



Emergency Evacuation Devices



People with physical and intellectual disabilities are two to four times more likely than the general population to die or sustain injuries during emergency situations (7). First responders or fire personnel are often not prepared to ensure timely rescue of large numbers of persons with intellectual and or physical disabilities (5). Planning and preparing for emergencies situations and fire evacuations can decrease the risk of injury and death.

Wheelchair Users

If a patient lift will need to be used to transfer the individual from their bed to their wheelchair for a fire evacuation an evacuation device is strongly recommended, since dense smoke and poor visibility during a residential fire would likely make the use of a patient lift unsafe and would place the individual and their caregiver at a high risk for injury or death from smoke inhalation.



Emergency Evacuation Devices

- An evacuation device should be chosen with the recommendation of a fire evacuation device expert with disability-related evacuation expertise, such as an Occupational Therapist (OT) or Physical Therapist (PT) and a Durable Medical Equipment (DME) /Vendor/ Sales Representative.
- All evacuation devices must have a written/signed primary care physician's (PCP) order, before a licensed provider can use the device. Parents and/or legal guardians who are not licensed providers, are not required to have a PCP order to obtain an evacuation device.
- All evacuation plans and the use of an evacuation devices should be incorporated into an adult's individual's Individual Support Plan (ISP), or a student's (<22 years of age) the Individual Education Plan (IEP), and updated annually.
- Waiver individuals can apply for Assistive Technology (AT) funding to obtain an emergency evacuation device.

References

- 1) Albac Enterprises P/L (n.d.) The Albac Mat <http://www.albacmat.com/>
- 2) Commonwealth of Virginia, Code of Virginia (2021) 63.2-1705. Compliance with Uniform Statewide Building Code. <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title63.2/chapter17/section63.2-1705/>
- 3) Ethos (n.d.) Why Use Med Sled? <https://www.medsled.com/>
- 4) Evac Chair (n.d.) Emergency Evacuation Chairs. <https://evac-chair.com/evacuation-chairs/all-evacchair-models/>
- 5) Künzler, L., Hofinger, G., & Zinke, R. (2020). Safe Evacuation for All A top 10 List of Requirements. *Collective Dynamics*, 5, 197-204.
- 6) National Fire Protection Association. (2016). Emergency evacuation planning guide for people with disabilities. National Fire Protection Association, p. 20. <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/By-Topic/Disabilities/EvacuationGuidePDF.ashx>
- 7) Quail, J., Barker, R., & West, C. (2018). Experiences of individuals with physical disabilities in natural disasters: An integrative review. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management, The*, 33(3), 58-63.
- 8) Tetcon BV (2021) S-CAPEPOD Evacuation Sheet <https://s-capeplus.com/en/evacuation-equipment/evacuation-sheet/>

3 Types of Evacuation Devices

- **Evacuation Chairs** are used for multi-level evacuations. Requires a transfer of the individual from one surface to the evacuation chair. Evacuation chairs are needed in homes, day programs, or work situations with multiple levels (4).



- **Rescue Sheets** are for evacuating multiple non-ambulatory individuals quickly and safely. There are two types of rescue sheets.

- 1) An over-the-mattress rescue sheet is placed directly under the individual and requires a two person assist. Very inexpensive (\$40.00 or less).



- 2) An under-the-mattress evacuation sheet is placed under the individual's mattress and allows a caregiver to evacuate a person directly from their bed. The mattress functions as the backboard or padding, and the device is secured by a cross strap (8). Check doorway width when considering this type of device to make sure it can accommodate the individual's mattress. Most twin mattresses are 38-39 inches wide.



- **Skeds/Slides/Mats** are designed for a one-person assist and can be used in multi-level situations. Many can even accommodate vertical evacuations from high-rise or multi-storied buildings. They provide good head and neck support, and folding versions require very little storage space (1) (3).



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ABA Snippets ...

