



**FIRE
EMERGENCY
POLICY**

Department of Environmental Health & Safety

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FIRE EMERGENCY POLICY

This is a statement of official University policy for the reporting of fire emergencies and for the evacuation of all campus buildings during fire emergencies, in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations.

The Department of Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) is the University's primary point of contact for all fire safety issues and all Federal, State and Local fire protection agencies and organizations including, but not limited to, the Maryland State Fire Marshal's (SFM) Office and the Baltimore County Fire Department (BCFD). **The Baltimore County Fire Department (BCFD) is the primary point of contact for all fire emergencies.**

A. POLICY:

1. A "Fire Emergency" exists whenever:
 - a) A building fire alarm is sounding;
 - b) An uncontrolled fire or imminent fire hazard occurs in any building or area of the campus;
 - c) There is the presence of smoke, or the odor of burning within any campus building;
 - d) There is spontaneous or abnormal heating of any material.
 - e) There is an uncontrolled release of a hazardous material.
 - f) There is the odor of natural gas in any building on campus.
2. If condition a. listed above exists:

It will be reported immediately to the TUPD. They have 2 minutes in which to confirm an automatic fire alarm by either having an Officer verify on scene **or** receiving independent telephonic confirmation. If the alarm is not confirmed within 2 minutes, the BCFD will be notified immediately. **IN NO INSTANCE WILL THE DELAY IN NOTIFYING THE BCFD BE GREATER THAN 2 MINUTES.**

3. If any condition listed in b. through d. above exists:

It will be reported immediately to Baltimore County's 911 Center.

4. If any condition listed in e. and f. above exists:

It will be reported immediately to the TUPD. Upon confirmation, and as necessary, the TUPD will notify the appropriate internal departments (EHS, Facilities Management) and the BCFD. EHS will notify the appropriate external departments/agencies (MDE, OSHA, SFM, etc.).

B. INTERRUPTION OF FIRE ALARM:

1. No person may shut off any fire protection or alarm system during a fire emergency incident without the permission of the BCFD.
2. No person may shut off any fire protection or alarm system during a bomb threat emergency without the permission of the TUPD Incident Commander.
3. It shall be the responsibility of Facilities Management to reset any fire protection or alarm system after an emergency incident when notified by the BCFD or TUPD Incident Commander. EHS in cooperation with Facilities Management shall inspect each such system as soon as possible after every emergency incident and place the system in serviceable condition. If repairs are required, the responsible contractor shall be notified immediately. If repairs cannot be completed within 24 hours, and the system is considered non-functional by EHS, the impairment policy will be placed into effect until such time as the repairs can be completed.
4. Facilities Management may reset an alarm system only if there is no damage to the system and when it is within their technical capabilities to do so.
5. Any person desiring to interrupt service to any fire protection or alarm system must obtain permission from EHS through Facilities Management's Work Control Center.
6. The TUPD should request Facilities Management to reset a fire protection system or EHS to repair a fire protection system, via the Work Control Center (x4-2481)

C. PROCEDURES:

Campus Buildings shall be immediately and totally evacuated whenever the building fire alarm is sounding.

All personnel will evacuate the building. NO PERSONNEL WILL ATTEMPT TO FIGHT THE FIRE.

Upon discovery of evidence that a fire emergency exists, an individual shall accomplish, or cause to be accomplished, the following actions:

IF THERE IS A FIRE:

1. **PULL THE BUILDING FIRE ALARM.** If you discover or suspect a fire, sound the building alarm.
 - From a safe location outside of the building, dial 911. At the emergency blue-light & yellow phones located around campus, press the emergency button to be connected to the TUPD who can contact the 911 Center, or dial 911 on the key pad to be connected directly to the 911 Center.
 - Remain calm; give your name and the location of the fire (building and room number and what is burning, if known).
 - Meet the Fire Department outside and direct them to the emergency.
2. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FIGHT THE FIRE – EVACUATE!!!!** Towson University’s official policy is that no employees will fight fires in University buildings. All employees will immediately evacuate the building and notify the 911 Center there is a fire.
3. **FEEL THE DOOR.** If the door is closed in the room where you are located, do not open the door before feeling the knob and upper door for heat.
 - If the knob and door are cool to the touch, brace yourself against the door and open it slightly. Check the conditions of the hall. If the hall does not contain excessive heat and smoke, proceed to the nearest exit.
 - If the knob and/or door is hot, or even warm to the touch, do not open the door – there is a good chance that the fire is in the hallway near your room and your probability of reaching an exit is very slim. Remain in your room and follow the instructions for being trapped.
4. **GO TO THE NEAREST EXIT OR STAIRWAY.** Evacuate the building using corridors and stairwells. Close as many doors as possible between you and the fire. This helps to confine the fire. Shut off all machinery and equipment in your area on your way out.
5. **NEVER USE AN ELEVATOR!** The power can fail leaving you stranded between floors in a burning building. Elevator shafts and open stairwells produce a chimney effect, drawing smoke and heat up the shaft.
6. **CRAWL IF THERE IS SMOKE.** If you encounter excessive smoke while evacuating the building, get as low as possible and crawl to the nearest exit. Heat and smoke rise, so the coolest, cleanest air will be near the floor. If possible, cover your mouth and nose with a wet cloth, etc. to cool and partially filter the air you breathe.
7. If your primary exit becomes blocked, use a secondary exit. Once outside the building, move to a safe location at least 300 feet away from the building.

DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING FOR ANYTHING UNTIL A FIRE OR POLICE OFFICIAL SAYS IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.

8. All fires, even if extinguished or found to be extinguished, must be reported to TUPD at x4-2133.
9. All fire alarms, even if suspected of being false or accidental, must be reported to the Baltimore County 911 Center.
10. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) asks that you render reasonable assistance to disabled persons to evacuate and ensure that they are aware of the alarm if these actions do not place you in personal danger.

IF YOU ARE DISABLED:

1. If you are disabled, either temporarily or permanently, to an extent that impairs your mobility, it is your responsibility to inform your Supervisor and Environmental Health and Safety (410-296-7593). You are the best judge of your physical limitations. Your name, building, room number and the nature of your disability will be placed on a list that will be given to the Baltimore County Fire Department (BCFD) in an emergency. If you are unable to evacuate and your office is in a fire area, your rescue will be the first priority for rescue units.
2. Co-workers will assist you to evacuate only if this places them in no personal danger. (See Item #10 above).
3. NEVER use elevators for evacuations.
4. Mobility impaired persons in wheelchairs on non-ground level floors should proceed to the nearest enclosed stairwell and wait for the BCFD to arrive. Have someone stay with you (if it places them in no personal danger) and someone meet the responding BCFD Unit to report your location. (Follow the instructions below for being trapped if you cannot get to an enclosed stairwell.)
5. Visually impaired persons should have a sighted assistant to guide them to safety.
6. Individually inform hearing impaired persons of the emergency. Do not assume they know what is happening by watching others.

IF YOU GET TRAPPED:

1. Stuff the cracks around the door with towels, lab coats, throw rugs, etc. to keep out as much heat and smoke as possible.
2. Go to the window and if it is clear outside (no smoke or flames), open the window at the top (to let any heat and smoke out of the room) and at the bottom (for a source of fresh air). Signal for help by hanging a “flag” (sheet, jacket, etc.) out of the window.

3. If there is a telephone in the room, call 911 and advise them of your exact location, even if the BCFD is already on the scene. They will send rescue personnel to your location.
4. Do not attempt to jump from a multi-story building. Jumps from heights of three floors (36 feet) or higher are almost always fatal.

BEFORE A FIRE OCCURS:

1. Learn the location of fire exits and fire alarm pull stations where you work, live, and when traveling – it may well save your life! (Fire alarm pull stations are usually located near building exits.)
2. Maintain corridors clear of ALL OBSTRUCTIONS.
3. Report damaged fire equipment.
 - Fire Doors - Keep stairwell doors and smoke doors in corridors CLOSED unless equipped with automatic self-closing devices connected to a smoke detector or the building fire alarm system.
 - Exit Signs – Two exits should be visible from all public areas.
 - Fire Alarms – Keep audio/visual devices and pull stations accessible.
 - Smoke Detectors – Keep them clear so they can detect smoke easily.
4. Use only U.L. listed appliances and do not overload outlets. Replace damaged wires.
5. Participate in fire drills...they are for your life safety.

D. **EVACUATION POLICY:**

The evacuation policy shall be as follows:

1. It shall be the responsibility of every person to immediately leave a University building whenever the fire alarm is activated or a fire emergency exists. All students, faculty, and staff are required to leave the building and remain outside until the emergency is over. No one shall restrict or impede the evacuation. **NO ONE WILL ATTEMPT TO FIGHT A FIRE IN A CAMPUS BUILDING.** The BCFD has the responsibility to extinguish all fires on campus.

E. **REVIEW:**

Department heads are expected to review fire prevention and fire survival policies at the beginning of each semester with faculty and staff, or to schedule such a presentation with EHS. Such information is available from EHS for use and distribution.

F. **IMPAIRMENT:**

Whenever a building fire alarm or sprinkler system is inoperable or has been placed out of service, the University's "**Fire Protection System Impairment Policy**" is in effect. This policy is available from EHS.

G. INFORMATION RELEASE TO MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC:

All information regarding University “Fire Emergencies” will be released through the Office of University Relations. No other University agency or employee may release official statements regarding the cause, origin, or nature of campus fires unless specifically authorized to do so by the Office of University Relations.