

Lessons Learned

Evacuation Procedures



What Happened?

On a winter Monday morning, EHS received notification of a **fire alarm activation** on a clinical practice floor at the Weill Greenberg Center. When EHS responders arrived at the location, they found a smoke condition spreading through the west-side portion of the floor.

The building's Fire Safety Director made announcements over the building's public address system, instructing occupants to evacuate the floor using Stair B to avoid the smoke condition at the opposite end of the floor. While investigating the condition, EHS responders found staff evacuating through both stairwells. Responders also found medical staff and patients using the building's freight elevator to evacuate.

The FDNY responded to the alarm and with the help of the building mechanics, determined that the condition was caused by a fan motor that had stopped.



Always listen to any public address announcements before evacuating.

Why Did This Happen?

- Some occupants did not listen to the instructions provided through the public address system.
- Building occupants were not familiar with their Building Specific Evacuation Procedures.
- All staff was not clear how to properly evacuate physically challenged patients.

Lessons Learned

- In buildings with public address systems, occupants must always **listen to announcements** and follow all evacuation instructions when safe to do so.
- Campus buildings may have different evacuation procedures based on the building's fire alarm system. It is important that all occupants **know the evacuation procedures** for all buildings they are working in.
- Occupants must **never use elevators to evacuate**. The movement of elevators can spread smoke throughout a building during a fire condition.
- Procedures must be in place for all clinical practices to evacuate physically impaired individuals. Staff must **move patients who need assistance to a safe area**, generally a stairwell landing or enclosed elevator landing. They must relay the patient(s)' location to the building's Fire Safety Director or responding EHS staff, so their evacuation can be coordinated with FDNY. For more information on procedures for evacuation of physically impaired patients, please consult this [EHS Fire Safety Evacuation Update](#).
- During a fire/smoke condition, affected departments should **designate a practice manager or administrator** available to coordinate with EHS responders. EHS will provide information as to the status of a location and when the department can re-occupy the space; as well as provide valuable information as to the status of the practice, staff, and patients. The department representative should stay in the building lobby and keep in touch with EHS responders in the location.
- For more Fire Safety Information, please consult the [EHS Website](#).

