



# COVID-19 & High-Rise Evacuation Drills

June 2020

Annual evacuation drills for high rise buildings, with participation by all employees, are essential to increase the successful, orderly and immediate evacuation of occupants in the event of a real emergency. They are required by law within the City of Bellevue and the State of Washington.

In order to maintain [the CDC](#) recommended social distancing we are suggesting these options to consider:

- Emergency training program with partial building or floor evacuation drills
- Computer based safety training programs (commonly known as an instructional program)
- Virtual drills. These can be “home grown” using smart phones or “go pro” devices or alternatively, there are several companies in the area that are developing virtual drills. The two that we are currently aware of are [AK Preparedness](#) and [WPS](#).

However you decide to provide this training it must be provided to all building staff and occupants and contain the following:

- Use floor plans or video to show occupants all possible exits. Most employees use the elevators to get to their office and should be aware of all exit stair locations.
- Provide the audio/video of the actual fire alarm message for each location.
- Review the evacuation process which includes occupant behavior, egress times, assembly points and accountability for personnel.
- Review the life and safety systems and explain the performance of the fire alarm system, smoke control systems, fire doors and elevators for all the different alarm conditions.

- Explain how the occupants may encounter firefighters in the stairways and to evacuate along the outside wall to allow responders the inside path to ascend.
- Provide specific job duty training to floor wardens and building staff who provide direction in case of emergency.
- An opportunity for staff to respond with feedback or questions.

The evacuation drills have always been required to be held at unexpected times and under varying conditions to simulate the unusual conditions that occur in the event of a real emergency. On occasion we have heard of occupants finding out when a drill will happen and avoid the office that day. These options can be great opportunity to reach all occupants and/or employees and ensure they comfortable with their roles in the event of a fire and, if not, to provide additional information and/or training to account for their unique needs.

While the Bellevue Fire Department understands that the evacuation drill training has an impact on your time, this training can be completed in a relatively short period of time which is a small investment for the safety of your employees. The Bellevue Fire Department expects full and immediate participation in these drills.

## Working from home fire safety

We would also like you to take this opportunity to provide your building occupants with fire safety information they can use in what might be their current workspace: their home.

- Electrical safety while working from home: [ESFI.org/resource/electrical-safety-while-working-from-home-757](https://ESFI.org/resource/electrical-safety-while-working-from-home-757)
- Bellevue Fire Public Information handout have additional fire safety information: [BellevueWA.gov/city-government/departments/fire/fire-prevention/information](https://BellevueWA.gov/city-government/departments/fire/fire-prevention/information)



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