e-ACCESS
Your accessible route to fire and life safety information for people with disabilities.

The content of articles contained in e-ACCESS solely reflect the personal opinions of the authors or contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position of NFPA

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Do you have a story to tell or information to share?
We'd love to hear it!
Contribute to a future issue of *e-ACCESS* by sending it to afraser@nfpa.org

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ADVERTISMENT

GARAVENTA LIFT

What is your accessibility challenge? Let us help.

Visit us at 2013 NFPA Conference & Expo- June 10-12, 2013- McCormick Center, Chicago, IL – Booth 1276

"I Hear Ya!"

By Allan B. Fraser, CBI, CPCA, Sr. Building Code Specialist, NFPA

Like most of you, I've used this expression innumerable times in my life. It always seemed kind of "hip", "cool" or "with it" to me. However, I have to admit that I never thought very much about it and what it really means or about the fact that it may be a very confusing statement.

Online, "The Free Dictionary" gives two very different and almost opposite meanings to the interchangeable idioms, "I hear what you're saying", and "I hear you."

1. I know exactly what you mean!
   a. John: The prices in this place are a bit steep. Jane: Man, I hear you!
   b. Bill: I think it's about time for the whole management team to resign! Andrew: I hear what you're saying.

2. An expression indicating that the speaker has been heard, but implying that there is no agreement.
   a. Tom: Time has come to do something about that ailing dog of yours. Mary: I hear what you're saying.
   b. Jane: It would be a good idea to have the house painted. John: I hear what you're saying.

About four months ago I got my first pair of hearing aids. I'd been in denial of the possibility of me needing them for a number of years, but I finally gave in and went to have my hearing checked by an audiologist. I was actually surprised to find out how much of my hearing I had lost. The audiologist wasn't at all surprised given the facts that I had played in a rock band from junior high school through college and have worked in the construction industry for most of my life, both without any sort of ear protection.

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McCormick Center, Chicago, IL – Booth 1276

How ironic that I had no problem wearing eye protection after having to have a tiny metal fragment removed after it was thrown into my eye by a sander, yet I never gave my hearing a second thought.

As soon as the hearing aids were put in I was astonished - and kind of embarrassed - by my misconceptions about them. First and foremost, they weren't any louder they just made everything clearer, incredibly clearer.

Sounds I hadn't heard in the audiologist's office without them were now "clear as a bell." When I got home, I was standing in the kitchen and heard one of my kids saying something about me in the living room. To his shock I responded. He then turned to his mother and laughing said "I guess we have to be more careful what we say about Dad."

I was also very surprised about how tiny they are and the fact that most people have no idea that I'm wearing them unless I tell them. Lastly, I was very surprised at how comfortable they are. I actually forget to take them out before getting into bed at least two or three nights a week and have to get up to put them away when I realize they are still in when my head hits the pillow. I'm grateful that I can now hear normal conversations and don't have to ask people to repeat things.

But then I began to wonder what fire and life safety information I might have missed along the way and what others with known and unknown hearing loss are or could be missing that could be life threatening. We have to remember that we only have alarms for fire and some of those are voice messages as well as carbon monoxide detectors. The same voice or announcement message systems I

haven't been able to understand in malls and airports for a number of years. What about storm warnings or earthquakes or snow or floods? I've also realized that I, and many others, am guilty of telling others "don't go that way" while pointing in the direction they should not. My reaction would have been to go in the direction being pointed out which would have been the wrong thing to do. The verbal and audio messages are directly opposite. For most people, visual input overrides audio input so we would tend to go in the wrong direction. We should all get in the habit of saying "Go that way" and pointing in the right direction so that both messages match and there is no chance for confusion that might result in harm. Fire and life safety messages should always be stated as a positive, "Do this…." rather than "Don't do this……"

ADVERTISMENT

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McCormick Center, Chicago, IL – Booth 171

"I hear ya", when it relates to fire and life safety, must always mean that "I know exactly what you mean!"

2013 NFPA® Webinars

Get more top-notch instruction for less with NFPA®'s Webinars.

A Great Literal "Safety Key"!

This is a great little safety tip that will work for everyone! Have you ever heard a strange noise in the middle of the night? Worried that someone was breaking into your home? Or what if you are elderly or have a disability and you need to let your neighbors know you need help? In this day and age we all need to be better prepared and many of us already have a tool we can use with absolutely no cost. Can you guess what I'm talking about?

It's your car key. Virtually every car key made since 2005 has a "panic button" that sets the car's horn beeping like mad.

