Savannah Technical College

Tornado Safety Plan

INTRODUCTION

Why talk about tornadoes? Tornadoes have been reported in every state. As the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) - (US Department of Homeland Security) states in its Publication, Tornado Protection (Selecting Refuge Areas in Buildings) FEMA P-431, Second Edition: "Tornadoes cause heavy loss of life and property damage throughout much of the United States.

More tornadoes are recorded in the months of May and June than in any other month. The Savannah Technical College's response to this type of event includes providing our campus population with information, which may minimize the impact of a direct hit by a tornado. No one is immune from experiencing such an event.

Tornadoes generally occur during spring and summer, although they can happen in every season. While more tornadoes are recorded in the months of May and June than in any other month, they occur year round. Tornadoes can strike at any time of the day or night.

Indeed, on Wednesday, February 3, 2016 the National Weather Service confirmed that a tornado at Fort Stewart first touched down at 5 PM and lasted until either 5:10 PM or 5:12 PM. The first tornado warning on the storm was issued at 5:10 PM. ***According to this data either most, or the***

entire life of the tornado was NOT under a tornado warning from the National Weather Service. Tornado warnings were issued for Chatham, Bryan and Effingham counties west of Savannah.

The tornado had max winds estimated between 105-110 mph and was on the ground for 5.7 miles. No injuries or fatalities were reported. Total damage reported along the path of the tornado included approximately 42 homes, 150 to 200 vehicles, and 8 unit facilities within or near the Fort Stewart Area. The Savannah Technical College Liberty Campus was in close proximity to the storm but was not impacted.

The tornado continued to move northeast along with the weather conditions that spawned the tornado. Savannah Technical College activated our response immediately upon hearing the reports.

The National Weather Service said there were reports of a tornado moving northeast at about 35 mph at about 5 p.m. On page 3 of this document is a mobile phone video of the funnel cloud posted on Facebook.

The Savannah Technical College Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) clearly outlines what response decisions are to be made, and by whom in this type of emergency.

"To the extent possible and as each individual situation develops, the final decision for emergency response shall be made by the President of the College or, in the absence of the President, the Chief of Police who will take

such action as necessary to protect the personal and physical assets of the College. The Chief of Police will immediately report any such action to the President of the College and the Vice President of Operations & Technology."

If we are facing any type of weather emergency such as a tornado, please be certain not to leave the campus location you are in. In the case of management, do not release or evacuate your campus/area without being directed to do so. It is imperative that we don't travel into a storm condition, which may have more perilous results to our wellbeing than sheltering in place until the condition subsides.

No areas are immune to tornadoes. They have been reported in mountains and valleys, over deserts and swamps, from the Gulf Coast into Canada, in Hawaii, and even in Alaska. Regardless of the location or time of year, if conditions are right, a tornado can develop.

More than 1,000 tornadoes are reported annually nationwide, and as our tornado detection systems improve, fewer tornadoes go undetected. Even so, tornadoes sometimes develop in areas in which no tornado watch or warning has been issued.

This document provides not only what procedures we will follow on each Savannah Technical College Campus, but also information that will better prepare our community under any situation involving a tornado.

What are tornadoes?

According to the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) in its publication Tornado Safety dated May 12, 2016 "A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending from a thunderstorm to the ground. Tornadoes may appear transparent until dust and debris are picked up or a cloud forms within the funnel. The average tornado moves from southwest to northeast, but they have been known to move in any direction."

Tornado intensities are classified on the Fujita Scale with ratings between 0 and 5. A storm of F0 is the weakest and F5 is the strongest. The most violent tornadoes have rotating winds of 250 miles (402 kilometers) per hour or more. They are capable of completely destroying well-made structures, uprooting trees, and hurling normally harmless objects through the air like deadly missiles. Most tornadoes are rated F0 and F1, and these usually span just a few dozen yards and touch down only briefly. Highly destructive violent tornadoes—F4 and F5—can carve out paths more than a mile (1.6 kilometers) wide and 50 miles (80 kilometers) long. Although these violent tornadoes comprise only two percent of all tornadoes, they are responsible for nearly 70 percent of tornado-related fatalities. Waterspouts are similar to tornadoes but form over a body of water. They are most common along the Florida Gulf and Atlantic coasts and southeastern states. In the western United States, waterspouts occur in connection with storms in the late fall or winter, a time when they are least expected. Waterspouts occasionally move inland becoming tornadoes, causing damage and injuries.

