

Safeguard Your Facility: Take the Next Step in Evacuation Response

A New Direction In Building Safety

The repercussions of September 11th forced facility managers to re-evaluate emergency management plans, along with ancillary tools that help facilitate evacuation. Improved communication systems, additional alarms and transportation devices for safer stairwell negotiation are the new protocol for building operators. New York City presented the worst-case situation for large-scale evacuation. For most building emergencies, the scenario will most likely be a result of natural disasters, elevator malfunctions or power outages – like the 2003 blackout.

The job of the facility manager is to ensure safe and easy evacuation strategies for their employees and tenants – not just for the physically handicapped, but also for others with conditions that limit their ability to navigate several flights of stairs, especially in an expedient manner. The manager must plan for employees or tenants that require assistance down just two or three flights of stairs – for someone that has asthma, a broken leg, a pre-existing ailment, is pregnant, is elderly or incurred an injury from an accident.

Prior to the redefined evacuation processes and needs, individuals with disabilities would move to a designated “area of refuge” and wait for emergency/rescue personnel to carry them down the stairs. However, practice drills showed that the “area of refuge” was usually at the top of a stairwell, so the staging area would then clog exit pathways for others. These procedural run-throughs also revealed that rescuers had limited time to assist all individuals that required help down the stairs. A faster and more efficient means of evacuation became necessary.

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While a variety of evacuation products and methods are available, the evacuation chair is the most common and functional piece of assistive equipment. Facility managers have several chair options that aid with evacuation efforts, but all of which vary in operation. Looking at the new emergency response environment and its focus, Stryker sought to develop a more ergonomically-proficient and easy-to-use evacuation chair.

Because the Evacuation-Chair supports a non-clinical market, Stryker engineers relied on comprehensive testing and user feedback to validate the product’s functionality and reliability. If need be, an untrained operator can easily unfold the chair, secure the person requiring assistance, maneuver to the stairs and transport the person down the stairs. Although the Stryker Evacuation-Chair operates intuitively, familiarizing people in your facility on how to use the equipment is encouraged. Providing a short product in-service, watching the operational video and even incorporating the chair into facility drills will help train potential users.

To maintain your facility aesthetics, the Evacuation-Chair conveniently stores on the wall. It can be placed near the stairwell, a known disabled person or centrally located so as to not be obtrusive. Pictorial instructions for use are located on the chair back. After unfolding the chair, it pushes and moves like a wheelchair. When descending stairs, the Evacuation-Chair uses the weight of the patient to assist the operator. The Stair-TREAD™ is a friction-based feature that supports



**Essential for evacuation of
disabled or injured persons
from multi-level facilities in
emergency situations**

the unit when going down stairs and will even help stop the Evacuation-Chair mid-staircase...all by leveraging the patient’s weight. Once on flat ground, the Evacuation-Chair will once again function and roll like a wheelchair.

While the Stryker Evacuation-Chair can be a vital tool for evacuation emergencies, it also can be utilized even if the elevator is simply out of commission. You will find it’s one of those tools that you never knew how much you needed it or would use it until you had it!

To learn more about the Evacuation-Chair and Stryker, visit the company websites at www.ruggedcots.com or www.strykercorp.com, or contact your sales representative at (800) RUGGED6. The EMS division is part of Stryker Corporation, a worldwide medical device manufacturer and Fortune 500 company headquartered in Michigan. Stryker joined the pre-hospital transportation market in 1994 with the development and introduction of the RUGGED® ambulance cot line, and has become a recognized innovator in the industry.

EVACUATION-CHAIR