Originally intended to thwart muggers or carjackers in dark isolated parking lots, this device can be a life saver at home too. Just get in the habit of keeping your car keys on the night stand by your bed. If you need help, just hit the panic button! If someone is trying to break into your home they'll certainly runs for the hills.

If you don't shut it off, the neighbors will no doubt come over or call the police if for no other reason than you're ruining their sleep. Either way you get the help you need. Even at the possibility of being slightly embarrassed, I'd much rather have to explain why I set the car alarm off than face the potential of injury or worse. What a simple solution!

Your "key" for help!

ADVERTISMENT

ada National Network
Information, Guidance, and Training on the Americans with Disabilities Act

Visit us at 2013 NFPA Conference & Expo- June 10-12, 2013
McCormick Center, Chicago, IL – Booth 1277

NFPA Accessibility EXPO Beyond the ADA

NFPA Announces New "Accessibility Expo: Beyond the ADA" to Collocate with the 2013 NFPA Conference & Expo

The inaugural *Accessibility Expo* will co-locate with 2013 *NFPA Conference & Expo* at McCormick Place, from June 10 through 12, 2013. This new exposition will feature products specifically designed to empower people with disabilities and their families, friends and caregivers as well as building managers, supervisors and

first responders to improve the quality of life and safety of people with disabilities far beyond those specified in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"Fire and life safety may be more important to people with disabilities than others because of the barriers to accessing information and physical barriers in the built the environment, according to Allan Fraser, senior building code specialist at NFPA. "With each passing day I marvel at new technological innovations and advancements, particularly those that improve access to information, communications, and the ability of people with disabilities to be more empowered with respect to their own safety."

It's time to shine the light on vendor's innovations so that users, safety managers, caregivers, first responder's and vendors can connect and interact.

Supporting the *Accessibility Expo* will be a series of conference sessions addressing one or more of the five categories of disability—mobility, vision, hearing, speech, and cognitive—and the creative, common sense, best practices and solutions available. Sessions include, but are not limited to:

- **M24** - Preventing the Unthinkable: Prevention and Public Education for the Special Needs Population
- **M45** - High-Rise Evacuation for People with Special Needs
- **T08** - Accessibility and ADA: 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- **T22** - The Basics Every First Responder Needs to Know About the Disability Community
- **T60** - Get Out Safely Using NFPA's *Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities*
- **W47**- Improving Fire and Life Safety for People with Disabilities

ADVERTISMENT

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ADA Area of Refuge Call Systems - ADA Area of Refuge Call Systems & More

Visit us at 2013 NFPA Conference & Expo- June 10-12, 2013
McCormick Center, Chicago, IL – Booth 1281

- Ergonomic Evaluation of Stair Descent Devices: Final Results and Device Demonstration to be held in the Exhibitor Presentation Theatre and the chair evacuation demonstration area.

Examples of the many products suitable for the exhibition include enhanced alarming systems, directional sound devices, voice to text/text to voice devices, video phones for ASL users, power wheelchairs, signage, and accessibility training and preparedness programs for employers.

NFPA has been a worldwide leader in providing fire, electrical, building and life safety to the public since 1896. Its mission is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training and education.

Suppliers interested in exhibiting at the Accessibility Expo should contact ROC-NFPA, LLC at 630-271-8210. To learn more, visit www.nfpa.org/conference

DARAC

(Disability Access Review and Advisory Committee

Visit us at 2013 NFPA Conference & Expo- June 10-12, 2013
McCormick Center, Chicago, IL – Booth 1376

We're Changing…. for the Better!

e-ACCESS has been providing valuable, quality information about fire and life safety information for people with disabilities since June, 2008. It has been successful due, in part, to the fact that it's in formats accessible to all our readers, their relatives, friends, employers, caregivers and anyone who needs or wants such information. Its success has generated numerous requests by vendors to advertise their goods and services that are of particular interest to this audience.

The background behind our thinking:

The disability community has been very loyal to *e-ACCESS* so it is extremely important for us to assure that any and all changes improve the access to the information by the reader. Therefore our plan is to introduce changes in relatively small packages so that the readers have time to provide us with feedback prior to our introduction of the next change.

Phase One:

- We will be placing ads in *e-ACCESS* of vendors who will be exhibiting at the 2013 NFPA Conference & Expo with links to their websites in the both the March & June 2013 issues still using the PDF format of both the multi-column single column versions that we are doing currently do.

- The March, June and September 2013 issues will have articles outlining the proposed changes and we are requesting reader input. Please send your comments to afraser@nfpa.org .

Phase Two:

- At the moment, the plan is to discontinue the "multi-column" PDF version which will be replaced by an "Online" version which will be in an html format. The single column PDF format will remain for those who would like to download copies. The content will be identical in both.
- Both versions will continue to be archived.

