

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY**

**SAFETY #2**

**July 1997**

**SUBJECT:** Evacuation and Emergency Procedures for City Buildings

**GENERAL:** This policy is issued to clarify the City's policy of evacuation of City buildings in case of:

1. Fire
2. Power Outages
3. Bomb Threats
4. Tornadoes
5. Hurricanes

The City desires to offer its employees a safe working environment, and this information has been compiled to establish guidelines for actions in case of an emergency to ensure that safety.

Some City employees are classified as "Essential Personnel" (EP) and may be required to remain at work during an emergency. Supervisors are responsible for advising all designated employees of their EP status in writing. Employees are required to acknowledge in writing their understanding that they are so classified.

The procedures for evacuation are detailed in the attached sections.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTMENT HEADS:**

1. The City Manager will designate a Department Head or responsible department official in each building to decide when that particular building should be evacuated, that employees are so notified, and ensure that 911 is called when appropriate.
2. Establish meeting place for all employees at evacuation time.
3. Account for all employees.
4. Notify employees whether or not they are considered essential and would be required to remain on the scene in case of any emergency.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES:**

1. To report any fire or bomb threat to the immediate supervisor or department official and call 911.
2. In the event of bomb threats, to make a written report of the call on the Bomb Threat Call Sheet, and to be available to the Police officials immediately and for as long as necessary.

As City employees, it is our most important duty to protect the life of citizens and employees, as well as the City's property. Your clear understanding of evacuation procedures can help protect both. Employees who fail to comply or to take seriously any emergency situation may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Portsmouth desires to offer its employees a safe working environment. This information has been completed to establish guidelines for action in case of an emergency. Failure to follow these guidelines could result in disciplinary action.

## **FIRE SAFETY:**

The best plan for fire safety starts with preventing fires; but in the event of a fire, the surest way to avoid panic and loss of life is to have a well conceived and rehearsed plan of action. A fire, regardless of its size, creates fear in the minds of all. It is your responsibility as a City employee to familiarize yourself with this fire policy.

## **PLAN FOR FIRE BEFORE FIRE OCCURS:**

1. Know the location of exits.
2. Recognize the sound of the fire alarm.
3. Know how to activate the fire alarm.
4. Know how to notify the Fire Department.
5. Participate in fire drills and know the evacuation plan for your building.

## **DISCOVERING A FIRE:**

Sound the alarm and exit:

1. Report a fire - call 911.
2. If 911 is out of service, call the operator.

**GIVE CORRECT INFORMATION:**

Whenever calling 911, it is important that you give correct information. Please identify:

1. Type of an emergency
2. Address
3. Location
4. Your telephone number

**EVACUATION PROCEDURES:**

1. CLOSE ALL DOORS BEHIND YOU, especially the door to a burning room.
2. DO NOT USE THE ELEVATORS. Proceed directly to the nearest exit.
3. KNOW BOTH EXITS. If one exit is blocked by fire, take the other way out.
4. DO NOT LOCK THE DOORS TO YOUR OFFICE. This will only hinder search and rescue of the Fire Department.
5. BE AWARE THAT ALL STAIRWELL DOORS MAY LOCK BEHIND YOU. Once you exit your floor, go quickly and calmly to the ground floor and exit immediately. Report to the department's established meeting place.
6. STAY CALM IF YOUR EXIT ROUTE IS BLOCKED BY SMOKE!
7. CRAWL LOW IN SMOKE. The air is easier to breathe near the floor.
8. IF TRAPPED IN A ROOM, close all doors between you and the smoke. Seal cracks around doors and vents.
9. SIGNAL AT THE WINDOW TO RESCUERS. If there is a phone in the room, give the Fire Department your exact location, even if they're on the scene.

**MEETING PLACE:**

1. ONCE OUT - STAY OUT. Meet in a predetermined meeting place to ensure everyone is out safely.
2. STAY AWAY FROM THE BUILDING, flying glass, falling debris, emergency equipment, explosions, etc.
3. HAVE A FLASHLIGHT handy for all types of emergencies.

## **POWER OUTAGES**

Like all other emergencies, do not panic, and stay calm. The power outage may be isolated within the building or it may be Citywide.

In any case, follow the instructions below and stay calm.

## **PLAN OF ACTION**

1. The stairwells are fully lit by emergency power.
2. **DO NOT USE THE ELEVATORS.**
3. If the decision is to evacuate, **USE THE STAIRWELL.**
4. **HAVE A FLASHLIGHT** available for such emergencies.
5. When exiting the building, use the **BUDDY SYSTEM**. Go in pairs or larger groups and stay together until you are in a safe location. Do not leave the building unless absolutely necessary.

## **TORNADO SAFETY PROCEDURE**

### **TORNADO PREPAREDNESS CAN SAVE LIVES:**

Tornadoes are tropical thunderstorms which are violent, destructive, whirling winds accompanied by a funnel-shaped cloud that progresses in a narrow path over the land. Tornadoes injure and kill hundreds of people and cause millions of dollars in damage each year.

Tornadoes have occurred most frequently during the months of April through August. However, the deadly storm can strike during any month of the year. Tornado winds turn counterclockwise at speeds that vary from 100 MPH to 300 MPH and move forward at an average speed of 35 MPH.

Be alert to the National Weather Services when they issue tornado watches and warnings. Departmental officials will notify employees if the City has determined to evacuate your building and/or to close City business for the day.

