



ARLINGTON COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Prevention Office
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PROCEDURAL GUIDELINE

Acceptable Alternate Fire Evacuation Drill Procedures

Alternate Fire Evacuation Drill Procedures during COVID-19 Pandemic or other Long-Term Emergencies

Effective August 14, 2020, Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and for future reference in similar scenarios, the following applies to mandatory Fire Evacuation Drills within Arlington County.

To minimize undesired congregation of people, and to lower the impact to businesses and organizations within Arlington County, the following alternate methods of performing code required fire evacuation drills have been deemed acceptable by the Arlington County Fire Marshal. These methods are acceptable during the current declared state of emergency and will not be in effect when the state of emergency related to COVID-19 has ended. These policies may be re-instated for future emergencies or conditions upon the authority of the Arlington County Fire Marshal.

MODIFIED PHYSICAL FIRE EVACUATION DRILL:

- Building management may elect to perform fire evacuation drills floor by floor, as opposed to performing drills that evacuate the whole building. This will prevent crowding in stairwells, areas of refuge, and areas of gathering outside the building.
- Alternating floors may be performed at the same time. For example, a 10-story building may elect to evacuate floors 2, 5, and 10 for the drill. After that drill is complete, the process will be repeated for floors 3, 6, and 9. This will continue until the building has been completely drilled in fire evacuation.
- This method will take more time than a traditional fire evacuation drill but has the benefit of physically performing the needed steps to evacuate during an emergency.

EMAIL OR MASS MESSAGE VIRTUAL FIRE EVACUATION DRILL:

- Building management may elect to perform a virtual fire evacuation drill by sending their occupants an electronically distributed assignment whereby the occupant responds in detail with their fire evacuation plan, primary route to safety, and secondary route to safety. Building management may elect to delegate this task to tenant business management.
- The building management and delegated party will keep a record of occupant responses and ensure they are accurate. Such records must be available for review, if requested by the Arlington County Fire Prevention Office.
- Building management must set a reasonable deadline for completion of assignments, not exceeding 10 business days. For example, if an assignment is issued on a Monday August 17th, it would be required to be completed no later than the close of business Friday August 28th.

- This method has a low impact to the operations of building occupants. While it does not reinforce the physical steps of evacuating the building, it has the benefit of allowing occupants to review in detail various evacuation scenarios.

THIRD PARTY CONTRACTED VIRTUAL INSPECTIONS:

- Building management may elect to contract a third-party vendor to perform virtual emergency evacuation preparedness. Such vendors typically create an interactive map unique to the building in question and require that building occupants complete a training assignment specific to their typical location in the building.
- The Arlington County Fire Prevention Office will not endorse or recommend any vendor for this service. Any such contracted vendor's training methods are subject to review by the Arlington County Fire Prevention Office for a judgement on acceptability.

Any specific questions regarding these practices may be directed to the Arlington County Fire Prevention Office.

Arlington County Fire Prevention Office
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