Phase Three:

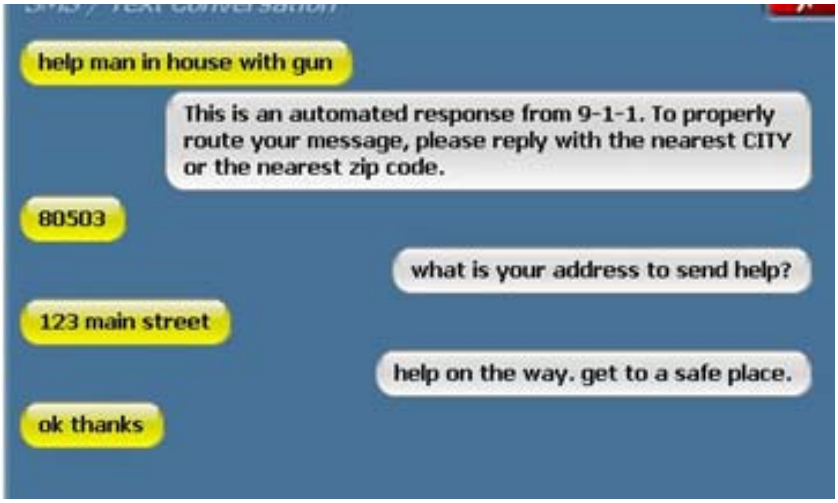
- The *e-ACCESS* team will be having quarterly meetings after the release of each issue to look at the statistics, feedback from readers and to evaluate the potential and direction for future improvements.

e-ACCESS is for you, the reader, and we hope that you'll continue to provide us input and guidance about what we can do to continue its success and to make it better and more useful for you.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and "text-to-911"

You may have seen reports about a recent action taken by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regarding "text-to-911" and wondered if it is possible in an emergency to reach 911 by text message. Text-to-911 is the ability to send a text message to 911 from your mobile phone or handheld device.

On December 12, 2012, the FCC proposed to require all wireless carriers, including certain providers of text messaging applications, such as iMessage, to make it possible for customers to send text messages to 911. The four largest wireless carriers have already voluntarily committed to make texting to 911 possible by May 15, 2014.



However, because most 911 centers are not ready to accept text messages now, the FCC also proposed to require, by June 30, 2013, automated "bounce-back" error messages to consumers who send text messages to such 911 centers that are not ready to receive these messages. In other words, if you send a text message to a 911 center that does not have the ability to accept text calls, after June 30, 2013, that center will have to send you back a text message that informs you that you need to reach 911 in another way. These messages will continue until that center is able to receive emergency calls in text.

The public was asked to comment on the myriad of proposed requirements by this Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 12-149). The link to this FNPRM is: http://www.fcc.gov/document/text-911-further-notice-proposed-rulemaking.

For now, here are three (3) facts you need to know:

1. In an emergency, always make a voice, relay, or TTY call to 911 if possible.
2. In most cases now, you cannot reach 911 by sending a text message.
3. In the future, you may be able to send text messages to 911 – but you should still make a voice or TTY call if you can.

Although text-to-911 is generally not available yet, it will become increasingly available during 2013. AccessInfo will help to keep you informed about the progress of this very important service.

For more information about text-to-911, please visit the FCC webpage at: http://www.fcc.gov/text-to-911

New Online ABA Complaint Form Available for Public Review

The ABA, one of the first laws passed by Congress addressing access for people with disabilities, requires that federally funded facilities be accessible according to established standards. The law applies to facilities designed, built or

altered with Federal dollars or leased by Federal agencies. The ABA covers a wide range of government buildings, including post offices, social security offices, and Federal office buildings. It also applies to non-Federal buildings that are federally funded, such as schools, transit stations, local courthouses and jails, and public housing.

The Board enforces the accessibility standards of the ABA through the investigation of complaints from the public. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Board opens an investigation to determine whether the facility in question is covered by the ABA and if so, whether it meets the applicable accessibility standards. If a covered facility is not in compliance, the Board will pursue a corrective action plan and monitor the case until all necessary work is completed.

The new online submission form will make it easier and more convenient for the public to file ABA complaints with the Board. It also will improve how the Board monitors and tracks complaints. Members of the public are invited to view and try out the proposed complaint form which was available for comment until February 15. A published notice provides further details. The new form, which replaces an earlier one previously made available on the Board's site, will be launched under procedures that Federal agencies must follow in collecting information from the public.

