

Emergency Evacuation Chairs in Offices

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Having a work place that is not only wheelchair accessible, but wheel chair convenient, is a strong signal that people who use wheelchairs are beginning to receive equal access and treatment in the workplace. Many major corporations have made their offices not only accessible for people who use wheelchairs, but easy and convenient for them to get around in as well. Elevators have become a requirement for office buildings that have multiple floors (and almost never do you see a set of stairs without a ramp alternative to the side). However, during an emergency, elevators cannot be safely used and people who cannot descend stairs are their own need a contingency plan to get out of the office. That is where emergency evacuation chairs come into play.

Evacuation Chairs are lightweight and portable. They can be easily stowed in any hall closet. The chairs are generally made out of a metal frame and strong fabric. They are not nearly as functional or mobile as a wheelchair. They are designed to easily move down stairs, out of buildings and to safety. Although they are comfortable, the seat itself is somewhat more reclined so people are at a safe and comfortable angle when they descend stairs in the evacuation chair. The evacuation chairs work by gripping the stairs and turning them into a ramp for the chair to safely move down in a smooth and controlled manor. They usually have multiple break systems for both the person sitting in the chair and the person assisting, so it never feels out of control. They are also commonly made out of flame retardant material which can prevent burns and other close calls when evacuating a building. Most importantly, these chairs are pretty inexpensive which means that any small business that has employees who use wheelchairs can afford these devices.

It is not enough to simply buy an evacuation chair and let it collect dust in a closet down the hall. It is an office's responsibility to assemble a volunteer team and train them in how to properly use the evacuation chairs during an emergency and delegate who is responsible for what during an actual emergency. You need to have a concrete plan and people need to know what they have to be accountable for in any emergency situation. When smoke starts pouring in and the fire alarm goes off, it is human nature to think about self-preservation, that is why people who volunteer for helping those in need with the emergency evacuation chair must have a clear understanding of how to use the device and who they are supposed to be helping. A company would ideally require drills a few times a year where those on the volunteer teams and employees that require assistance can practice using the emergency evacuation chairs, however people rarely have that much time to sacrifice in a work setting. It is of the utmost importance that everyone on a volunteer team have a full understanding of how emergency evacuation chairs work, how to securely fasten people into the device and how to descend stairs with it. Having a solid and well thought out plan for emergency evacuation of wheel chair users can be the difference between life and death, that's why you need a thought out evacuation plan ahead of time.

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