



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA

UOW SAFE@WORK

# BUILDING WARDEN GUIDELINES

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# 1 Introduction

The University's ability to effectively manage emergencies depends largely on the preparedness and response as outlined in the University's Emergency Management Procedures.

Building Wardens are an essential role in the Emergency Control Organisation within the University's emergency plan specifically in relation to our initial response to emergencies, and emergency evacuation of potentially large numbers of people.

## 2 Scope

This guideline applies to the selection, appointment and expectation of Building Wardens within the University. This applies to all University location including regional campuses.

## 3 Definitions

Assembly area	The designated place or places where people assemble during the course of an evacuation.
Emergency	An event that arises internally, or from external sources, which may adversely affect the occupants or visitors in a facility, and which requires an immediate response.
Emergency Control Organisation (ECO)	A person or persons appointed by the emergency planning committee to direct and control the implementation of the facility's emergency response procedures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chief Building Warden</li> <li>▪ Deputy Chief Building Warden (if applicable)</li> <li>▪ Building wardens</li> <li>▪ other persons as required i.e. first aid, security etc.</li> </ul>
Emergency Planning Group (EPG)	Persons responsible for the documentation and maintenance of an emergency plan.
Evacuation	The orderly movement of people from a place of danger.
Evacuation exercise	An emergency response exercise in which the exercise simulates an emergency that requires an evacuation.
Occupant	A person attending a facility on a permanent or temporary basis, such as an employee, contractor, student or resident, but not a visitor.
Occupant/visitor with a disability	A person who requires– <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) more time or different forms of communication, compared with other occupants, to respond to an emergency; or</li> <li>b) assistance to respond to an emergency or evacuate from a facility.</li> </ul>

## 4 Authority

During an emergency, instructions communicated from personnel in the emergency control organisation are personnel shall take precedence over the normal management structure. Further information regarding the ECO is contained in the Emergency Management Procedures.

Specifically, wardens have the following authority:

- to demand that egress routes are kept clear
- to instruct all persons within a building to evacuate in an emergency
- to evacuate an emergency site to remove persons from immediate danger, or where persons may be exposed to a hazardous situation.

## 5 Responsibilities

### 5.1 Chief Building Warden

- Ensure sufficient building wardens for area of responsibility and replace ECO members when a position becomes vacant
- Maintain a current register of ECO members for the building
- Activate relevant emergency procedures depending on the type of emergency
- Coordinate initial response to the emergency prior to UOW Emergency Coordinator or Emergency Services arriving
- Allocate duties to building wardens
- Coordinate administrative functions as required including briefing and debriefing for emergencies and exercises, as well as documentation in your local area such as signage
- Organise emergency evacuation drill at least once a year
- Conduct regular inspections in the workplace for prevention of incidents and emergency preparedness
- Attend training and exercises.

### 5.2 Deputy Chief Building Warden

- Undertake the Chief Building Warden responsibilities in their absence.
- Conduct activities outlined in building warden responsibilities below.

### 5.3 Building Wardens

- To act in the capacity of Chief Building Warden if the Deputy and Chief Building Wardens are absent
- Respond as instructed by the Chief Building Warden
- Assess the situation and implement emergency procedures within an assigned area of control
- Report to the Chief Building Warden, confirming that the activities of wardens have been completed and status of the evacuation, noting remaining occupants such as mobility impaired or those refusing to leave.
- Ensure occupants are aware of the emergency response procedures
- Carry out safety practices (e.g. clear egress paths, access to first-attack equipment and disposal of rubbish)
- Ensure personal ECO identification is available

- Attend training and emergency exercises, as required by the EPC to ensure they are qualified and competent to perform their allocated roles and responsibilities.

## 6 Building Wardens

### 6.1 Selection

University personnel, who are appointed by the Faculty/Department, should be:-

- physically capable
- have good decision making skills and capable of remaining calm under pressure
- be generally in high attendance at the University, i.e.: on campus relatively frequently
- be able to communicate effectively.

There is no allowance associated with the Building Warden role.

### 6.2 Number and Location

There must be Building Wardens identified for each floor of each University building

It is recommended that at least two (2) Building Wardens be identified for each floor, in the event that one of the wardens is not within the building at the time of an emergency

The number and location of Building Wardens required for each University building will be dependent on the level of risk. The level of risk can be determined by assessing the number of potential occupants of the building, the 'types' of occupants (e.g. students, staff, members of public), occupant literacy levels, the logistics of the building (i.e. the larger the area the building covers the more Building Wardens it will need ensure adequate coverage), and the nature of tasks carried out within the building (e.g. more hazardous areas may require more Building Wardens)

It is recommended that the Workplace Advisory Committee in each area assist with the risk assessment for emergency situations and input regarding Building Warden number and location. If further assistance is required contact the WHS Unit.

### 6.3 Communication of Information

It is the Faculties/Departments responsibility to ensure that Building Wardens are reviewed on a regular basis and to identify replacement Building Wardens as required (i.e.: if a staff member is on extended leave or leaves the University).

Any change in Building Warden information, should be communicated to the WHS Unit as soon as possible, so that University records are maintained and appropriate training can be organised for the new Building Wardens.

### 6.4 Training

Those persons nominated as a building wardens should attended the University's building warden training prior to commencement of the role. The training will cover:

- duties as described in the emergency response procedures
- procedures for the specific emergencies in the Emergency Response Procedures
- responding to alarms and reports of emergencies
- reporting emergencies and initiating the installed emergency warning equipment
- communication during emergencies
- pre-emergency activities

- occupants and visitors with disabilities
- human behaviour during emergencies
- the use of installed emergency response equipment
- the performance of the building and its installations during a fire or other emergency.

