

Georgia Institute of Technology

General Building Evacuation Procedures

Prior to an alarm—***Be prepared:***

- Learn/plan and visit your hall, building or department's designated outside meeting location.
- Learn location of pull stations and fire extinguishers.
- Learn the sound of your building's fire alarm by participating in Fire Drills.
- Learn the location of the two nearest exits from your work area. (Often stairwells).
- Count the doors, desks, work stations, etc. between your work area and the nearest exit. During a fire, it may be necessary to escape in the dark.
- Learn the procedures in the event of alarm (below)
- Learn procedures "If unable to leave building" or "Trapped in a room" (both below).

During an alarm—***Do not panic:***

- Evacuate the building immediately by using the closest exit and go to the "outside designated meeting location." Identification of occupants should be recorded at the meeting location for comparisons with the accountability lists.
- Never take the elevator during a fire. You may be trapped if the power goes out.
- Before opening any door, feel the handle with the back of your hand for heat. Then, feel the door itself, starting from the bottom and moving to the top. If the door is hot, do not try to open it. Smoke and flames may rush into your room. If the door is cool, open it slowly, but be prepared to quickly shut it if smoke or heat rushes in.
- Leave quickly, closing unlocked doors as you go to contain fire and smoke.
- If you encounter smoke or flame during your escape, use another exit. Heat and smoke rise, so cleaner air will be near the floor. Get as low as possible to the floor and move toward the exit.
- Do not re-enter the building (even if the audible alarm stops) until you hear an "**ALL CLEAR**" announced by the appropriate personnel.

If you should discover a fire:

- Avoid injury and excessive risks.
- Alert people in the area and immediately activate the fire alarm at the closest pull station.
- Dial 911 or GTPD at 404 894-2500 and provide details of the fire location.
- If you have been trained in the use of a fire extinguisher, quickly assess the fire and determine if it can be extinguished safely using a fire extinguisher. If you can not extinguish the fire, immediately exit the building.

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If you are unable to leave:

- Upon hearing the alarm, dial 911 or GTPD at 404 894-2500 and provide your present location and where you intend to wait.
- If you cannot escape safely, remain calm and protect yourself by closing as many doors as possible between you and the fire.
- Seal all cracks where smoke can enter by using wet materials -- jackets, towels, etc.
- If possible, open a window for air, but do not break it as you may need to close the window if smoke rushes in.

If you have limited mobility:

If you have mobility impairment, including a chronic medical condition, you should do the following:

- Learn about fire safety.
- Plan ahead for fire emergencies.
- Be aware of your own capabilities and limitations.

During evacuation, let the closest person to you know that you need assistance leaving the building. Look for "areas of refuge," like stair enclosures or the other side of corridor fire doors. Some elevators are designed to stop operating when the alarm is sounding and are not safe during fires. Sometimes it may be safer to stay in your room or office and follow the advice "If Trapped in a Room."

If trapped in a room:

- If there is a telephone in the room where you are trapped, dial 911 or GTPD at 404 894-2500 and provide your exact location.
- Wait at a window if possible and signal for help by waving an object that can be seen from a distance.
- Keep room door closed and unlocked. Stuff wet clothing/towels, etc. under the door to keep out smoke and toxic vapors.
- If possible, open a window for air, but do not break it as you may need to close the window if smoke rushes in.
- Stay close to the ground if there is smoke. The air is less smoky near the floor.