Fire Alarm Procedure ERP805

The fire alarm systems at the Fennell and Stoney Creek campuses operate as two-stage alarm systems. These have two different “stages” or alarm sounds and so evacuation is not necessarily automatically required when you hear an alarm. Two-stage systems are designed to allow building occupants to remain inside the building, but to stand by and be prepared to evacuate, during the First Stage while Security Services investigates. Evacuation is required when the second-stage alarm sounds. The IAHS campus operates on a single-stage fire alarm system and evacuation is immediately required upon hearing the alarm. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure an effective response upon the activation of fire alarm systems of the protection of the Mohawk College community and building occupants.

Application and Scope
This procedure applies to all College owned buildings and members of the Mohawk College community including staff, students, contractors and visitors on College property.

Definitions

“Individual Emergency Response Plan” is a plan that includes specific evacuation procedures and assistance required in the event of an emergency to an employee or student who has self-identified with their supervisor or Accessible Learning Services.

PROCEDURES

1. Fire Alarm Procedures by Campus

1.1 All Buildings/Campuses
Upon Discovery of Fire:
- Leave fire area immediately and close doors behind you.
- Pull the nearest fire alarm.
- Evacuate the building via the nearest safe exit.
- Call Security at 55, IAHS at 88, or CALL 911 from a safe location.

1.2 Fennell and Stoney Creek Campuses
Upon Activation of the Fire Alarm System:

First Stage – Alert Signal (slow, intermittent beeps)
- There is a possible emergency situation in the building.
- Stand by and prepare to leave the building.
- Listen for announcements and instructions.

Second Stage – Fire Alarm Signal (3 fast beeps followed by a pause)
- There is an emergency in the building.
- Evacuate the building via the nearest safe exit.
- Close doors behind you.

1.3 IAHS Campus
Upon Activation of the Fire Alarm System:
- Evacuate by the nearest safe exit and leave the building
- Close doors behind you

2. **Special Notes for All Fire Alarm Situations**
   - Do not use elevators.
   - Use an alternative exit if you encounter fire or smoke.
   - If a person with a disability cannot be evacuated from the building, assist them to a fire rated room such as an office or classroom that is away from smoke or fire, as close as possible to an exit. Preference should be given to rooms with two exits and a telephone (refer to Attachment A).
   - Notify Security and/or the Fire Department of the specific location of any individuals that were not evacuated (refer to Attachment A).

3. **Returning to Facilities**
   Do not re-enter the building until authorized by the Fire Department, Security, Staff or Fire Wardens.

4. **Extended Evacuation**
   In the event of an extended evacuation, you will be directed by Security, staff and/or Fire Wardens to a sheltered location. If instructed, please move quickly and calmly to the designated location.

5. **Traffic Control**
   With the exception of emergency service vehicles, access to the campus may be denied to all oncoming traffic when the order to evacuate has been given. Security Services staff will be responsible for safely controlling any vehicular traffic wishing to leave the Campus.

6. **False Alarms**
   The willful activation of a fire alarm, without reasonable cause, is a violation of the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 437). Anyone witnessing the initiation of a false alarm should notify College Security immediately.

7. **Fire Drills**
   Fire drills will be coordinated through the Occupational Health and Safety and Security Services and conducted at least once per year. Failure to respond and react to an alarm in the correct manner or refusal to evacuate when required will lead to disciplinary action.

8. **Communication**

8.1 **Internal Communication**
   The procedures outlined in ERP802 --- Internal Crisis Communication will apply.

8.2 **Communication with Media**
   All communication with the media about the evacuation and the nature of the emergency should be handled by the Director of Communications (or designate) and in accordance with CRP152 Media Relations Procedure
9. Responsibilities

9.1 Employees

- Be Prepared and know the procedures to be followed when fire or smoke is detected or when the alarm sounds.
- Know the requirements for individuals with disabilities and plan accordingly for their evacuation (refer to Attachment A).
- Ensure all students, visitors and other employees evacuate when required.
- Faculty must provide instruction to students at the beginning of each semester on how the fire alarm system operates, the procedures to be followed and the nearest escape routes to be used in the event of an emergency. Procedures are provided in Mohawk's "Emergency Safety & Security Procedures" booklet and on the “Active Threat/Fire Alarm Procedure” cards which can be used for reference purposes.
- Ensure that machinery and equipment in offices, classes/labs and service areas are shut off providing doing so does not endanger the safety of any person.
- Close, but do not lock doors.
- Advise Security and/or the Fire Department of the location of any endangered occupants.
- Inform your manager if you have a disability and require assistance for emergency situations. Once you self-identify, an Individual Emergency Response Plan will be prepared.