For further information, contact Lisa Fairhall, the Board's Deputy General Counsel at fairhall@access-board.gov, (202)272-0046 (voice), (202) 272-0064 or visit the Board's website.

Center on Disabilities
California State University Northridge

28th Annual CSUN Conference on Technology and People with Disabilities – February 25 to March 2, 2013– San Diego, CA

By: Allan B. Fraser, CBI, CPCA – Senior Building Code Specialist

The simple fact is that, for people with disabilities, being prepared for fire and life safety events is even more important for them than the rest of the population because it is much harder for them to access safety information and to navigate the built environment during emergencies. The 28th Annual CSUN (California State University at Northridge) Conference on Technology and People with Disabilities will be another wonderful opportunity for NFPA to reach out to this community.

This will be the sixth year that I'll attend the CSUN Conference as NFPA's representative and each year I've seen it grow in scope, in the number of attendees, in content and in influence as the largest event of its type in the world.

Last year there were more than 300 general sessions and workshops, more than 130 exhibitors and over 5,000 participants from all 50 states, numerous territories and more than 35 foreign countries.

NFPA's mission, work and activities in the disability community will be displayed at our booth, #914, again this year. In addition, I will present a session entitled "Evacuating Safely-One Size Doesn't Fit All" which is based on NFPA's extensively downloaded and widely used *Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities*©.

The Collection

By definition, a collection is a group of objects or works to be seen, studied, or kept together. The purpose of this column is to provide you with links to news items, stories and general information that you may not be aware of, but may help you to reduce the burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of your own life or that of family and friends.

- Patient who fell from wheel chair during Ike evacuationElectric wheelchair sparks fire in Hillsboro
- Woman in wheelchair can't escape Oskaloosa fire
- Sumner wheelchair bound teen, family escapes fire
- Wheelchair-bound man saved from Hayward fire by grandnephew, neighbor

FORT WORTH
CITY OF COWBOYS AND CULTURE

New Warning System for Fort Worth, Texas Residents with Functional Needs.

The City of Fort Worth Office of Emergency Management announced a new severe weather and man-made disaster alert system at a news conference on Thursday, February 14th.

The new system named Accessible Hazard Alert System (AHAS) is designed to send warning messages to Fort Worth residents with functional needs such as Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind or Deaf/Blind that may not be able to detect the outdoor warning sirens, The AHAS warnings in American Sign Language, English verbal and captioned text will be broadcast to video capable mobile devices such as iPads and smart cell phones, home and office Internet emails, and wireless Braille readers. The AHAS alert system is developed and operated by Deaf Link.

Fort Worth residents, living in a Fort Worth zip code, may sign up for the AHAS service by registering at www.ftwahas.deaflink.com

Contact Information:

Randy Westerman

Fort Worth Office of Emergency Management

817-392-6170

Randy.Westerman@fortworthtexas.gov

2013 National ADA Symposium

May 12-15, San Antonio, Texas

The National ADA Symposium is a three to four day annual conference on the Americans with Disabilities Act and related laws. The Symposium is a national initiative of the ADA National Network, funded through the National Institute of Disability Rehabilitation and Research (NIDRR). The Symposium is coordinated and hosted by the Great Plains ADA Center, one of the ADA National Network's ten regional centers.

The National ADA Symposium was developed to bring together the wide range of groups (disability advocates, architects, government officials, etc.) involved with the ADA together to get the latest information from national/federal experts, problem solve, network and learn from each other. The goal of the Symposium was to provide useful practical information that would assist in ADA implementation.

Break-out Sessions

Each year a variety of break-out sessions are offered and designed to cover all areas of the ADA and meet the needs of the many different stakeholders involved with the ADA. The sessions are also offered for different skill levels, ranging from basic sessions for novices to advanced discussion groups designed for participants with years of experience in ADA implementation. These sessions are presented by representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Access Board, and the EEOC along with other nationally recognized presenters. The ADA Symposium is known for the quality of its presenters and a number of presenters have returned year after year at the request of Symposium participants.

Group Interaction and Problem Solving

The structure of the ADA Symposium emphasizes group interaction, problem solving and networking . We provide forums and networking lunches for individualized attention with presenters and staff. Evaluations consistently rate the opportunity to learn from other participants as one the most valuable experiences gained by attending a National ADA Symposium.

Presenters

The National ADA Symposium features presenters from the key federal agencies involved in developing, interpreting and enforcing ADA guidelines and regulations: the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Access Board and the EEOC. Other federal agencies including FEMA, U.S. Departments of Labor and Education are represented at the Symposium. All presenters are experts in their fields.

