

Safety Code of Practice 56

1st Edition, 2020

PERSONAL EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS (PEEPS)

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1 INTRODUCTION

The University of Reading welcomes staff and students with a range of disabilities, specific learning difficulties and chronic medical conditions. The University's objective is to provide an environment where disabled people are able to safely enjoy all the facilities.

The University and other employers on campus have a responsibility for ensuring that all people can leave a building safely in the event of a fire. This Code of Practice describes how the University provides emergency evacuation plans for all people likely to be on the premises, including disabled people. It is recognised that failure to do so may breach fire safety and discrimination legislation.

Where special arrangements are required, as outlined in this Code of Practice, these are intended to provide a balance between the right of disabled people to participate fully in university life and the requirement to ensure their health and safety.

2 SCOPE/APPLICATION

This Code of Practice will apply to buildings under the control of the University of Reading on the following premises: UoR Campus (London Road, Whiteknight, and Greenlands), SportsPark, Bulmershe Pavilion, UoR Boat Houses, UoR staff at TVSP, UoR staff at Enterprise Centre, Student Union, and Farms. It will also apply to study and field trips for the school to ensure there is provision for the safe evacuation of any disabled persons who attend.

This Code of Practice does not apply to work activities or premises under the control of commercial or private tenants of UoR. It does not apply to building sites on UoR land under the control of a Principal Contractor.

It does not apply to the University of Reading Malaysia, where separate local arrangements have been established.

3 DEFINITIONS

Planning for means of escape is about planning for exceptional circumstances i.e. not an everyday event. What a disabled person is prepared to do in exceptional circumstances may differ significantly from what they can reasonably be expected to do or manage in their everyday activities. In an emergency people may not react exactly as planned. Unless guided by trained Fire Wardens, Most people will make their way to the exit that they are familiar with, rather than to the most suitable escape route.

A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is a plan that is jointly agreed **in advance of any emergency** between the disabled person and the Fire Safety advisors so that disabled person knows what they have to do (where to go etc.) in an emergency and ensure that the correct assistance is available.

Managers, disability advisers, and tutors should be aware that some disabled people may not wish to disclose personal information about their disability - discretion should be used in how this issue is approached.

It should be noted that evacuation plans should not rely on the Fire and Rescue Service to make them work - it is the employer's responsibility to ensure an effective evacuation in the event of fire.

3.1 Types of PEEPS

In a lot of cases a General emergency evacuation plan (GEEP) will be suitable and sufficient. In extreme cases a Personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) will be required. Examples of those that may need a PEEP are a wheelchair user who is entirely reliant on their chair and is unable to self-transfer to an evacuation chair, a serious medical condition that requires specialist equipment, etc.

Individual PEEPs

In residential Halls and academic buildings where a disabled staff member or student normally lives, works or visits regularly, an individual PEEP should be prepared wherever possible. This is a plan tailored to the specific individual, for a specific building.

If a person visits more than one university building on a regular basis, it may be necessary to produce a PEEP to take into account all possible buildings they may visit. The University fire safety strategy wherever possible ensures that all buildings have very similar fire precautions.

General emergency evacuation plan (GEEP) for casual users and visitors

It is not practical to provide a bespoke plan for each visitor and casual user of a building. Instead, standard plans should be developed. This is appropriate for any buildings that have uncontrolled access, and in particular for buildings that have centrally booked rooms or are open to the general campus population e.g. Library, Palmer, Great Hall.

GEEP evacuation plans can be used as options for disabled people to choose from. They should be held at the reception points within the building and advertised and offered to people as part of the entry/reception procedures. A link to the GEEP is available in section 5 as a QR code or the pdf link.

Where a system of standard evacuation plans has been established, all staff resident in the building, and in particular those with a role in the evacuation procedures e.g. fire wardens, should be trained to offer an appropriate option to disabled people during an emergency and to lead them to appropriate points in the building.

Staff should not be concerned if a person who has an apparent disability does not ask for or accept a plan. It is possible that the person is confident that they can make their way out the building. Staff should confirm that this is the case.

Standard plans should be provided in a discreet manner. This will encourage people who have conditions such as asthma, heart disease, epilepsy, or emotional problems to ask for assistance, if they wish to do so.