9.2 Fire Wardens

Fire Wardens are employee volunteers who assist Security Services with fire alarm response and evacuations, and to relay important information to Security and/or emergency personnel. Fire Wardens are not required to put themselves in undue danger while performing their duties. They are assigned areas of the building to respond and provide assistance or direction to occupants as necessary, and to report the status of the evacuation and/or any problems encountered to Security. If necessary, Fire Wardens may be required to assist with crowd control or movement outside the building.

Fire Wardens will:

- Be coordinated and trained in fire alarm response procedures through the Occupational Health and Safety Department.
- Participate in fire drills to become familiar with alarms and specific duties.
- Wear high visibility vests during alarm situations
- Understand how to perform a systematic sweep of their area.
- Familiarize themselves with the building emergency systems and locations in their areas (e.g. fire alarm pull stations; fire extinguishers; emergency intercoms) and report faulty or missing equipment to Facility Services or Occupational Health and Safety.
- Regularly inspect their assigned area to ensure emergency exits are kept free and clear of obstructions.
- Familiarize themselves with other Fire Wardens in their area and arrange a backup for scheduled absences.
- Notify the Occupational Health and Safety Department of any changes in their work location or status to assist with maintaining a current and up to date list of Fire Wardens.
Upon activation of the fire alarm, Fire Wardens will:

**First Stage Alarm (slow, intermittent beeps)**
- Check the immediate area for signs of smoke or fire.
- If smoke or fire is detected, alert people in the immediate area and direct them to evacuate the building via the nearest safe exit. Inform Security as soon as possible if safe to do so.
- If a fire emergency is not evident, wait for further instructions and prepare to evacuate in case the alarm signal (evacuate) is activated.

**Second Stage Alarm (3 fast beeps followed by a pause, repeated)**
- Alert people in the immediate area and direct them to evacuate the building via the nearest exit.
- Systematically sweep and evacuate the assigned area, including washrooms.
- Ensure doors and windows are closed. Do not lock doors.
- Provide assistance as required.
- Prevent unauthorized entry into the area.
- If a person with disabilities is unable to evacuate safely, assist them to a fire rated room that is away from smoke or fire, as close as possible to an exit. This could be a classroom or office. Preference should be given to rooms with two exits and a telephone or intercom for communicating directly with Security.
- Notify Security and/or the Fire Department of the specific location of any individuals that were not evacuated and provide their specific location.
- Once the area has been cleared, leave the building and report any problems or difficulties encountered to Security or emergency responders.
- Take a position away from the building so as not to interfere with emergency personnel.
- Do not permit re-entry into the building until an “all clear” has been given.

**Note:** Everyone in the building is required to respect the fire alarm systems and immediately evacuate when the alarm sounds for single-stage systems, and when the second stage alarm sounds for two-stage systems.

**9.3 Security Services**
- Overall campus security and emergency response involving police, ambulance and fire at Mohawk College owned campuses.
- Fire alarm system monitoring and control in coordination with Facility Services.
- Respond to, and investigate fire alarms.
- Ensure the building has been evacuated and move people from entrances.
- Announce the “all clear” signal for building re-entry.
- Reset the fire alarm system upon approval of the fire department.

**9.4 Facility Services**
- Overall operation and maintenance of campus buildings, utilities and services at Mohawk owned campuses.
- Fire alarm system monitoring and control in coordination with Security Services.
9.5 Occupational Health and Safety

- Prepare, revise and distribute approved Fire Safety Plans
- Coordinate operation/activities and training for Fire Wardens
- Communicate information for employees, students and building occupants regarding fire alarm procedures.
- Coordinate fire drills with Security Services and conduct at least annually.

9.6 Students

- Review the Fire Alarm Procedures at the beginning of the semester.
- If special evacuation assistance is required, introduce yourself to the instructor or person in charge of each class at the beginning of each semester.
- Identify yourself to Accessible Learning Services to review procedures and/or to facilitate communication with faculty and others in charge of classes regarding special evacuation assistance.
- Know the location of the nearest exit and an alternate route in case the preferred route is blocked.
- Know the location of the nearest fire alarm pull station. Pull to sound the alarm.
- Know that failure to respond to an alarm in the correct manner or refusal to evacuate will lead to disciplinary action.
- Ask the instructor or class advisor if there are any questions regarding the above information.

