



## I. Purpose

This directive outlines the policy and responsibilities for establishing and implementing Occupant Emergency Organizations and Occupant Emergency Plans (OEPs) within the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and for the safe protection and evacuation of ED employees.

## II. Policy

It is ED's policy to take all steps necessary to minimize the impact on ED employees of any disasters or emergencies. Those steps include the development of OEPs for all ED facilities and the establishment of Occupant Emergency Organizations to implement those plans in the event of an emergency. ED's OEPs include plans for notifying ED employees of any disaster or emergency prior to reporting to work.

## III. Authorization

Occupant Emergency Organizations and OEPs are established under the authorities contained in the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-596); Executive Order 12196, Occupational Safety and Health Programs for Federal Employees, dated February 26, 1980; and Federal Management Regulations, 41 CFR 102-74.

The guidelines relating to employees with disabilities are established in coordination and adherence with the Uniformed Federal Accessibility Standard (UFAS), 1984.

## IV. Applicability

This directive applies to all ED employees located in headquarters and in the regions.

## V. Definitions

- A. *Designated Official* – The highest-ranking ED official in buildings where ED is the primary tenant, or a designee selected by mutual agreement of occupant agency officials. In facilities where ED is not the primary tenant, the Designated Official is the highest-ranking official of the primary tenant agency.
- B. *Designated Safety Official* – The highest-ranking ED official in ED facilities where ED is not the primary tenant. The authority of Designated Safety Officials has been delegated from the Assistant Secretary for Management.
- C. *Occupant Emergency Coordinator* – A secondary point of contact named by the Designated Official.
- D. *Occupant Emergency Organization* – The emergency response organization comprised of employees who have been designated and trained by the Designated Official to carry out the requirements of the OEP. The Occupant Emergency

Organization is comprised of employees from all occupant federal agencies of a facility.

- E. *Occupant Emergency Plan (OEP)* – The procedures developed to protect life and property in a specific facility under stipulated emergency conditions. The OEP applies to the entire facility even though the facility may have multiple federal occupant agencies.
- F. *Occupant Safety Coordinator* – A secondary point of contact in ED facilities where ED is not the primary tenant.
- G. *Building Related Emergencies* – An emergency within a structure that threatens the health and safety of occupants in a specific area or all of ED's space. This may include threats of structural damage due to fire, explosion, flooding, and/or harmful vapor/substance releases. The authority of the Designated Official or Designated Safety Official is limited to the confines of ED occupied space and does not extend to external (building) environmental conditions.
- H. *Slow Descent Device* – A mechanical device used to assist persons up and down stairs due to their inability to accomplish this function independently, [*commonly referred to as evacuation chairs*]. Slow descent devices are not required and their purchase and storage by ED are discouraged.

However, where this equipment exists in multi-agency facilities; staff use is optional and staff are encouraged to become fully knowledgeable of its operations and limitations prior to use.

## **VI. Responsibilities**

### **A. The Assistant Secretary for Management**

As the designated agency safety and health official, the Assistant Secretary for Management is responsible for:

1. Approving the appointment of Designated Officials and Designated Safety Officials (respectively) based on the recommendations of ED's Safety Officer, when necessary;
2. Ensuring that Occupant Emergency Organizations are developed and implemented in every facility in which ED has tenant spaces; and
3. Issuing the administrative orders to close space and/or release employees from work in the event of a building-related emergency. This authority may be redelegated to a management official but with no provision for further redelegation.

### **B. Designated Officials**

Each Designated Official and the Secretary's Regional Representative (SRR) in each regional space where ED has tenant spaces are responsible for:

1. Developing, implementing, and maintaining an OEP. The Office of Management's Security Services (OM/SS) will review each OEP annually. A copy of each OEP will be maintained by OM/SS' Emergency Operations Center and posted on ED's website;
2. Consulting with the highest ranking officials of other occupant federal agencies (in buildings where ED is not the sole tenant) in the development of the OEP;
3. Establishing, staffing, and training (with the assistance of the Security Services Staff) members of an Occupant Emergency Organization.
5. Provides the authorization to members of the Occupant Emergency Organization to institute the evacuation process of persons with disabilities by use of slow descent device. This decision shall be based on:
  - a. Direction from the ranking fire/rescue or law enforcement official on the scene at the time of the incident;
  - b. After full consideration has been made relating to the conditions throughout the facility and the overall environment based on the escalation of the incident; and
  - c. Using sound judgment, taking into account other pertinent information that would prohibit the use of a slow descent device.
8. Designating an Occupant Emergency Coordinator;
9. Activating the Occupant Emergency Organization in the event of an emergency;
10. Issuing the administrative orders, for their respective building/areas of responsibilities, to close space and/or release employees from work in the event of a building-related emergency, including building related emergencies in satellite offices within that region; and
11. Informing OM/SS as soon as practicable, of the nature of any emergency and the action that was taken.

A listing of Designated Officials is posted on connected at Home >> Security & Safety.

These responsibilities may be redelegated to a management position but with no provision for further redelegation. When the responsibilities of the Designated

Official are redelegated, the SRR shall reserve the authority to close the agency in the event of a building-related emergency.

**C. Designated Safety Officials**

Each Designated Safety Official, i.e., the SRR in regional space where ED is *not* the primary tenant, is responsible for:

1. Consulting with the Designated Official of the primary tenant in the facility in the development, implementation, and maintenance of the OEP;
2. Assuring that ED members of the Occupant Emergency Organization receive appropriate training;
3. Implementing the OEP in ED-occupied space in the event of an emergency;
4. Issuing the administrative orders, for their respective building/areas of responsibility, to close space and/or release employees from work in the event of a building-related emergency, including building-related emergencies in satellite offices within that region; and
5. Informing OM/SS, as soon as practicable, of the nature of any emergency and the action that was taken.

A listing of Designated Safety Officials is posted on connected at Home >> Security & Safety.

These responsibilities may be redelegated to a management position but with no provision for further redelegation. When the responsibilities of the Designated Safety Official are redelegated, the SRR shall reserve the authority to close the agency in the event of a building-related emergency.

**D. Occupant Emergency Coordinators**

Each Occupant Emergency Coordinator assists the Designated Official in his or her assigned duties and assumes the responsibilities of the Designated Official in his or her absence.

**E. Occupant Safety Coordinators**

Each occupant safety coordinator assists the Designated Safety Official in his or her assigned duties and assumes the responsibilities of the Designated Safety Official in his or her absence.

**F. Executive Officers**

Each Executive Officer, when requested by the Designated Official/Safety Official, identifies employees in their Principal Office to fill Occupant Emergency Organization positions.

**G. OM/SS**

OM/SS ensures that each ED facility complies with the requirements of an OEP and Occupant Emergency Organization. OM/SS also provides guidance, assistance, and sample plans to ED officials to facilitate the development of OEPs and Occupant Emergency Organizations. OM/SS also provides the operational oversight for the development and maintenance of the OEP and management of the Occupant Emergency Organization.

**H. ED Managers and Employees**

ED managers and employees are responsible for assisting and cooperating with Occupant Emergency Organization officials and members.

## **VII. Requirements and Procedures**

The procedures for carrying out the requirements of ED's Occupant Emergency Organizations, as well as the specific responsibilities of Occupant Emergency Organization officials and members, are contained in the OEPs that have been developed to meet the specific requirements of each ED-occupied facility. OEPs for all ED-occupied buildings are found on the "connectED" website under "Security and Safety", "Emergency Preparedness."