**Introduction**

Under the Equality Act 2010, if disabled people could realistically be expected to use your premises, you must anticipate any reasonable adjustments that would make it easier for their right of safe access and egress to be exercised. If disabled people are going to be in your premises then you must also provide safe means for them to leave if there is a fire. From low risk office environments everyone should be able to reach a place of relative safety from an affected area within 3 minutes (a place of relative safety could be a fire protected stairwell or refuge). Those with disabilities may need assistance or special arrangements.

The range of disabilities encountered can be considerable. This could include:

* wheelchair users
* ambulant disability - disabled people who are able to walk but who may depend on the use of prosthesis (artificial limbs), orthoses (callipers), sticks, crutches or other walking aids
* sensory impairment - deaf or hard of hearing or a visual impairment
* physical impairment - using a wheelchair or difficulty using their arms or legs
* mental health conditions and learning disabilities
* recovery from operations or recent injuries
* potentially vulnerable people e.g. pregnant women
* long standing health conditions or ill health e.g. epilepsy, diabetes

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| Where people with special needs use or work in the premises, their needs should, so far, as is practicable, be discussed with them. In some cases a person with a disability may need to have a written Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) to enable them to leave the building safely in an emergency. This guidance is provided for those managers responsible for ensuring the safety of people with disabilities using the building in the event of a fire. |
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| The Equality Act 2010 includes the concept of ‘reasonable adjustments’ and this can be carried over into fire safety law. Building managers will need to make judgements of what actions are reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances of each case when considering the costs and risks involved with making such adjustments. |
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| Building evacuation policies must include the anticipation of the needs of people with disabilities and relate to the contents of the access statement (newer buildings only). All access statements, normally submitted with planning applications, must include information on the design and anticipated access arrangements for the building or location.  **Responsibilities** |

The building manager (on behalf of the occupier) is responsible for ensuring all occupants can leave the building safely. The building manager must:

* have an effective means of identifying all those who might have difficulty evacuating the building. Visitors should be encouraged to identify themselves at the time of arrival if they are likely to require assistance in the event of an emergency
* discuss and agree with the individual the assistance or special arrangements that might be necessary. As part of your consultation exercise you will need to consider the matter of personal dignity
* record a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) if required. In many cases providing information or making simple arrangements/adjustments for assistance is all that will be required. If a PEEP is to be written then a template has been provided separate from this guidance. Advice and support for writing the PEEP is available from your Health and Safety Adviser if required
* If members of the public use your building then you may need to develop a range of standard PEEPs, that can be provided on request to a disabled person or others with special needs but check the details match individual needs.

**Completing the PEEP**

The available template records the agreed plan and the actions to be taken.

The employee and manager should complete the form during a face-to-face meeting. Both parties should discuss/consider the local emergency evacuation policies and the HM Government guidance; Fire Safety Risk Assessment – Means of Escape for Disabled People, before filling in the form.

People with disabilities who regularly use different buildings may have to have a separate PEEP for each building.

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