Quality Reviews of Behavioral Programming

DBHDS will commence formalized quality review and feedback sessions for behavior support plans and associated documentation for therapeutic consultation behavioral services beginning in 2022. Quality review and/or training on expectations of behavior support plans has been demonstrated to improve practitioner development of quality behavior support plans (1) (2) (3). The purpose of reviews by DBHDS is to provide quality assurance as it relates to behavior support plan adherence to [regulations](#) that govern this service, as well as to the [DBHDS/DMAS Practice Guidelines for Behavior Support Plans](#). Such reviews are an opportunity to provide reinforcement to behaviorists for behavior planning elements that are adhering to, or exceeding regulatory requirements and the Practice Guidelines, as well as to provide resources on any areas that may need improvement. Quality reviews at DBHDS will be conducted by Licensed and Board-Certified Behavior Analysts® with extensive experience in the assessment and treatment of challenging behavior and the application of positive behavior supports across a variety of settings and populations. In the near future, DBHDS quality reviewers will provide a training on the quality review process for the community, which will be advertised via the DBHDS Provider Network Listserv. For readers that would like to join this Listserv for this and future training announcements, one can sign-up by navigating to the following [link](#).

Watch the second ABA video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPTxSoPSnUI>

References:

- 1) Browning-Wright, D., Mayer, R.G., Cook, C.R., Crews, D.S., Kraemer, B.R., & Gale, B. (2007). A preliminary study on the effects of training using Behavior Support Plan Quality Evaluation Guide (BSP-QE) to improve positive behavioral support plans. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 30(3), 89-106.
- 2) Kraemer, B.R., Cook, C.R., Browning-Wright, D., Mayer, R.G., & Wallace, M.D. (2008). Effects of training on the use of the Behavior Support Plan Quality Evaluation Guide with autism educators: a preliminary investigation examining positive behavior support plans. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 10(3), 179-189.
- 3) McVilly, K., Webber, L., Paris, M., & Sharp, G. (2013). Reliability and utility of the Behavior Support Plan Quality Evaluation tool (BSP-QEII) for auditing and quality development in services for adults with intellectual disability and challenging behavior. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 57(8), 716-727.

Commonwealth of Virginia Government (2021). Therapeutic consultation service. 12VAC30-122-550. Retrieved December 10, 2021, from <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title12/agency30/chapter122/section550/>

Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services. (2021, May). Practice guidelines for behavior support plans. https://www.townhall.virginia.gov/L/GetFile.cfm?File=C:\TownHall\docroot\GuidanceDocs\602\GDoc_DMAS_7024_v1.pdf

Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (2021). DBHDS Provider Network Listserv: <https://tinyurl.com/ProviderNetworkListserv>

Emergency Evacuation Devices *continued...*

- Before making any evacuation plans and/or attempting to acquire any evacuation devices, caregivers should read the National Fire Protection Association's Guidebook entitled **Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities**.
- Caregivers need to determine if an individual can evacuate independently or not. (Ambulatory versus Non-Ambulatory) (6).
- Ambulatory as "the condition of a resident or participant who is physically and mentally capable of self-preservation by evacuating in response to an emergency, to a refuge area as defined by the Uniform Statewide Building Code without the assistance of another person, or from the structure itself without the assistance of another person if there is no such refuge area within the structure, even if such resident or participant may require the assistance of a wheelchair, walker, cane, prosthetic device, or a single verbal command to evacuate" (2).
- Non-ambulatory as "the condition of a resident or participant who by reason of physical or mental impairment is not capable of self-preservation without the assistance of another person." If any individual cannot evacuate independently, and is therefore deemed "non-ambulatory", the best practice recommendation is the individual have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (2).
- As of this publication, Virginia Medicaid does not fund evacuation devices. However, some private insurance companies might.
- To request authorization for funding through Community Living Waiver/Assistive Technology funding dollars, if the proper documentation is submitted with a full and complete explanation of why it is needed, how it will assist the individual to evacuate, etc. and pictures of the device.
- Caregivers might consider one type and brand of evacuation device, which can accommodate all individuals in the residence, so training staff on several devices will not be necessary (5).

App of the Month



Red Cross Mobile App: Be Prepared for Emergencies. Accidents happen but you can be ready to help yourself and your loved ones with this FREE app. The First Aid app puts expert advice for common emergencies at your fingertips. Videos, interactive quizzes and simple step-by-step advice makes learning easy and engaging. <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps.html> (App of the Month is not endorsed by DBHDS Office of Integrated Health. User accepts full responsibility for utilization of app).