**Tornado Watch:** Means that weather conditions are right for the development of tornadoes. If a tornado WATCH is broadcast by your local radio or television station, stay tuned for further advisories and be prepared to take cover.

**Tornado Warning:** Means that a tornado has actually been sighted.

## **PLAN OF ACTION**

1. **BE ALERT** to tornado advisories in your area.
2. **STAY AWAY** from exterior walls which contain windows.
3. **DO NOT USE PHONES**, unless for actual emergencies.
4. **DO NOT GO OUTSIDE**. If outside, seek shelter in the nearest building.
5. **SEEK OUT PROTECTION** in the areas of the building offering the greatest protection. EX: Inner office spaces, hallways, and stairwells. The basement or underground location is best, if available.
6. **HAVE FLASHLIGHT** available for such emergencies.
7. **HAVE PORTABLE RADIOS** for emergency broadcasts.

Some employees are designated as Essential Personnel and may be required to remain at work during a tornado emergency. Employees are encouraged to clear with their supervisor in advance whether or not they are so classified.

## **HURRICANE SAFETY PROCEDURE**

No atmospheric disturbance combines duration, size, and violence more destructively than a hurricane. Hurricane season is generally from June 1 to November 30. A hurricane begins as a tropical depression, reaching wind-speeds of 74 MPH and is then labeled a full-force hurricane. While the strong winds and heavy rains of a hurricane can pose threat to human life and property, the most dangerous element of a hurricane is the storm surge.

### **HURRICANE AWARENESS - WATCH/WARNING**

When a hurricane watch or warning is issued, listen for official bulletins and be prepared to act quickly. Departmental officials will notify employees if the City has determined to evacuate your building and/or to close City business for the day.

### **HURRICANE AWARENESS - TORNADOES SPAWNED FROM HURRICANES**

Tornadoes are often spawned by hurricanes. When a hurricane is on its way, listen for tornado watches and warnings.

### **HURRICANE AWARENESS - AFTER THE HURRICANE**

Although the hurricane's storm has passed, stay indoors until local authorities say it is safe to leave.

## **HURRICANE AWARENESS - INLAND FLOODING**

Inland flooding caused by a hurricane is a dangerous killer. Avoid low-lying areas and waterways during and after a hurricane.

### **PLAN OF ACTION**

1. **BE ALERT** to tropical storm advisories in your area.
2. **STAY AWAY** from exterior walls which contain windows, during high winds.
3. **DO NOT USE PHONES**, unless for actual emergencies.
4. **HAVE FLASHLIGHT** ready for emergencies.
5. Close and lock all doors.
6. Close all curtains and blinds.
7. Take all personal belongings home from office.
8. Unplug all computers and other electrical equipment and cover with plastic.
9. Evacuate the building. Once out, do not return for any reason until the storm is over.
10. Know the emergency shelters in your area.

Some employees are designated as Essential Personnel and may be required to remain at work during a hurricane emergency. Employees are encouraged to clear with their supervisor in advance whether or not they are so classified.

### **BOMB THREATS**

Bombs can be constructed to look like almost anything and can be placed or delivered in any number of ways. The probability of finding a bomb that looks like a stereotypical bomb is almost nonexistent. Look for common items in uncommon places. The only common denominator that exists among bombs is that they are designed or intended to explode.

## **PLAN OF ACTION**

Should you receive a bomb threat telephone call, report this immediately to your supervisor, and call 911. Complete the Bomb Threat Call Sheet immediately. Make yourself available to Police when they arrive and for as long as they need you. Try to remember such things as whether or not the voice was familiar and what it sounded like, and if there were any background noises that could be distinguished.

Turn off any radios.

The Police will coordinate the building search with the departmental official in charge of that location. The final decision on evacuation will be made by the departmental official. The established Fire Evacuation Routes should be observed if evacuation is deemed necessary. Remember that it is not always necessary to evacuate a building in the case of a bomb threat. Do not re-enter the building until your departmental official has informed you that it is safe to re-enter.

**BOMB THREAT CALL SHEET**

Person receiving call should ask the following questions. DO NOT BE INSISTENT.

1. Exact location of the bomb?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Time set for detonation?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Who are you trying to hurt?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why do you want to bomb the \_\_\_\_\_ building?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What does it look like?

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6. How big is the bomb?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the type of bomb?

\_\_\_\_\_

REQUEST MORE DATA BY EXPRESSING A DESIRE TO SAVE LIVES.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Person receiving call)

Give this form to Police Officer in charge of investigation.



IMMEDIATELY AFTER caller hangs up, person receiving call should:

1. Notify supervisor of call and immediately fill out this form while the facts are fresh in his mind.

RECORD THE FOLLOWING:

2. Date of Call \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Call \_\_\_\_\_

3. Exact language used (exact working or as close as possible)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Adult \_\_\_\_\_  
Child \_\_\_\_\_ Race \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated Age \_\_\_\_\_

5. Speech:

Slow \_\_\_\_\_ Rapid \_\_\_\_\_ Normal \_\_\_\_\_

Excited \_\_\_\_\_ Loud \_\_\_\_\_ Normal \_\_\_\_\_

Disguised \_\_\_\_\_ Broken \_\_\_\_\_ Sincere \_\_\_\_\_

Any accent or other trait \_\_\_\_\_

6. Were there any background noises?

Factory \_\_\_\_\_ Music \_\_\_\_\_ Talking \_\_\_\_\_

Construction \_\_\_\_\_ Office \_\_\_\_\_ Traffic \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Person receiving call)

Give this form to Police Officer in charge of investigation.