○ A campus map of emergency evacuation chair locations will be maintained by OEP and updated on an annual basis. This map will be available at [www.prepare.uga.edu](http://www.prepare.uga.edu).
- OEP will perform and document an annual check of each emergency evacuation chair located in campus building.

#### **Evacuation Chair Locations**

OEP maintains an updated listing of all the evacuation chairs located in buildings on the UGA campus in Athens. The locations may be found at [www.prepare.uga.edu](http://www.prepare.uga.edu).

Additionally, the evacuation chair locations are entered in to the UGA emergency response database, maintained by the UGA Facilities Management Division. This database is available for access by the UGA Police Department, the Athens-Clarke County Fire Department and UGA OEP to help first responders identify building floor plans, safety equipment and fire-related equipment in campus buildings.

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#### **Forms/Instructions**

Instructions for UGA Departments on how to purchase an evacuation chair using UGA Mart, please see OEP's Website.

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#### **Additional contacts**

The Office of Emergency Preparedness

Steve Harris, Director  
Hodgson Oil Building

286 Oconee St, Ste 200 S Athens,

GA 30602 [www.prepare.uga.edu](http://www.prepare.uga.edu)

706-542-5845

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## Policy definitions

### **Building Safety and Security Representative**

A representative selected by a Dean, Department Head or Director to serve as the building coordinator for emergency planning, safety and security activities. Each occupied UGA building should have one Primary BSSR and can have multiple Backup BSSR representatives. Backup BSSRs are often drawn from each department that occupies the building and may be a part of the Building Safety Team.

### **Evacuation Chair**

Emergency evacuation chairs are fold-up chairs, which are stored near emergency exits and allow for people with permanent or temporary mobility limitations to be moved down stairs during an emergency. These devices can help faculty, staff, students or first responders quickly move people with mobility limitations down the stairs or across rough terrain. Although many businesses, government buildings, schools and colleges purchase them voluntarily, evacuation chairs are not mandatory or required by law.

### **Emergency Medical Service (EMS)**

Service providing out-of-hospital acute care and transport to definitive care, to patients with illnesses and injuries which the patient believes constitutes a medical emergency.

### **Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP)**

The Office of Emergency Preparedness is responsible for homeland security initiatives and coordination of emergency management activities at UGA.

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## Responsibilities

Responsible University Senior Administrator: Vice President for Finance and Administration

Responsible University Administrator: Senior Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration

Policy Owner: [Office of Emergency Preparedness](#)

Policy Contact: [Steven Harris](#), Director **Phone:**

706-542-5845

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## Related information

See [UGA Athens Campus Evacuation Chair Locations](#)

‹ [University of Georgia Building Safety and Security Representative \(BSSR\) Policy](#) | [Environmental Safety](#) ›

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## Policy Dates

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of Last Review:

Date of Approval:

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