Stair Chair Usage

The following slides were prepared by Ben Kahn, Disability Disaster Access & Resource Coordinator for the Disability Community Resource Center in Los Angeles California, with feedback and approval from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

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Areas of Refuge and Rescue Assistance

Individuals with chronic conditions and disabilities may:

- Prefer to stay in a designated "Area of Refuge" instead of evacuating immediately
- Require an evacuation device, support staff, or a combination
- Have difficulty communicating their needs

When providing assistance:

- ALWAYS ASK the individual how you can assist before acting
- When absolutely necessary, assist an individual with a disability to evacuate down a stairwell
- Reunite the individual with their mobility device

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Evacuation Stair Chair Devices

- Different types and features:
  - Most devices only travel down stairs
  - Some devices have a motorized assist feature
  - Some can be used temporarily as a wheelchair on flat surfaces
- Untrained personnel should not use evacuation chair devices unless there is no other option
- During emergency planning, ask individuals with disabilities what kind of evacuation device would work for them

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Design Types

Carry:
- Sling or steel framed chair with handles.
- 2-4 operators required




Track:
- Folding seat on wheeled tracks that glide along stairs.
- 1-2 operators required




Sled:
- Evacuee lays down and is secured horizontally
- 1-2 operators required




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Preparation to Use Track-Type Device



- Review the instructions for the device.
- Prepare the chair for use.
- Keep communication open
- Fasten the seatbelt. Never let go of the handles. Release brakes.
- Tilt the device. Move forward.
- Keep the chair near the inside edge of the staircase to ensure room for other traffic flow.

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Using Track-Type Devices (Example)



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Assessing Needs After an Evacuation

- Reconfigure the chair to use the caster system on the base to move across flat surfaces.
- Assist to reunite an evacuated individual with their original mobility device.
- Remain with the individual until an emergency responder has arrived; or
- Remain with the individual until the "all clear" signal has been given.

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Evaluation

To improve evacuation plans and performance:

- After each drill or actual emergency, debrief to identify successes, gaps, and lessons learned.
- Create a written record of the drill performance
- Get feedback from individuals with lived disability experience

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