## 6.5 Fire Prevention

Wardens should undertake an active role in monitoring the workplace for situations that may lead to a fire or inhibit the safe egress of occupants from a building. This may include conducting regular inspections of the workplace to identify:

- that paths of egress are clear;
- there are no combustible materials stored at or near egress paths;
- activities occurring with the potential for a fire are conducted in appropriately designed areas.

Wardens should be familiar with:

- the fire alarm system and emergency warning system;
- the area they represent, including;
  - means of egress;
  - any alternative egress routes;
  - potentially hazardous materials or operations undertaken in their zone;
  - the location and operation of fire doors, smoke doors and fire fighting equipment;
  - the number and location of mobility-impaired persons in their area.

## 6.6 Identification

Roles are identified by a vest coloured as follows:

ECO Position	Colour
Chief Warden	White (with position title)
Warden	Orange

## 6.7 Evacuating Mobility Impaired Persons

The Chief Building Warden, local Building Warden and designated assistants should be aware of those in the building that are mobility impaired.

Mobility impaired persons should have a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan](#) (also referred to as PEEPs.) These are customised plans that provide a framework for the planning and provision of emergency evacuation of people with a disability.

The PEEP should be followed when evacuating a mobility-impaired person.

Where a PEEP does not exist, procedures to be followed for evacuating mobility-impaired persons in an emergency include:

- assembly of mobility impaired persons during an evacuation in a safe holding area such as fire isolated stair well landing, with constant attendance by a least one building warden or delegated person
- once evacuation of other occupants has been completed, evacuation of mobility impaired persons should commence, in descending order of mobility, i.e. most mobile to least mobile

- mobility impaired persons who cannot use the stairs to evacuate, should be evacuated under the control of Emergency Services.

## 6.8 Unwilling People

Building Wardens are to follow the steps below should they encounter people unwilling to evacuate a building in a real emergency or training exercise:

- inform the person of the hazard and the need to evacuate;
- if they refuse, repeat the request;
- if they continue to refuse to leave:
  - note the location and number of people
  - continue to sweep area.
  - inform the Chief Building Warden

## 6.9 Debrief

Following an evacuation, all building wardens should meet to discuss how the evacuation proceeded and to highlight any issues such as:

- Were the alarms audible?
- Was the system working as designed?
- Were there any unwilling people?
- Were there any mobility-impaired persons? If so, were there any difficulties in evacuating them?

Possible improvements should be discussed to make the evacuation process as safe and efficient as possible. An [evacuation debrief form](#) should be completed and forward to WHS Unit listing any actions requiring improvement, with any issues being entered into the hazard/incident reporting system, [SafetyNet](#).

## 7 Related Documents

- [Emergency Management Procedures](#)
- [Standard Fire Orders](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation Procedures](#)
- [Fire Extinguishers](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation Debrief](#)
- [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan](#)

## 8 Reference Documents

- AS3745 Planning for emergencies in facilities.

## 9 Version Control Table

<b>Version Control</b>	<b>Date Released</b>	<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Amendment</b>
1	April 2001	Manager WHS	New document created
2	April 2003	Manager WHS	Document updated to reflect current requirements
3	August 2005	Manager WHS	Document updated to reflect current requirements
4	August 2007	Manager WHS	Document updated to reflect current requirements
5	August 2008	Manager WHS	Formatted inline with template, additional information contained in Satellite Campus Building Warden Guidelines added.
6	August 2010	Manager WHS	Document updated to incorporate the Personnel name change to Human Resources Division.
7	April 2011	Manager WHS	Inclusion of satellite building warden guidelines in this document.
8	March 2012	Manager WHS	Rebrand
9	March 2013	Manager WHS	Minor changes only.
10	May 2016	Manager WHS	Scheduled review, minor changes to functions.
11	July 2016	Manager WHS	Rebrand
12	May 2022	Manager WHS	Scheduled review, no changes.
13	Jan 2023	Manager WHS	Minor update to wording in "Responsibilities"

## 10 Appendix 1: Chief Building Warden Emergency Functions

1. Don the high visibility vest.
2. Determine the location and the type of emergency.
3. Ensure appropriate emergency services and Wollongong Campus Security is notified.
  - Satellite and education centres are also to ensure local security contact point has been notified.
4. Assess the situation and if necessary, initiate an evacuation and/or control access to the effected areas. Activate relevant emergency procedures.
5. Where appropriate, operate the building's emergency warning intercommunications system.
6. Delegate tasks to building wardens and collation of information regarding areas checked, amount of people still occupying building, location of mobility impaired persons etc.
7. Monitor the progress of the evacuation
8. Liaise with Security and Emergency Service personnel on arrival at the scene, providing as much information as possible about the type and location of the emergency, and the progress of the evacuation or other initial response.
9. Remain available to assist Security and Emergency Services personnel.
10. Assist Security and Emergency Services personnel to announce when the scene of the emergency is clear for re-entry.
11. Submit Emergency Evacuation Debrief Form to the WHS Unit after any emergency evacuation.

# 11 Appendix 2: Building Warden Emergency Functions

1. Don the high visibility vest.
2. Determine the location and the type of emergency.
3. Assess the situation and if necessary, initiate an evacuation and/or control access to the effected areas. Activate relevant emergency procedures.
4. In the event of a fire alarm activation, commence sweeping of area. Enter each accessible room including toilets and direct occupants to leave the building. Do not open doors which have hot handles or smoke coming from under door. For non-fire emergencies, determine the location and the type of emergency.
5. Check that any fire doors and smoke doors are properly closed
6. Liaise with the Chief Building Warden and/or the Security Officers regarding an emergency.
7. Ensure that any mobility impaired persons who may be within a safe place within the building are promptly notified to the Chief Building Warden or in their absence, University Security or Emergency Services.
8. Undertake duties as directed by the Chief Building Warden.