



# FS/NAAF GARRISON SAFETY OFFICE

## *Outsmart the Darkness: Your Weekly Safety Spotlight*



# Fire Evacuation

When a fire breaks out, seconds matter. Knowing how to react—where to go, how to get there, and what to avoid—can save lives. Fire Drills and evacuation planning aren't just compliance requirements; they are essential safety tools for every workplace on the garrison, from offices and gyms to ranges, shops and recreational facilities.

### Why Fire Drills Matter

#### Muscle Memory

- Practice Builds Confidence—Drills turn procedures into muscle memory, reducing panic during a real emergency
- Identify Weak Points—Drills highlight blocked exits, malfunctioning alarms, or unclear routes before they become life-threatening
- Ensure Accountability—Headcounts and assembly points help supervisors ensure everyone is safe

#### Evacuation Procedures—Know Before You Go

- Know two ways out, Always be familiar with at least two exits from your work area. Don't assume your primary route will be safe
- Never use elevators—use stairs during evacuations as elevators may fail or expose employees to smoke and fire
- Go Low—If smoke is present, crouch or crawl to avoid inhalation; breathable air is closer to the floor
- Close doors behind you as this can slow fire and smoke spread, giving others more time to escape

### Once You Exit, Now What?

#### Assembly Points

- Consider planning separate Assembly Points for different sections in larger organizations to facilitate accountability
- Report to your Rally Point immediately upon exiting the building
- Headcounts Save Lives—Supervisors and fire wardens conduct accountability. Report unaccounted coworkers immediately

#### Employee Responsibilities

- Know your routes and routes from common areas in the workplace (Restroom, Breakroom, Conference Room, etc)
- Obey designated fire wardens and supervisors during drills and real events
- Help Others Safely—Assist coworkers with mobility challenges if you can do so without putting yourself at risk
- Report hazards—Notify safety staff if you see blocked exits, jammed doors, or obstructed fire equipment

### Key Takeaway

Fire drills and evacuation procedures aren't just "check the box" exercises. They are life-saving practices that prepare us to respond calmly and effectively. Be ready, know your routes, and take every drill seriously—the time you spend practicing today could make the difference tomorrow.

Identify and report anything that could potentially hinder an emergency evacuation. This includes locked doors, obstructed exit routes, non-functioning exit signs or emergency lighting, missing or un-charged fire extinguishers and door panic hardware that is operating as it should.