

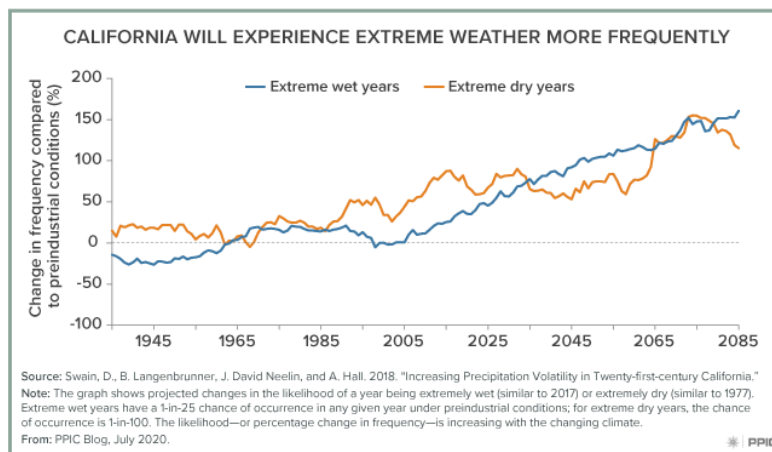
Evacuation Maps: Ensuring Safety and Preparedness in the Workplace

In 2017, during the catastrophic Northern California wildfires, many residents were forced to evacuate quickly. In some areas, public buildings, including shopping malls and community centers, acted as temporary shelters. Unfortunately, a lack of clearly displayed evacuation plans led to confusion and delayed evacuations. Those who were familiar with evacuation routes, however, were able to exit more quickly.



California is home to diverse public spaces, each with its own set of risks and challenges. From earthquakes to wildfires, natural disasters can strike at any time. As such, evacuation maps are not just a regulatory requirement, they are a lifeline for those who occupy public buildings. By ensuring that evacuation routes are clearly displayed and accessible. Public buildings across California can better protect lives and reduce the risk of injury in an emergency. Every public building should prioritize having evacuation maps prominently displayed to ensure swift and efficient evacuations.

When it comes to safety, there should be no compromise. Evacuation maps save lives, reduce panic, and ensure that California's public buildings remain safe and resilient in the face of disasters. So, let's make sure that these maps are not just a suggestion but a requirement in every public building across the state.



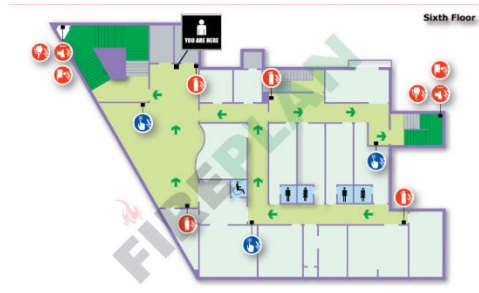
- Awareness: By prominently displaying evacuation maps in public areas, building occupants become more familiar with emergency procedures. This increased awareness can be crucial in actual emergencies, as people are more likely to react calmly and follow the designated routes.
- Training: Evacuation maps are valuable tools for training emergency personnel. They allow first responders to familiarize themselves with the building layout, which can be vital for efficient evacuations and rescue operations.
- Reduced Panic: Panic can lead to chaotic evacuations, putting people at risk. Evacuation maps provide a clear sense of direction, reducing uncertainty and helping people remain calm and focused during emergencies.
- Property Protection: Well-planned evacuations, guided by clear maps, help protect property and infrastructure. By ensuring a swift and organized exit, evacuation maps minimize the risk of damage and allow for easier access for emergency responders.

However a poorly designed evacuation map can be more confusing than helpful, potentially wasting precious moments in an emergency. When designing evacuation maps, there are several things one must consider if they wish to achieve all the possible benefits. Here are some best practices for designing evacuation maps:

- Use Simple Symbols: Use widely recognized symbols such as arrows for direction, stairs for stairwells, and bold lines for primary evacuation routes.



- Clear Color Contrast: Use high-contrast colors, like red for danger zones and green for safe zones, to make maps easy to read from a distance.



- Multilingual: Given California's diverse population, evacuation maps should be multilingual, offering key instructions in English, Spanish, and other relevant languages.



- Include Accessible Features: Ensure that the maps indicate accessible routes for people with disabilities, including elevator locations (if operational during emergencies) and ramps.



- Placement and Visibility : Evacuation maps should be placed near entrances, in hallways, in elevator lobbies, and in other high-traffic areas. They should be large enough to be legible from a distance.

