

Licensees are required at least once every two years to do a planned evacuation of the retirement home. The purpose of a planned evacuation is to ensure that staff is familiar with the planned evacuation procedures and able to safely remove residents in an emergency. See section 24 of Regulation 166 in the Act.

What is the difference between a planned evacuation and a fire drill?

Fire drills for vulnerable occupancies, such as retirement homes, are required under the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1996*, which is administered by the Office of the Fire Marshall. Fire drills are specific to situations involving fire, and may only require partial or horizontal evacuation of the retirement home. Operators are required to conduct fire drills under the supervision of their local fire department.

Planned evacuations test a home's ability to safely remove all residents from the home in other emergency situations, such as a carbon monoxide leak, a bomb threat or a flood. The requirements for planned evacuations are set out in the Act.

If you have only conducted a fire drill consisting of partial or horizontal evacuation, you may not know whether you can safely evacuate all of your residents in other emergency situations. Conducting a planned evacuation, in addition to your fire drill(s), is extremely important for the safety and protection of your residents.

Considerations for Planning an Evacuation Drill

The RHRA cannot advise operators on the specifics of a planned evacuation. Operators need to consider a number of factors such as the style and size of the building, and the needs of the residents when determining how they will conduct their planned evacuation.

The planned evacuation should be conducted in a way that is representative of a real emergency situation. Operators are not required to directly involve emergency responders or call emergency services during the planned evacuation.

Residents should be involved in the planned evacuation to the fullest extent possible considering their safety and wellbeing. It is important that operators consider the cognitive and/or physical limitations of residents and their ability to be evacuated safely during the drill. You may use a stand-in for example, a staff member or volunteer in place of a resident to lessen the potential for risk. While using staff or volunteers in place of residents may be necessary, the evacuation should simulate the specific needs of the resident, and other requirements for safe evacuation. If you choose this option, please document and provide a rationale for using stand-ins.

Documenting Your Planned Evacuation

Licensees are required to keep a written record of the planned evacuation and any changes made to improve the emergency plan for the home.

An RHRA Inspector will review your planned evacuation during your next routine inspection (or potentially sooner if concerns have already been raised about your emergency plan).

You must document your planning and the actual evacuation for review by RHRA Inspectors. Inspectors have been directed to consider this a priority area.