

From: **"Singh, Sandra"**

To: **"Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"**

Date: 2024-07-10 5:55:36 PM

Subject: Outstanding Council Q&A: City Hall Emergency Evacuation Plans - Provisions for people with disabilities

Good afternoon,

There is an outstanding question from early June in the weekly Q&As related to provisions for people with disabilities in City Hall's emergency evacuation plan, with a specific question related to equipment. Please accept my apologies for the delayed response; there was some misunderstanding about the source of the response. Please find below additional information from City Protective Services (CPS). This information would not be considered confidential and so could be shared as needed.

Council meetings:

- Persons requiring assistance due to accessibility needs, will be accompanied by Council Security/Member of CoV staff to the 3rd Floor Little Mountain Room in an emergency/evacuation.
 - Little Mountain Room has been designated as an Area of Refuge (approved by the Fire Marshall). They will wait in this area for rescue by Emergency Responders who will utilise their own equipment. A phone has been installed for direct access to the Security Operations Centre.
- In May, 2024, the Mayor and Councillors opening speech for Council Hearings was amended to:
 - "In case of an emergency, where we need to evacuate the building, I would like to direct your attention to the exits. There are 2 exits beyond the glass doors and to the left. If the glass doors are obstructed, please direct your attention to the 4 exits in this chamber. Please use the stairs (do not use the elevator).*
 - If you require accessibility assistance, please remain at your location and stand by for the Security Staff to guide you to the safe location. I would also like to highlight that there is a defibrillator located at the end of the hallway outside of the Council Chamber."*
- The Fire Safety Plan with these new details, identification of the updated Area of Refuge for the 3rd Floor, and procedures is currently being updated and completion is expected this week.
- Instructions to Occupants (ITOs), also referred to as Evacuation signage, is posted on every floor by the elevators and stairwells detailing the steps to take in an emergency/evacuation.
- For Council meetings, Security has a Council Team that all have a specific role in an emergency/evacuation.
 - Some team members lead the evacuation of Mayor and Council, others the members of public in Chambers, including accompanying those identified with Accessibility needs.
 - Council Secretariat Office staff are being trained on performing an Emergency Companion function when it is not a public hearing day and security resources are scaled down and limited to our regular operations.

Employees at City Hall

- Any employee with a disability who permanently works out of City Hall is pre-identified and evacuation need details are provided in the Fire Safety Plan located at the main entrance. This aids Security and Emergency Responders in their evacuation of persons requiring assistance. At this time, no one at City Hall requires this assistance, so no further preparedness plans have been made for other floors of City Hall, other than the 3rd floor for Council Hearings.

- CPS's Fire and Life Safety Team, provides quarterly training to all CoV employees (via CityLearn) on Basic Fire Safety Awareness, Fire Safety Plan training for Supervisors and Floor Warden Program training. This training is also available ad-hoc for departments or individuals on request.
 - The training covers the procedures for evacuations in an emergency, including steps to take to assist those with Accessibility needs.
 - CPS also advises that if staff are working in another CoV facility, not their dedicated workspace (i.e. City Hall for a meeting), employees requiring assistance should inform Security in the building or their Manager/Supervisor on site that they require assistance in an emergency.
 - This information is communicated through CPS training sessions, and reiterated at the annual fire drills
- In any facility, the most common Area of Refuge is a stairwell as these typically are a solid concrete space (little debris to cause injury) with fire rated doors for protection.
- There are Fire Fighter Phones (inside red boxes) on every floor, typically close to the elevator lobbies. These lines call a designated Fire Fighter phone on level one outside the Security Operations Centre, and are a direct contact to speak with an Emergency Responder. These phones can be used to provide information about a fire/emergency, people's location for assistance and to report a first aid incident.

Equipment

- Audio alarms and strobe lights are used throughout City facilities (site specific) to assist visually and hearing-impaired persons.
- Emergency and Fire, Life Safety Systems are different in each facility due to a number of reasons (age of building – can't accommodate due to physical layout, heritage status – limit modifications can be made etc.).
- No specialised evacuation equipment has been purchased at any City facility at this time. Ideas and initiatives are being discussed as part of the Accessibility Action Plan.

Compliance and Future Work

- The City is fully in compliance with the National and BC Fire Code for Evacuations at City Hall, and are actively participating in the City's new Accessibility Strategy Plan to improve where we can above the minimum requirements.
- CPS' Fire and Life Safety team also incorporated the Rick Hansen recommendations into the City's Fire Safety Plans in 2022.

I hope this response helps provide more insight into emergency evacuation procedures at City Hall and ongoing work related to continuous improvement.

Thank you,

Sandra

Sandra Singh | Deputy City Manager

City of Vancouver

E-mail:

Pronouns: she/her

Assistant: Alix Kivlin

Phone: 604.754.3721

E-mail: alix.kivlin@vancouver.ca

Pronouns: she/her

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