

University of Colorado at Boulder

Emergency Evacuation

I. PURPOSE

All members of the University community should be aware that when a fire alarm sounds in any campus building, it signals a potentially life-threatening situation and the building must be evacuated. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to the university community on the proper way to evacuate a building.

II. PROCEDURE

It is the accepted procedure of the University of Colorado at Boulder that occupants evacuate the building immediately (within seconds) and move to a safe distance upon activation of the building alarm system (audible and/or visual).

III. DEFINITIONS

Manual Fire Alarm Box or Pull Station—the *red*-handled alarm station located at eye level in campus buildings and labeled “Fire Alarm.” Pulling the handle causes the fire alarm to sound, indicating the need to evacuate the building.

Manual Chemical Spill Alarm—the *yellow* alarm station located in some rooms and areas with chemical spill potential. Pulling this handle also causes the fire alarm to sound.

III. OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Individuals are responsible for their safe evacuation from buildings.

IV. EVACUATION GUIDELINES

All building occupants should be aware of potential evacuation routes in a building as well as where to meet should a building require evacuation.

When Is It Appropriate to Pull the Fire Alarm?

1. **Pull the alarm any time occupants are in physical danger if they remain in the building.** Incidents that may pose a risk to others include fires, explosions, the presence of smoke, a criminal or terrorist act that poses a threat to life and safety, a natural gas odor, a radioactive materials release, or a chemical spill. If you cannot find an alarm pull station near the exit of the building, do not waste time searching for one. Leave the building and call 9-1-1 from a safe location.
2. **Do not pull the alarm if you receive a bomb threat or are unsure whether a situation requires evacuation.** Instead, call 9-1-1 to obtain guidance from the CU Police Department.

Action to Take When an Alarm Sounds

1. **When in doubt, get out.** Evacuate the building immediately in a calm manner.
2. **Within seconds, shut down any experiments or procedures that should not be left unattended.** If you are unable to shut down noxious or flammable gas supplies, notify the responders at the scene or call 9-1-1 to make them aware of the situation.
3. **If you are a supervisor or a professor with a classroom of students, direct everyone to leave as quickly as possible.**
4. **Leave the building via the shortest and safest exit route.** Meet at the designated location, according to your building's evacuation plan, which should be a safe distance from the building (a minimum of 100 feet away).
5. **If someone in your building is hearing, visually, or mobility impaired, assist them in leaving the building if you feel safe enough to do so.** If you are unable to assist a disabled individual, urge that person to shelter in place, then exit the building immediately and notify authorities of the location of the disabled person.
6. **Do not use elevators. Use exit stairs.**
7. **If you were the person who discovered the emergency or have information that may be useful to emergency responders and were able to safely exit the building, await emergency response personnel at a safe location outside and direct them to the scene.** If you suspect someone is missing or trapped, let the responders know. Also, if you know of disabled persons that are still in the building, let the responders know.
8. **Do not re-enter the building until the Boulder Fire Department or CU Police have indicated the building is safe to enter.**

V. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the campus fire marshal by calling (303) 492-4042 or the campus emergency planning coordinator by calling (303) 492-5162.

For further information on fire safety procedures, refer to the *Campus Fire Safety Guidelines* at <http://fm.colorado.edu/firesafety/safety.html> or call (303) 492-4042. For guidance on choosing an evacuation gathering site, go to <http://ehs.colorado.edu/embr> or <http://fm.colorado.edu/firesafety/firedrillsd.html>.