

DHS-PB-2024-003

<p>SUBJECT:</p> <p>Assessing Clients' Needs During Elevator Outages</p>	<p>APPLICABLE TO:</p> <p>All DHS Directly Operated or provider operated Facilities / Programs Serving Single Adults, Adult Families, and Families with Children</p>	<p>ISSUED</p> <p>February 9, 2024</p>
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<p>ADMINISTERED BY:</p> <p>Division of Adult Services Division of Family Services Street Homeless Solutions</p>	<p>APPROVED BY:</p> <p>Joslyn Carter, Administrator Department of Social Services/ Department of Homeless Services</p>
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■ PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy bulletin is to provide guidance to the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and provider-run facilities with elevators on the communication protocol and assessing the need for client transfers, including reasonable accommodations, when there is an elevator outage at a facility.

■ REQUIRED ACTION

When a facility with an elevator, whether DHS or provider-run, experiences an elevator outage, staff may have questions about how to handle communication to clients as well as how to ensure that clients' varying access needs are appropriately considered so that they can continue to be met while the elevator is out.

In the event of an elevator outage, staff must:

- Determine how long the elevator outage will be.
- Ensure that all appropriate and necessary staff are aware of the outage.
- Depending on the length of the elevator outage, follow the guidance below to alert clients with and without disabilities to the outage.
- If there is more than one elevator on site, determine if there are any clients with disabilities that will still be impacted by the outage.

- Because clients with disabilities will have different needs affected by the elevator outage, engage such clients in an interactive dialogue, using the guidance below, to determine next steps, possibly including reasonable accommodation requests, that will meet their needs in the most efficient way possible.

Maintenance and Repair Obligations

In accordance with DHS’ Maintenance Policy ([DHS-PB-2021-001](#)), the DHS Facility Operator is responsible for the daily preventative, corrective, and emergency maintenance of the facility, including interior and exterior building components (e.g., elevators). In leased facility spaces, the responsibility may belong to the building landlord depending on the terms of the lease. For additional information on such obligations, please refer to [DHS-PB-2021-001](#).

Elevator Outage Timetable

<p>Offline <1 day</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate outage to clients and assist clients, as necessary • Account for clients that have disability-related needs Meet with each client to ascertain the type of assistance needed (this may include accessing meals, attending appointments, etc.), check the RA Screen in CARES to see what active/approved RAs a client has, and ensure that those needs continue to be met during the outage • Transfers will likely not be necessary
<p>Offline 1-3 days</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate outage to clients • Account for clients that have disability-related needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meet with each client to ascertain the type of assistance needed and whether a temporary transfer will be necessary (including accessing meals, attending appointments), check the RA Screen in CARES to see what active/approved RAs a client has, whether clients need additional RAs, and ensure that those needs continue to be met during the outage

Offline >3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate outage to clients • Clients with disabilities impacted by the outage must be temporarily transferred to a comparable location that meets their disability-related needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Check the RA Screen in CARES to see what active/approved RAs a client has, whether clients need additional RAs, and ensure that those needs continue to be met during the outage
Offline >1 week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate outage to clients • Clients with disabilities impacted by the outage must be temporarily transferred to a comparable location that meets their disability-related needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Check the RA Screen in CARES to see what active/approved RAs a client has, whether clients need additional RAs, and ensure that those needs continue to be met during the outage
<p><u>Please Note</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the estimated time for repair changes, refer to this timetable for actions applicable to the updated timeframe. 	

Client Communication Protocol

When an elevator outage occurs at a facility, staff must first determine the extent of the outage and ascertain length of time the elevator will be offline. If there is another working elevator(s) at the site, staff must still follow the below protocol to ensure that they inform clients of the outage and direct them to the other working elevator(s). However, staff must also engage clients with disabilities to see if they are still impacted by the outage and how to best assist them.

Once the length of the outage has been determined, staff must use the following guidance in communicating to clients:

- *Communication:*
 - All communication must be provided in formats to meet the diverse language and communication needs of clients and indicate the estimated length of outage.
 - The Elevator Outage (**DHS-138**) sign must be posted and staff must engage clients to ensure that questions and concerns are addressed. This sign includes information for clients about alternate elevator(s) for use, transfers if necessary, requesting reasonable accommodations, and the estimated length of the outage.

