



5 June 2002

Secretary-General's bulletin

**Evacuation procedures for the United Nations
Headquarters complex**

The Secretary-General hereby promulgates the evacuation procedures for the United Nations Headquarters complex, which are set out in the annex to the present bulletin.

The present bulletin shall enter into force on 15 June 2002.

(Signed) **Kofi A. Annan**
Secretary-General

Annex

Evacuation procedures for the United Nations Headquarters complex

I. Introduction

1. The evacuation procedures outlined below must be observed when it has been decided to evacuate the complex of buildings located east of First Avenue from 42nd Street to 48th Street. Evacuation instructions for other United Nations premises located in New York City are being developed and will be published as soon as they are ready. These procedures give primary importance to the safety of occupants before, during and after the evacuation.
2. Security staff and facility managers will receive specialized instructions explaining in detail what they have to do to facilitate the execution of the procedures by all other occupants of the complex who are being evacuated. The procedures apply to all other staff, and to affiliates, delegates, visitors and any other person present on the premises at the time of evacuation. Staff members who have visitors should explain to them what is to be done when an evacuation is announced, and guide them in the execution of these procedures.

II. Definitions

3. To assist in the execution of the evacuation procedures, it is important for all to understand the meaning of the following expressions when used in these procedures:

Evacuation: Removing staff and all other individuals covered by these procedures from their work area either to a safer place within the complex or completely off site;

Evacuees: All staff, affiliates, delegates, visitors and any other person present on the premises when an evacuation is ordered, except for Security staff and facility managers who are to supervise the execution of the evacuation procedures;

Headquarters complex: The area east of First Avenue from 42nd Street to 48th Street;

Threat: A credible warning received by the Security and Safety Service indicating that the Headquarters may come under attack;

Physically challenged persons: Persons who require the assistance of two or more colleagues to leave the site or relocate to another part of the complex.

III. Evacuation procedures

4. In brief, the steps to be followed when an evacuation is ordered are as follows: When a public address announcement is made ordering an evacuation of the Headquarters complex, all evacuees are to proceed to the nearest stairway, escalator, door or, if authorized, elevator. The announcement will contain important information regarding routes that should be avoided, whether or not elevators can be

used and regrouping instructions, and any other appropriate information required by the circumstances.

Evacuation signal

5. An attention-getting tone will sound throughout the complex when an evacuation becomes necessary. This signal will be followed immediately by a public address announcement.

Public address announcement

6. When the evacuation is announced on the public address system, all evacuees should proceed to the nearest exit, staircase or elevator immediately. (See “Use of elevators” below.) The announcement will include the evacuation order and indications as to whether elevators can be used and whether the movement will be to another area of the complex or to an off-site location. The announcement may include information about areas to avoid while carrying out the evacuation because of danger. The regrouping arrangements will be announced to direct all evacuees to appropriate locations. In the event that the message is not fully comprehensible, evacuees should not delay, but continue to leave the work area. Security officers located at strategic points on the evacuation routes throughout the complex will be making the same announcement. If the evacuees do not hear the announcement through the public address system, they will be able to get clarification from a security officer.

Use of elevators

7. **Elevators should not be used when there is a fire emergency.** In a non-fire, complex-wide evacuation, elevators may be used when authorized by the senior member of the Security and Safety Service. Generally, however, the use of stairs is preferred in all emergency situations.

8. According to these procedures, and where circumstances permit, elevators will continue to operate to facilitate evacuation of those who may not wish or may not be able to walk down multiple flights of stairs. The public address announcement will include information regarding the use of elevators.

9. Evacuees choosing to use the elevators should be aware that passenger cars in the Secretariat building will respond to the highest floor that they are summoned to, and that when the cars become fully occupied they will return directly to the lobby. The elevators will repeat this pattern, floor by floor, until people on a higher floor are no longer signalling for the elevator. Additionally, if staff on intermediate floors press the “up” button, enter the elevator when it arrives and ride to the highest floor, persons waiting at the upper floors may find the arriving passenger car already at or near capacity. As a result, individuals waiting for elevators may be delayed for a longer period than it would take to walk down the stairs.

Regrouping

10. The public address announcement and security officers on the evacuation routes will inform evacuees of where they should go after leaving their work areas. Evacuees may be

- (a) relocated to a safe area within the complex;
- (b) reassembled at a public site; or
- (c) requested to disperse and leave the vicinity.

11. The exact scenario will depend on the nature of the threat. For instance, if travel through the streets is dangerous because of a biological hazard, staff may be relocated to a safe place within the complex where medical assistance is available.

12. If relocation within the complex is required, the Medical Services Division will deploy resources to the area and will furnish appropriate assistance.

