

## Evacuation

**Impact:** Builds teamwork; requires problem solving with participation by all team members

**Risk:** Medium

**Group Size:** 10 – 20. The activity can be done with a larger group, but the team interactions needed to solve the problem will be challenging. It is better to divide large groups into smaller teams of 8 – 12.

**Time Required:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Materials:** Stretchy band for each group

### Directions:

- Divide large groups into teams of 10 to 20 if necessary. Tell participants that their organization is concerned with their safety and wants to make sure that everyone could get out of their building or vehicle quickly in the event of an emergency. Therefore they are going to practice an evacuation procedure.
- Present each group with a stretchy band, and explain that this is their exit out of the building/vehicle. The object of the exercise is to get everyone out of this exit as quickly and as safely as possible. To do that they must follow a few rules:
  1. Participants may touch the band with their hands only – no other body parts may touch.
  2. Once participants have touched the band with their hands and let go, they cannot touch it again.
  3. Everyone in the group must get out of the exit in less than 20 seconds.
  4. The group times itself.
  5. The group(s) has three (or more) minutes to solve the problem.
- As groups struggle to solve the problem, try urging them on by reminding them that they have to evacuate quickly because their building/vehicle is burning.

### Discussion:

- Have all groups demonstrate their solutions, starting with the slowest group.
- How did the group arrive at the solution?
- Did they try several methods before choosing one?
- Did someone act as leader for the group or were many involved in the process? Describe.
- What was the biggest challenge for the group?
- What problems, if any, did they have understanding the directions?
- How did the players who were given challenges feel? How did their teams support them to get out of the building?

### Option:

- A number of variations can be used to make the activity more or less competitive or team building.
- Make it a challenge between teams to see which one can do it the fastest.

- Once a group has demonstrated the evacuation procedure, challenge them to come up with a faster way. It is possible to do this in 10 seconds or less.
- Give some participants challenges such as a being blindfolded, unable to talk, unable to use their hands, only being able to hop, etc. This is good for players who have done this activity before.

### Want More?

For more **team building activities**, please see our book *Growing Together* at [thefoodproject.org/books](http://thefoodproject.org/books).

Want to learn more about how we create youth leadership development models in the context of farming, our social justice curriculum, and our food access initiatives? Attend one of our Institutes! More info at [thefoodproject.org/institute](http://thefoodproject.org/institute).