Disabled people have a responsibility for their own safety. They should be expected to identify themselves so that they can be informed of the choice of evacuation plans and co-operate by giving any information necessary for the safe execution of the plan.

4 REQUIREMENTS

The groups of people who should be considered and are likely to be present in university buildings are:

- University staff
- University students
- Residents in Halls of Residence
- Contractors
- Tenants
- Visiting members of the public

4.1 Range of disabilities

Staff & students who may need assistance in an emergency evacuation should have a PEEP. This includes:

- Mobility impaired people – including wheelchair users, those who use walking aids such as sticks, and those who may be unable to exit via stairs, steps, or narrow corridors.
- Mental health issues - who may suffer panic attacks, anxieties etc.
- Sensory impaired people – who may not be able to hear audible, or see visual, alarm signals.
- Those who may have difficulty reading or understanding signage.
- Those people with medical conditions (e.g. asthma, heart disease) which may affect their ability to use the stairs, or to move quickly.
- Those with broken limbs or on crutches due to a temporary medical problem who may not be able to use the stairs, or to move quickly.
- Women in the later stages of pregnancy.

4.2 Duties for a PEEP

The responsibility for the production of a PEEP is as follows:

- Line managers are responsible through normal recruitment and induction procedures for identifying a new member of staff who discloses a disability.
- Occupational health will make a recommendation for a PEEP to the line manager of new and existing members of staff who have or develop a disability. The Line manager will then follow this CoP for the staff member.

Once a disabled member of staff has been identified the individual with the disability must complete the PEEP QUESTIONNAIRE. After completion, if a PEEP is requested the Line manager will arrange a meeting with the staff member and the Deputy Fire Safety Advisor. Should the member of staff decline a PEEP this must be declared on the questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire will be kept on file with the line manager and Fire Safety.

- The Disability Advisory Service (DAS) is responsible for inviting potential students to declare a disability during the student recruitment process and identifying those students who make such a declaration. The disability rep for the schools will ask the student to complete the PEEP QUESTIONNAIRE and after completion, if a PEEP is requested, arrange a meeting with the student and the fire safety advisor. Should the student decline a PEEP this must be declared on the questionnaire which will be held by DAS, disability rep and Fire Safety.

For both staff and students the utmost sensitivity needs to be applied and GDPR guidelines followed.

If the student resides in a Hall of Residence and a PEEP is requested, the responsibility for its production rests with the Hall Residence Manager (UPP). The fire safety measures for Halls are identical for the UoR academic buildings, therefore the PEEP will be shared to UoR fire Safety advisors and UoR DAS.

- **Contractors** – Where there are contractors working in the building, the person who has organised for the contractor to be on site has overall responsibility for their safety in case of fire; however, this may often be delegated to a competent person in the department they are working for. The competent person should ensure that steps are taken where necessary to ensure that they are made aware of the building GEEP.
- **Visiting members of the public** – Individual visitors to a building may fall into two groups: those who are invited to a building, such as sales representatives; and casual visitors who attend of their own volition, such as clients attending to discuss issues with members of staff.

If the University is given sufficient prior notice of a disabled visitor, the first option should be for the person (the host) arranging the visit to book rooms/accommodation from which the disabled person can easily self-evacuate and the building GEEP sent prior to the meeting. For casual visitors the GEEP should be presented to them when they arrive/book in at reception.

In public areas and where public lectures are organised, consideration should be given by the organiser/host in advance to any access/egress arrangements for disabled people. However it may be impossible to know how many disabled people are present at any one time or their level of disability. In such cases, responsibility for evacuating them safely in the event of an emergency will rest with the event organiser or events safety team. It is important, therefore, that all staff fully understand the evacuation plan and fire safety strategy for the building so that they can render maximum assistance to disabled people, irrespective of the nature of their impairment.

The buildings GEEP and Fire Action Notice will provide the appropriate information and must be prominently displayed near the entrance to the building. Advertising this information and making them available on request will be the responsibility of the BSO/ Fire Safety Advisers.

- **Hotel guests** - When a disabled person is allocated a room (whether it is specially adapted for them or not), a suitable escape plan must be provided by the hotel management. Some disabled people who use the hotel accommodation may not need an adapted room but may need support to escape, e.g. blind people. Therefore, a clear sign is required to be displayed at reception and alongside the escape instructions in each room. Escape instructions displayed should be made available in other accessible formats, for example

the receptionist could explain the instructions at check in. Part of the booking-in procedure should also be to include the building GEEP.