13. If the threat appears temporary and it is safe to do so, staff will be asked to regroup at either of two major assembly points. **Those leaving from the northern portion of the complex will reassemble at Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, on 47th Street between First Avenue and Second Avenue; those leaving the southern portion of the complex will reassemble on First Avenue, from 39th Street southward to 37th Street, and eastward on 38th Street to the FDR Drive.**

14. If the nature of the threat makes it unsafe to remain in the area, or if the emergency occurs during a period of severe weather that would make reassembly at a public site impractical, staff will be directed to leave the area and go home or to some other place of safety. They should remain informed by phoning the United Nations hotline, (212) 963-9800, or by accessing the United Nations emergency staff information web site at <http://staffinfo.un.int>.

IV. Physically challenged persons

Transport

15. As explained above, under “Use of elevators”, the nature of the emergency may preclude the use of elevators in the evacuation. It is also possible that elevators operating in the Secretariat building may be delayed in reaching the intermediate floors. As a result, a specific procedure to evacuate physically challenged evacuees has been devised to transport them down the stairs if elevators are not available. On each floor or work area where a physically challenged person is assigned, an evacuation chair will be available for their use. In addition, a number of evacuation chairs are pre-positioned throughout the complex for the emergency transport of physically challenged persons.

Daily census

16. To properly assist physically challenged evacuees, it is important that the Security and Safety Service be aware of the number of physically challenged persons in the complex and their approximate location throughout the day.

17. Before 10 a.m. each day, the floor fire warden will be in contact with the Fire Command Centre to provide the number and location of any physically challenged persons on the floor. The information will be used by the Security and Safety Service as a guide for the location of physically challenged persons during an evacuation.

18. Each day the Fire Command Centre will check with those fire wardens who have not reported in to determine the status of the physically challenged persons on their floors.

Volunteer colleagues

19. The Organization is responsible for the safe evacuation of all occupants in the Headquarters complex. In case of an emergency, trained volunteers will assist in evacuating staff with special needs. Two to four volunteer colleagues will assist each physically challenged person. The task of the volunteer colleagues is to bring the physically challenged person to a safe evacuation point or to a location where security services personnel can effectively continue the evacuation of the individual. The daily census will be utilized by security services personnel to assist them in locating physically challenged persons and their volunteer colleagues on the evacuation route. Additionally, if practical, and if it can be accomplished without undue delay to the evacuation process, a volunteer colleague or fire warden should notify the Fire Command Centre that the evacuation of a physically challenged person is in progress. The person making the notification should supply the name and work area of the physically challenged person.

Procedures in the Secretariat building

20. When the evacuation announcement is made, the volunteer assistants will help their colleague to either the elevators or the stairs, depending on the circumstances. If an elevator is used to transport the physically challenged person, the assistants should remain with the person and follow the evacuation procedures. The volunteer colleagues must remain at all times with the physically challenged person so that in the event the elevator becomes disabled or some other obstacle arises, they can be of assistance.

Procedures in other areas of the complex

21. In many ways, the evacuation process in areas other than the Secretariat building is simpler because it takes place at or near ground level. All evacuees, including the physically challenged and their volunteer colleagues, should use the nearest stairway and exit to leave their work area. For those in the first, second and third basement levels, the garage exits serve as an additional means to leave the complex.

Fire wardens and searchers

22. Staff members designated as fire wardens, deputy fire wardens and searchers are identified on the sign placed next to the fire alarm boxes throughout the Headquarters complex. When an evacuation announcement is made, searchers will inspect all locations within their area of responsibility to ensure that everyone has heard the notification and is evacuating or has already left the work area, and that physically challenged evacuees are being assisted by their volunteer colleagues. If a physically challenged person requires additional help, the searcher and fire warden should arrange for this assistance. When the searchers have completed their inspection and arranged for assistance to physically challenged persons, they should report the results to the fire warden and leave the work area.

23. After the fire warden has received reports from the searchers in his team and has ensured that the physically challenged persons within his area are being assisted, he will immediately depart from the floor.

V. Training

24. Fire alarm and related relocation procedures have been in existence for many years and will continue to be followed in the event of a fire. The evacuation procedures for the entire United Nations Headquarters complex are a response to a different set of circumstances that requires other actions and different training.

25. In order to minimize confusion, especially in an emergency, a new and frequent training schedule for both fire emergency and evacuation procedures will be instituted, including the fire warden response to the different emergencies, elevator usage and the handling of evacuation chairs. Staff members who have volunteered to assist their physically handicapped colleagues will be included in this new training programme.

VI. Conclusion

26. The best way to be prepared for future circumstances is to acknowledge the danger, to determine the best way to minimize the threat and to fully understand the defensive measures that are in place for everyone's protection. If you have further questions, contact the fire warden in your area, whose name and phone number can be found posted in the vicinity of the fire alarm box.
