

**TOWN OF WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

**SECTION: Rescue Operations
SUBJECT: Building Evacuation
REVISED: 7/2013**

PURPOSE:

To provide a system for evacuation of buildings during emergency situations.

POLICY:

- A. The incident commander shall initiate building evacuation operations whenever in their opinion it is in the best interest of occupants to be evacuated due to a definite life safety hazard.
- B. Additional resources as may be required, shall be requested by the incident commander to accomplish life safety objectives during evacuation operations.
- C. During bomb threat situations the decision to evacuate a building rests with the occupancy management and the law enforcement agency involved.

RESPONSIBILITY:

The incident commander shall be responsible for initiating evacuation operations at emergencies involving structures which are occupied.

SCOPE:

The scope of this guideline is concerned primarily with the evacuation of those buildings in which a life hazard problem has developed due to an emergency condition within the involved building.

PROCEDURE:

- A. Establish a plan, plan the evacuation and make assignments and progress reports.
- B. Evacuate persons in the greatest danger first. The people in the greatest danger in a fire are those in the immediate area and those above.
- C. Assign specific areas for evacuation. Companies should be assigned according to priorities, to specific areas, sectors, of floors to evacuate and report all clear.
- D. Identify safe evacuation routes. Usually an evacuation is intended to remove occupants from a hazard. The objective should include moving occupants to safe areas via identified safe paths. Companies may have to be assigned to keep the evacuation routes safe. Aerial ladders, ground ladders, fire escapes, etc., are secondary means of egress. If the evacuation route is unsafe, consider leaving occupants where they are until conditions improve.
- E. Identify evacuation stairs. In multi-story buildings, it may be necessary to designate one stairway to be used for evacuation while another is used for fire-fighting and/or ventilation.
- F. Evacuate to a safe location. Move evacuees to a location out of danger, but not further than is practical.
- G. Avoid panic. Personnel must consciously work to lessen anxiety of occupants and avoid early as the situation permits.

- H. Assign sufficient resources to evacuation. Rapid evacuation of a building may require a major commitment of crews. Never leave evacuated occupants unattended.
- I. Do not evacuate unnecessarily. If conditions do not present a hazard, evacuation may be unnecessary.

MARKING SEARCHED ROOMS:

- A. All rooms searched will be marked with red surveyors tape.
- B. A roll of search tape will be carried on all apparatus.