

## **Apple South East Asia Ltd settled on the Evac+Chair model 600H-AMB**

Very often the Risk Management in the Workplace Safety and Health overlook the fire safety requirements to protect the safety and health of employees with disabilities in workplaces. Not all multi-storey buildings have evacuation lift, temporary refuge areas or holding points for persons with disabilities. How do we evacuate this group of people to safety in the event of an emergency evacuation?

Apple South East Asia Ltd has employees with disabilities in their workforce. The company's Workplace Safety and Health department conducted a risk assessment in relation to the safety and health risks posed to employees with disabilities who may be affected by his/her undertaking in the workplace. Tests of the fire evacuation plan showed a serious problem: The vertical evacuation takes place by way of staircase. Participants had great difficulty evacuating mobility-impaired colleagues from multi-level floors by way of the stairs.

The method of evacuation is for able-bodied employees to self-evacuate (walk out by themselves), but those confined to wheelchairs need assistance to move them down the stairs to safety. Buddy-colleagues had great difficulty carrying wheelchair bound colleagues down the stairs. Helpers also tired easily using these methods. Some feared that they and rescuers could become casualties themselves during the process of evacuating their colleagues on wheelchairs. Without a better evacuation method, carrying wheelchair bound colleagues down the stairs was determined to be very inefficient and unsafe.

In achieving good WSH outcomes rather than complying with prescriptive requirements, Mr. Aw Kai Ren, Engineer, Workplace Safety and Health, Facilities proceeded to search for a safer method of evacuation. After consultation with Mr. John Ng of Escape Consult Mobiltex (S) Ltd, the regional representative and distributor for Evac+Chair International Ltd, UK., Mr. Aw settled on the Evac+Chair model 600H-AMB. The egress route from the building to the 'Assembly Point' is quite a distance and has to pass through rough terrain.

This Evac+Chair model 600H-AMB featuring retractable rear and front grab handles that is suitable for carry by 2 to 4 operators for locations with difficult access, and also have larger heavy duty rear wheels for move over rough terrain. By having this practicable and achievable WSH management solution, it also help Apple South East Asia Ltd in developing and implementing measures for dealing with the evacuation of persons with disabilities from his/her workplace in emergencies.



This Evac+Chair is commonly used in the United Kingdom for vertical evacuation by way of stairs in tall buildings. Some advantages of using the evacuation chair include the following:

- The ensured safety of mobility-impaired persons during stairway evacuation
- One-person operation uses fewer staff to evacuate a disabled person.
- Protection against lawsuits
- Answer to fears concerning emergency evacuation
- Protection of personnel from unnecessary injury
- Stairway evacuation can now be much more efficient, effective, and safe.