Attendees

The National ADA Symposium is generally attended by 500 to 600 people from across the United States (all fifty states, Puerto Rico, Canada, Japan and Guam have been represented at an ADA Symposium!). These attendees have a wide range of skills, experience and backgrounds which, we believe, adds to the energy of a National ADA Symposium. The common factor is that attendees are committed to ADA implementation in their communities and professions.

On-line access to all session hand-outs

Participants are able to download materials for all sessions (including sessions outside of their registration schedule) prior to attending the ADA Symposium and for up to two months after the conference. There is no need to lug a stack of papers through the airport--and it is good for the environment! Alternate formats of resource materials are available upon request.

For complete information, go to: http://www.adasymposium.org/

NFPA Video PSA offers important message using American Sign Language

By Lisa Braxton, NFPA Public Education Division

ASL interpreter Bruce Baltazar

Gary Olsen has a message to share with the public about the importance of making a home fire drill plan. Olsen, a member of the NFPA Public Education Division Fire Safety for People with Disabilities Task Force and president of the Nevada Association of the Deaf, appears in a public service announcement using American Sign Language. The PSA also includes open captioning and a voice-over translation by ASL interpreter Bruce Baltazar.

The Task Force advises the Public Education Division on developing new fire safety educational materials, such as the PSA, to ensure the inclusion of fire and life safety messages for people with disabilities. The task force also seeks to ensure that fire safety educational materials depict people with disabilities in a positive and correct manner, and reviews existing educational materials for sensitivity, accuracy, and inclusiveness of people with disabilities. The video is available on the Fire Safety for People with Disabilities web page and in NFPA's library of video PSAs.

NFPA Coming Events

March 2013

March 1 NFPA Training Seminar Week: Quincy, MA.

- Other

March 4-15 NFPA Training Seminar Week: Cincinnati, OH.

- Electrical
- Life Safety
- Sprinklers

March 1 1-15 NFPA Training Seminar Week: Milwaukee, WI.

- Electrical
- Sprinklers
- Other

March 25-29 NFPA Training Seminar Week: Quincy, MA.

- Life Safety

April 2013

April 8-12 NFPA Training Seminar Week: Atlanta, GA.

- Electrical
- NFPA 70E
- Life Safety
- Sprinklers
- Other

April 15-19 NFPA Training Seminar Week: Northbrook, IL.

- Electrical
- NFPA 70E

April 15-26 NFPA Training Seminar Week: Dallas, TX.

- Electrical
- NFPA 70E
- Life Safety

April 19-21 7th Annual Wildland Fire Litigation Conference, Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel and Spa,

	Monterey, CA.
April 23-25	NFPA Mexico Fire Expo, Centro Banamex, Mexico City, Mexico
April 29-May 3	NFPA Training Seminar Week: Quincy, MA. • Life Safety
April 29-May 3	NFPA Training Seminar Week: Nashville, TN. • Electrical • Life Safety • NFPA 70E • Sprinklers • Fire Alarms

Future NFPA Conference & Expo Dates:

June 10-13, 2013, McCormick Place Convention Center, Chicago, IL

June 9-12, 2014, Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV

June 22-25, 2015, McCormick Place Convention Center, Chicago, IL

June 6-9, 2016, Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV

June 4-7, 2017, Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Boston, MA

See NFPA's complete online calendar.

e-ACCESS Your accessible route to fire and life safety information for people with disabilities.

Do you have a story to tell or information to share?

Our readers are people with disabilities, and their relatives, caregivers, and friends.

Our goals are to:

- Provide specialized information about fire and life safety for people with disabilities directly to those with disabilities and to those who help them in order to reduce or eliminate death and injury from fire and other emergencies.
- Provide a forum for the collection and dissemination of information for people with disabilities in support of DARAC's mission.
- Provide personal stories about events, ideas, or solutions from our readers that can guide others in similar circumstances.

Content for future editions will include:

- NFPA-related news
  - DARAC news
  - NFPA codes- and standards-related information
  - Fire safety tips
  - Emergency evacuation information
- Articles relating to the safety of people with disabilities from:
  - NFPA staff
  - DARAC members
  - Other national advocates
  - General news
  - Our readers
- News from other standards-developing organizations' news

- U.S. Access Board
- ANSI/ICC A117, *Standard for Accessible Buildings and Facilities*
- RESNA
- U.S. Department of Justice
- Other

We'd love to hear your stories and opinions! If you'd like to contribute an article or information consistent with the outline above, please e-mail them to Allan B. Fraser, senior building code specialist and *e-Access* coordinator, at *afraser@nfpa.org*.

Did You Miss an Issue?

No problem! You can read the back issues of *e-ACCESS* by clicking here.