- *Individualized Client Needs:* Staff must engage with all clients to alert them to the outage but prioritize engaging clients with disability-related needs, taking into consideration the following:
 - Whether clients have any medications being stored in refrigerators on a different floor than their unit/dorm;
 - Whether clients are located on a different floor than common areas, such as the cafeteria;
 - Whether clients have regular and/or upcoming medical/clinical or other appointments;
 - Whether clients may need to be oriented to a different exit path for the duration of the outage; and
 - Whether clients need any RAs or any additional RAs and review the RA request process with them.
- *Addressing Client Needs:* Staff must work with clients individually to ascertain whether their needs can be met during the outage or whether a temporary transfer is in the best interest of the client:
 - Consider whether meals can be brought to the client's unit/dorm area for the duration of the outage;
 - Consider whether medication stored in refrigerators can be brought to the client's unit/dorm area for the duration of the outage, or whether the client needs a different type of assistance/accommodation;
 - Consider whether there is an alternate unit/dorm on a first floor/ground level where the client can be placed;
 - Consider whether the client needs assistance with rescheduling any upcoming medical/clinical and/or other appointments, if the outage is less than 3 days;
 - Consider whether the client can navigate stairs and may need to be oriented to a different exit path and/or other paths within the site; and
 - Consider whether the client needs any RAs or any additional RAs and review the RA request process with them.
- *Transferring Clients:* Staff must work with clients that require a temporary transfer to ensure that clients understand what is taking place:
 - Communicate with clients in their preferred language and/or mode of communication;
 - If the transfer is temporary, ensure that this is communicated to clients along with an estimate of time that the client will remain at the temporary placement;
 - If an elevator outage repair takes longer than initially expected, relay this information to shelter staff at clients' temporary site and ensure that they communicate the information to clients in accordance with this procedure;
 - Relay necessary information about temporary placements to clients (e.g., elevators, locations, etc.) and provide a completed transfer form to clients;

- Work with clients to ensure that they are taking necessary belongings (e.g., medication, disability-related equipment, etc.) with them to temporary placements;
- To complete the transfer, ensure that the staff assisting clients with disabilities are those designated and trained to assist clients with disabilities exit the facility if the elevators are nonoperational (see Emergency Evacuation Plans: Best Practices Guide for Accommodating People with Disabilities ([DHS-PB-2022-003](#)); and
- If a client declines a temporary placement, document the declination in CARES.

Additional Assistance and Resources

For additional information, please consult the following policies:

- Maintenance Policy ([DHS-PB-2021-001](#))
- DHS Compliance Procedure ([DHS-PB-2021-004](#))
- DHS Security Management, Roles, and Responsibilities ([DHS-PB-2021-006](#))
- Facility Transfer, Reassignment and Referral Procedure ([DHS-PB-2023-001](#))
- DHS Interim Reasonable Accommodation Request Process ([DHS-PB-2022-002](#))
- Emergency Evacuation Plans: Best Practices Guide for Accommodating People with Disabilities ([DHS-PB-2022-003](#))
- Incident Reporting Procedure for DHS Funded Programs ([DHS-PB-2022-001](#))
- Office of Disability Affairs: disabilityaffairs@dss.nyc.gov
- Disability Access and Functional Needs Unit: DAFNRArequests@dhs.nyc.gov

Effective Immediately

RELATED ITEMS:

[DHS-PB-2021-001](#)

[DHS-PB-2021-004](#)

[DHS-PB-2021-006](#)

[DHS-PB-2022-002](#)

[DHS-PB-2022-003](#)

[DHS-PB-2023-001](#)

ATTACHMENT:

DHS-138 (E)

Elevator Outage

ELEVATOR OUTAGE

Date: _____

Site: _____

- This site is experiencing an elevator outage. The elevator is out of order.
- There may be another elevator at this site that you can use.
- If you need an elevator and there is not another one at this site that you can use, please ask your case manager or other shelter staff for help.
- The amount of time the elevator will be out of order is listed below. This can change. Shelter staff will let you know if there are any changes to how long the elevator will be out of order.
- Shelter staff will also communicate with you about any disability or medically related needs you might have.
- If you have any questions or need any help, please ask your case manager or other shelter staff. They can help you if you need a transfer, a reasonable accommodation, or another kind of help.
- You can request a reasonable accommodation at any time.

Estimated length of outage: _____

Location of other elevator to use: _____

For questions, you can call: _____