How can you get involved?

The Project Safe EV-AC Team is researching safe evacuation methods and training materials. The Team is looking for information from people with disabilities, emergency responders, employers, facility managers, and citizens in the private and public sectors. If you have a:

- best practice,
- product,
- need,
- idea,
- question, or
- concern

related to providing effective evacuation for people with disabilities during emergencies, please contact Project Safe EV-AC. You may remain anonymous if you wish.

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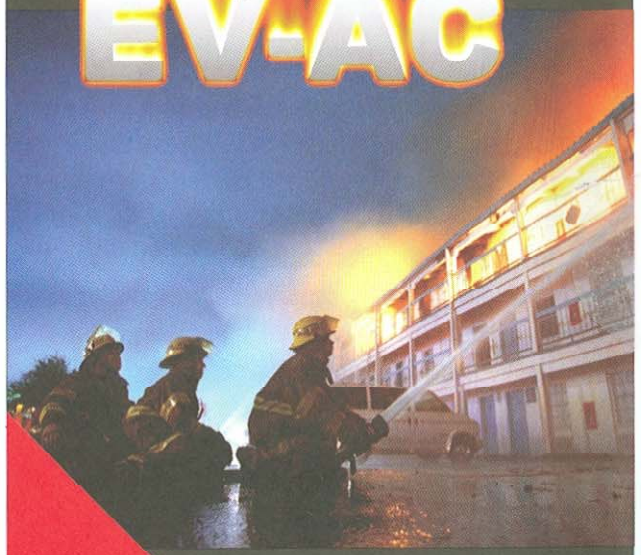
Project Safe EV-AC



Sound
Accessible
Free
Effective training and materials on
EVacuation and
ACcommodation of
People with Disabilities

What is Project Safe EV-AC?

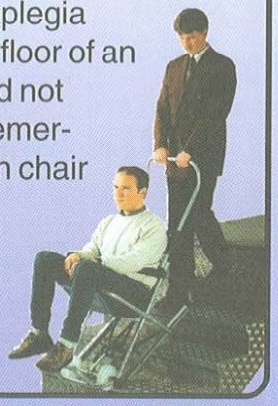
Project Safe EV-AC, a three-year development project funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), will improve evacuation from buildings, vehicles, and outdoor areas during emergencies by providing training materials on the **EV**acuation and **AC**commodation of people with disabilities. With your participation, materials will be **S**ound, **A**ccessible, **F**ree, and **E**ffective. Project Safe EV-AC will benefit people with disabilities, employers, and emergency responders.

What is happening with EV-AC?

The EV-AC Team is currently locating existing plans, policies, studies, and equipment that insure people with disabilities are included in the evacuation process. Project Safe EV-AC will integrate existing information on evacuation practices into comprehensive training materials. These will be developed with feedback from people with disabilities, emergency responders, facility managers, and other specialists. The materials will be distributed to effectively support individuals with disabilities and those responsible for emergency evacuation.

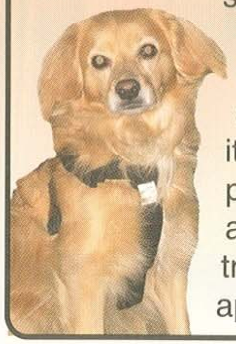
Solution

An employee with paraplegia worked on the seventh floor of an office building. He could not descend steps during emergencies. An evacuation chair was provided by the employer, and a first responder team was trained to use the chair to safely evacuate him.



Solution

An individual with mild Alzheimer's disease lived in an assisted living community. Because she easily became disoriented, she was unable to follow directions when evacuating during emergencies. The apartment complex modified its "no animal" policy to a "no pet" policy so she could have a service dog, which was trained to lead her from the apartment to a safe area.



What will be the EV-AC results?

Project Safe EV-AC will take safe evacuation beyond "traditional" evacuation and provide comprehensive training materials to assist with safely evacuating people with disabilities from various locations.

Project Safe EV-AC focuses on two issues:

First, there are no effective training materials that address the fear and anxiety caused by emergency planning.

Second, there is no cohesive set of safe evacuation "best practices" that includes people with disabilities.

Project Safe EV-AC will address these issues by (1) developing an effective training program for overcoming fear and anxiety, and (2) integrating best safe evacuation practices into easy-to-use materials. Project Safe EV-AC materials will be written for individuals, trainers, employers, and emergency responders; offered in accessible formats; and distributed via paper, e-mail, and the Internet.

Why is EV-AC important to you?

In an emergency, people must quickly evacuate buildings, vehicles, and outdoor areas. History has shown that planning for emergency evacuation dramatically increases the chance for successful evacuation.

The problem is that many individuals, business owners, and facility managers do not have emergency evacuation plans. For people with disabilities, this failure to plan ahead and provide for accommodations can mean the difference between surviving and perishing in an emergency.

Who is on the EV-AC Team?

Project Safe EV-AC is operated out of the International Center for Disability Information (ICDI) at West Virginia University (WVU). The ICDI has more than 30 years experience providing disability research, resource development, and program implementation.

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Solution

A college student who was deaf had difficulty evacuating from some of his classrooms during emergencies. Because emergency signals were not visible in all of the classrooms, the student's interpreter was trained to assist with safely evacuating.