- **Tenants** – the responsibility for evacuating disabled persons from tenanted accommodation rests with the tenant. However they may be reliant on facilities provided by the University, such as refuges, communications, and evacuation chair.

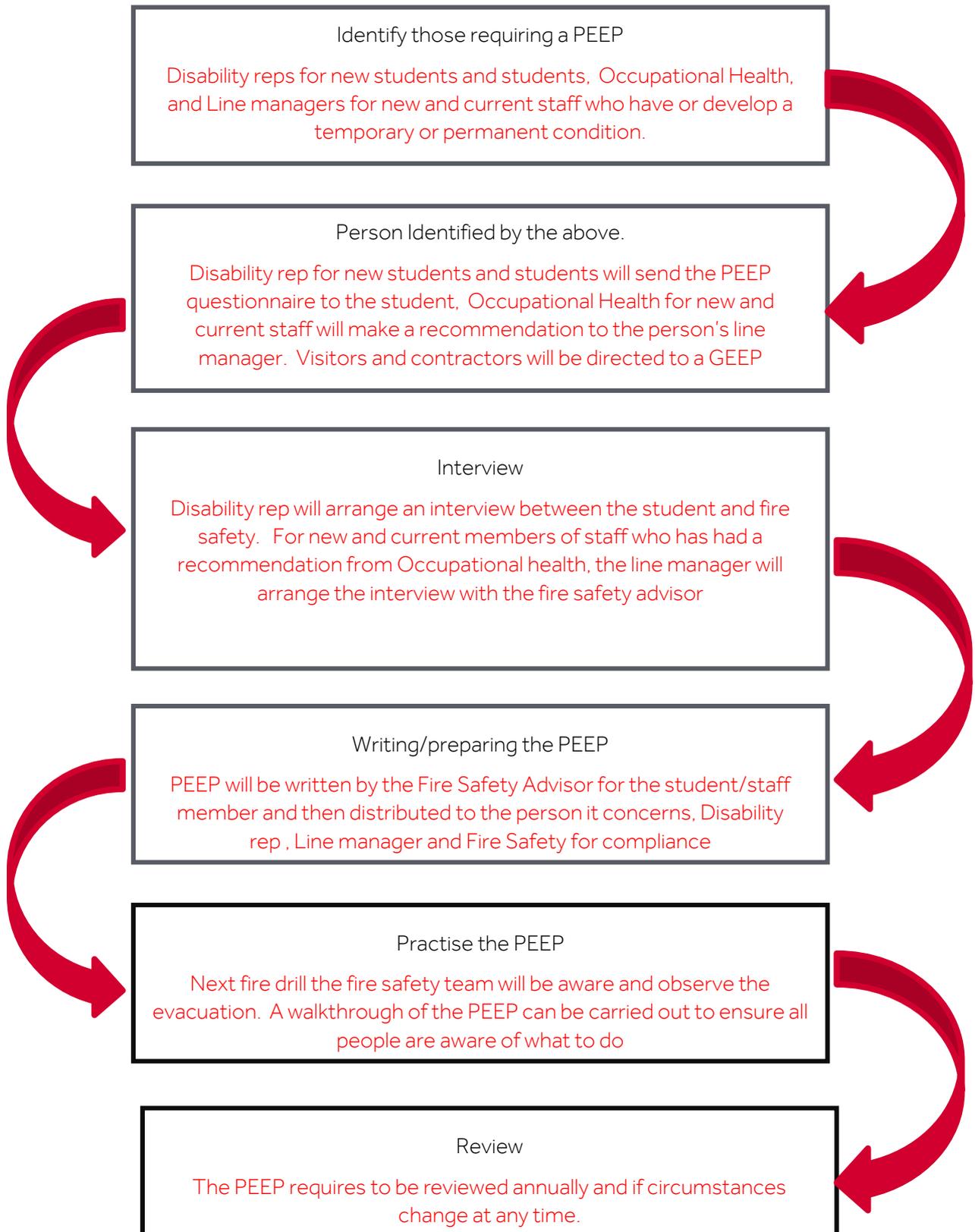
4.3 Obtaining information and writing the PEEP

Any disability information declared by potential students or staff during the recruitment process, or the PEEP Questionnaire (see Appendix 1) will form the starting point for collecting information about the disabled person's capabilities.