10. Policy Revision Date
May 2021

11. Attachments
Attachment A – Procedures for Evacuating Persons(s) with Disabilities

12. Specific Links
CS-1403-2008 Emergency Response
ERP802 Internal Crisis Communication Procedure
CRP152 Media Relations Procedure
Emergency Safety & Security Procedures Booklet
‘On Trak’ Student Handbook
Attachment A
Emergency Evacuation Procedures for Persons with Disabilities

These procedures are particularly important for an individual who has a physical disability such as blindness or low vision; deaf, deafened or hard-of-hearing; some physical/mobility challenges or learning disability. Any person with a disability may require some direction or assistance in the event of an evacuation. All staff, faculty and students must understand the procedures and know their specific responsibilities should an emergency situation arise.

Always ensure that any action you take does not put your life, or the lives of your designates, in danger.

Employee Responsibilities

- Inform your supervisor if you have a disability and require assistance for emergency situations. Once you self-identify, an Individual Emergency Response Plan will be prepared as per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- Review the current ‘Emergency Safety Security Procedures’ booklet, and in particular fire evacuation procedures that apply to your campus.
- At the beginning of a semester or new class, assign 2-3 peer helpers per class section, as designates to assist those who identify that they will require special evacuation assistance.
- Ensure that no person with identified special evacuation needs is left behind in your working area or area of responsibility. Assist them to a safe location outside the building if possible.
- In the event the person cannot be evacuated from the building, assist them to a fire rated room that is away from smoke or fire, as close as possible to an exit. This could be a classroom or office. Preference should be given to rooms with two exits and a telephone for communicating directly with Security. Note: An individual with a disability who requires support should not be left alone.
- Notify Security and/or the Fire Department of the specific location of any individuals that were not evacuated and provide their specific location.
- Horizontal evacuation from an area/wing to an adjacent or distant wing (away from the fire emergency) may be necessary to protect the person and/or to facilitate evacuation from the building.
- In circumstances where the individual has not identified the need for special assistance, but is in apparent need, ask the individual directly if he/she requires assistance and assist them to a fire rated room.
- Encourage students who have not identified themselves to make contact with Accessible Learning Services.
Student Responsibilities

- Review the “Safety on Campus” section of the On Trak Student Handbook or the current ‘Emergency Safety & Security Procedures’ booklet available on the College web site.
- At the beginning of every semester, or upon starting a new class, introduce yourself to the person in charge of each class, and advise whether special evacuation assistance is required.
- Identify yourself to Accessible Learning Services to review procedures and/or to facilitate communication with faculty regarding special evacuation assistance. This information is captured in the student’s Confidential Academic Accommodation Plan (CAAP).

Notes:

- Do not use elevators to evacuate a person with a disability.
- Do not leave a person with a disability behind to wait for rescue/evacuation except where the nature of the emergency absolutely requires such action.
- A fire-rated room is away from smoke or fire and as close as possible to an exit. This could be a classroom or office. Preference should be given to rooms with two exits and a telephone for communicating directly with Security.

The following are some suggested procedures that could be used during an emergency evacuation if you are located on a floor without direct access to the outside:

Contact Security in one of the following ways and give them your location:

From a cell phone, dial 905 574-5111.

On College lines, dial 55 to connect with Fennell, or Stoney Creek Campus Security.
- IAHS (McMaster Security) dial 88.
- Press the emergency button on the internal Bell pay phones (located at major campuses only) to be connected with Security. Signs above these phones identify your location. Give this location to Security.
- Use intercoms to connect with Security.
- Call 911 from a safe location.

The following are some specific directions for:

Person who is deaf, deafened, or hard-of-hearing – get their attention and communicate to them that there is a fire alarm and they need to leave the building, use pen and paper.

Person who is blind or has low vision – communicate to them that they are going to be led/escorted out of the building to a safe area and away from the immediate danger.

Person with physical/mobility challenges – communicate with them and let them know that they are going to be led to a fire-safe room where they will be in contact with Security or emergency personnel, and that they will be helped out of the building if emergency personnel feel that they are in jeopardy.

Familiarize yourself with the campus at which you are located to determine which emergency features are available.