

I. Fire

A fire can strike quickly and without warning. When the fire alarm sounds, **YOU MUST EXIT THE BUILDING!** All faculty, staff, and students must evacuate during an Emergency. Failure to evacuate and comply could result in injury or death, as well as, disciplinary actions.

In the event of a fire alarm and/or reported fire, Faculty and Staff members should use the following guidelines to ensure the organized evacuation of all Students, Faculty and Staff.

- **THE FIRST STEP IS TO USE YOUR COMMON SENSE - If the fire is small, you may use a nearby fire extinguisher to control and extinguish the fire. Attempt to use fire extinguishers ONLY if the following apply:**
 - The fire is small, contained and not spreading beyond its starting point.
 - The exit is cleared and there is no imminent peril.
 - The proper extinguisher is readily available.

- **Do not attempt to fight a fire if the following conditions exist:**
 - You don't know what's burning.
 - The fire is in a lab with chemicals or biohazards.
 - There is potential for explosion.
 - The fire is spreading rapidly.
 - You don't have the proper equipment.
 - You can't do so with your back to an exit.
 - The fire might block your means of escape.
 - You might inhale toxic smoke.
 - The fire is too large to handle.
 - Your instincts tell you not to do so.

Portable fire extinguishers are installed throughout all Palm Beach State College buildings, and you should be familiar with their locations. Fire extinguishers can only be used for small fires that can be easily contained, and the proper extinguisher must be used for the fire.

To operate the extinguisher, remember the word **PASS**.

- **P - Pull the pin**
- **A - Aim low**
- **S - Squeeze**
- **S - Sweep**

All fires must be reported to Security immediately.

After the use of a fire extinguisher, please contact Facilities, so that the extinguisher can be replaced.

If the first attempts to put out the fire do not succeed, evacuate the building immediately.

- **THE NEXT STEP IS EVACUATION**

- Alert people in the immediate area of the fire and evacuate the room.
 - Confine the fire by closing doors behind you as you leave the room, ensuring that everyone is out of the room.
 - Activate the building fire alarm system by pulling the handle on a local fire alarm box located along the exit routes. This will automatically notify the fire department and get help on the way. It will also sound the fire alarm bells to evacuate the building and shut down the air handling units to prevent the spread of smoke.
 - FOLLOW YOUR EVACUATION ROUTE and evacuate the building through the nearest exit. **DO NOT USE ELEVATORS!**
 - Advise students to evacuate building and proceed to **the Safe Assembly Areas** as indicated on the room evacuation map.
 - A faculty or staff member should position themselves at the safe assembly area to initiate accountability.
 - Faculty/staff members should not instruct students to proceed in a direction towards obvious danger unless there is no other direction in which to proceed. If no other option exists, the faculty/staff member should instruct the students to crawl on their hands and knees past or under dangerous conditions.
 - If possible faculty/staff member should check bathrooms to ensure everyone is aware of the evacuation process.
 - Faculty and staff should position themselves at intersections of the building to direct pedestrian traffic to safe assembly areas.
 - Assist any person in immediate danger to safety, if it can be accomplished without risk to you.
 - If the Hallway or stairway is filled with smoke, you may have to evacuate horizontally or use a secondary stairway.
 - If you encounter smoke on your way out, **stay low and crawl if necessary**. You are more apt to find breathable air close to the floor. Cover your nose and mouth with a wet cloth, if possible.
 - **Do not use elevators-** Should the fire involve the control panel of the elevator or the electrical system of the building, power in the building may be cut and you could be trapped between floors. Also, the elevator shaft can become a flue, lending itself to the passage and accumulation of hot gases and smoke generated by the fire and they may stall in the event of a power failure or deliver you to the floor where the fire is actually located.
- If you are trapped in a building, the following procedures should be followed:

- **Feel all doorknobs you encounter before opening any door.**
- **If the doorknob is hot, do not open the door.** Stay in that room.
 - Seal the cracks around the door with any available material.
 - Call 911 and let them know your location and that you are unable to exit.
 - Keep low to the floor and await evacuation by Emergency personnel.
- **If the doorknob is not hot,** brace yourself behind the door and open it slightly. If heat or heavy smoke is present, close the door and stay in that room.
- If smoke and heat fill the hall, close the door, stay in that room, and wait for help.
 - Call 911 and let them know your location and that you are unable to exit.
 - Leave by the nearest clear Exit stairway.
 - If you are able to move around within the building, but **can't exit**, find a safe room farthest from the fire.
- Once outside, you must go directly to the Safe Assembly Area and stay there.
 - If Emergency Responders have not arrived, call 911 immediately.
 - Advise Emergency Responders of the location, nature and size of the fire.
 - If advised that an entire area of the Campus will need to be evacuated, proceed to the identified area and/or shelter location.

PLEASE NOTE that once the Emergency Responders arrive, they are in charge of the scene and you must comply with their directions. Failure to comply with Emergency Responders can lead to criminal arrest or citations.

- Specified Palm Beach State College staff will act as Liaisons to the Emergency Responders. Palm Beach State College Emergency Liaisons will include:
 - Palm Beach State College Chief Fire Official or designee
 - Campus Security Supervisor
 - Facilities Manager
 - Manager of Safety & Risk
 - Academic Program Representative
 - Provost or academic designee
- If you are asked, you may speak to the Responders about the location, type of fire, and number of persons that were in the area. **DO NOT** attempt to talk to the Emergency Responders or ask questions that are not related to the situation. Once the Palm Beach State College liaisons are in place, all other personnel, students and visitors must stand back in the safe assembly area and not interfere with the Emergency.
- **If media approaches you,** refer them to the Palm Beach State College College Relations and Marketing Department.

- Staff, Students and Visitors must stay in the Safe Assembly Area and **under no circumstances should anyone try to go back into the building until the all clear is given by the Fire Department.**

To minimize the risk of fire, please note the following and always be mindful of fire hazards at all times and report hazards to Facilities or Palm Beach State College Chief Fire Official:

- Smoke only in designated areas and extinguish smoking materials properly.
- Candles or other sources of open flame are prohibited on Campuses.
- Fireworks are prohibited on Campuses.
- Avoid overloading circuits and outlets with office equipment and look for exposed wires. If you see any electrical hazards, report to facilities or the Palm Beach State College Chief Fire Official.
- Extension cords must be in good condition and of proper rating. Use only Underwriters Laboratory-approved extension cords. Cords should not run through doorways, partitions or covered with rugs.
- No storage is allowed under stairs or in a means of egress.
- Always store flammables in approved flammable cabinets.
- Gasoline, propane and other fuel items are prohibited in College buildings.
- Cooking is only permitted in approved areas with permanent cooking facilities
- Do not install refrigerators in closets or bathrooms since they require ventilation. Do not cover them with blankets, tablecloths or other materials.
- Means of egress must never be blocked by storage. Make sure all exits are unobstructed and clearly marked.
- Avoid excessive clutter in your workspace.
- Know and practice *at least* two ways out of your building. Take note of how you can reach these exits.
- When you hear a fire alarm, get out!