The PEEP will be completed by the person/s identified at the bottom of the PEEP questionnaire and agreed with the disabled person. Copies must be controlled with the utmost sensitivity and follow GDPR guidelines. Therefore on completion of a PEEP the Student/Staff member, DAS, Line Manager, and Fire Safety will have a copy. The PEEP requires updating when an individual's circumstances change and should be reviewed at least annually.

Figure 1 summarises the process of producing and implementing a PEEP.

Fig 1



5 FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please see: Means of Escape for Disabled People

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/422202/9446_Means_of_Escape_v2_.pdf or contact Health and Safety Services

General Emergency Evacuation plans

[General Emergency Evacuation Plan](#)



Click the link above or Scan the QR code for the General Emergency Evacuation Plans

6 REVIEW & AUDIT

A PEEP is to be reviewed yearly, or if the student/staff member condition/ability deteriorates or improves. The PEEP can be amended or removed depending on the circumstances.

Records will be held by the disability reps for students, and by the line manager for staff. Fire safety team will hold records for staff and students so evidence can be shown to a fire safety inspecting officer during an audit that reasonable measures are in place to evacuate everyone from a building in the event of a fire.

7 RECORDS & RETENTION REQUIREMENT

Records of the PEEP will be held with for staff; H&SS Fire Safety advisors, Line manager. For Students; H&SS Fire Safety advisors, Halls of Residence (UPP) if staying in Halls, Disability Advisory Service.

The PEEP will remain on record until the member of staff ceases to be employed by the University of Reading, or a student terminates or finishes their degree course.

8 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The Equality Act 2010

Appendix 1: Disabled Staff Emergency Evacuation Questionnaire for & Students

The University of Reading wants to ensure that all our staff, students, and visitors are able to leave our buildings safely in the event of fire or other emergency. We understand that many disabled people will be able to leave unaided; however some may require assistance. **Therefore if you would like to have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) drawn up for you, please complete the questionnaire below.**

If you do not feel comfortable about answering some of the questions and would prefer to develop the plan in a meeting with your manager or School Disability Officer, that is acceptable. However, if you do not provide all the information requested then the University may not be able to develop a suitable plan for you.

Once developed you will receive a copy of your plan, which will also be given to those people who may be nominated to help you to evacuate or escape.

The Plan will identify your options for evacuating from those university buildings that you regularly work or live in. You may be asked to participate in a practice to test the plan, but this will not require you to make any extraordinary effort to escape, or place you at any risk. The plan will only be implemented in full for a confirmed fire or other emergency.

If you do not request a plan, we will assume that you are able to make your own way out unaided.

If you or the person(s) producing the plan identify problems that you cannot resolve together, please contact Health and Safety Services for assistance.

Health and Safety Services
Estates, Building 50
Whiteknights
Reading
RG6 6DQ
Telephone: 0118 378 8888
Extension 8888

[Email: firesafety@reading.ac.uk](mailto:firesafety@reading.ac.uk)

Appendix 2: Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) Questionnaire.

We operate an evacuation system that includes Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for disabled staff and students.

Evacuation questionnaire Please fill it out and return it to Disability Advisory Service (students) or your Line manager (staff)		
Have you read and understand the evacuation procedure for University buildings you work or study in? University fire procedures	Yes	No
Have you made yourself familiar with the exit routes and assembly points for the building/s you will study or work in	Yes	No
Can you evacuate a building in 2 ½ minutes?	Yes	No
Do you have any special evacuation requirements? (e.g. Guided assistance, evacuation chair etc.)		
If Yes; please give a brief description of your requirements.	Yes	No
Would you like a PEEP?		
If No please state why and sign:	Yes	No
Print Name: Sign:	Date:	

If you have confirmed you would like a PEEP you will shortly receive a request for a meeting with the fire safety advisor to formulate your personal emergency evacuation plan.

If you have any questions please contact:-

Kevin McGovern
Deputy Fire Safety Advisor

Tel:- 0118 3788409
firesafety@reading.ac.uk

or

Margot Bishop
Assistant Health and Safety
Advisor

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m.k.bishop@reading.ac.uk