How do tornadoes develop?

Tornadoes usually develop from severe thunderstorms in warm, moist, unstable air along and ahead of cold fronts. Such thunderstorms also may generate large hail and damaging winds. When intense springtime storm systems produce large, persistent areas that support tornado development, major outbreaks can occur.

In the United States during the late spring, thunderstorms that cause tornadoes can develop in the southern High Plains along a "dry line" which is the interface between warm, moist air to the east and hot, dry air to the west. From the front range of the Rocky Mountains southward into the Texas Panhandle, a downslope flow of unstable air can spawn tornadoes causing thunderstorms to develop. Tropical storms and hurricanes that come ashore can also generate tornadoes. In 1967, Hurricane Beulah produced 141 tornadoes as it made landfall. In 1992, Hurricane Andrew produced 62 tornadoes.

How can I protect myself from a tornado?

You can protect yourself by having a safe place to go and having the time to get there. While tornadoes can be highly destructive and are potentially deadly, timely precautions can save lives and reduce property damage. During active weather, pay attention to the forecast by listening to local radio or television stations or by using a NOAA Weather Radio. Each year, many people are killed or seriously injured by tornadoes despite advance warning.

Some people do not hear the warning, while others hear the warning but did do not believe they are personally threatened. Timely tornado watches and warnings, combined with preparedness, could save your life. On campus once you receive a warning or observe threatening skies you must follow instructions. Off campus YOU must make the decision to take shelter before the tornado arrives. It could be the most important decision you will ever make.

What is the best source of information in a tornado situation?

On campus, the Police Department will utilize all emergency notification systems to make our community aware of the threat level and initiate a Tornado response. When not on campus local radio or television stations or a NOAA Weather Radio are the best sources of information in a tornado situation for official weather and weather-related bulletins. NOAA Weather Radio is the prime alerting and critical information delivery system of the National Weather Service (NWS). NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts warnings, watches, forecasts, and other hazards information 24 hours a day over more than 650 stations in the 50 states, adjacent coastal waters, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the U.S. Pacific territories. The NWS encourages people to buy a weather radio equipped with the Specific Area Message Encoder (SAME) feature. This feature automatically alerts you when important information about tornadoes and other hazards is issued for your area. Information on NOAA Weather Radio is available from your local news weather station or at http://www.nws.noaa.gov/.

Watch or Warning?

A Tornado **Watch** means that tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. People in a watch area should review their tornado plans (Family Disaster Plan, Disaster Supplies Kit, tornado safe room), and be ready to act if a warning is issued or they suspect a tornado is approaching.

A Tornado **Warning** means that a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Tornado warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property. People in a warning area should go immediately to a safe area. If they are in a vehicle, they should get out of the vehicle and go to shelter in a nearby sturdy building or lie flat in a low spot away from the vehicle.

Note: Savannah Technical College has multiple campuses, so there may be a variation of watches or warnings depending upon the geographical location of the campus and the storm development patterns. The Police Department will coordinate the timely delivery of accurate information to each campus via our emergency management notification systems.

Watches and warnings for tornadoes are issued by the
National Weather Service (NWS) and broadcast on NOAA Weather Radio and on local radio and television stations.

RESPONSE PLAN

The Savannah Technical College Tornado Safety Plan is one that imposes upon each of us the responsibility to review the information contained in this

document as well as the various blueprints attached, all of which are posted on the Savannah Technical College Police Department's website as well as SharePoint.

If a Tornado Warning is issued

If we are advised of a Tornado warning, we must move to one of the areas designated on the blueprints that are shaded in yellow. If you are in a multiple level building, pick a place in a hallway in the center of the building. You may not have enough time to go to the lowest floor. Center hallways are often the most structurally reinforced part of a building.

While there is no guarantee that these areas will not be impacted by storm conditions, they do follow Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) recommendations.

Seconds count. Follow the drill according to the plan. Everyone should proceed to the designated safe places in a calm, orderly and firm manner. Everyone should then crouch low, head down, protecting the back of the

head with the arms. Stay away from windows and large open rooms like vestibules and auditoriums.

If a Tornado Strikes

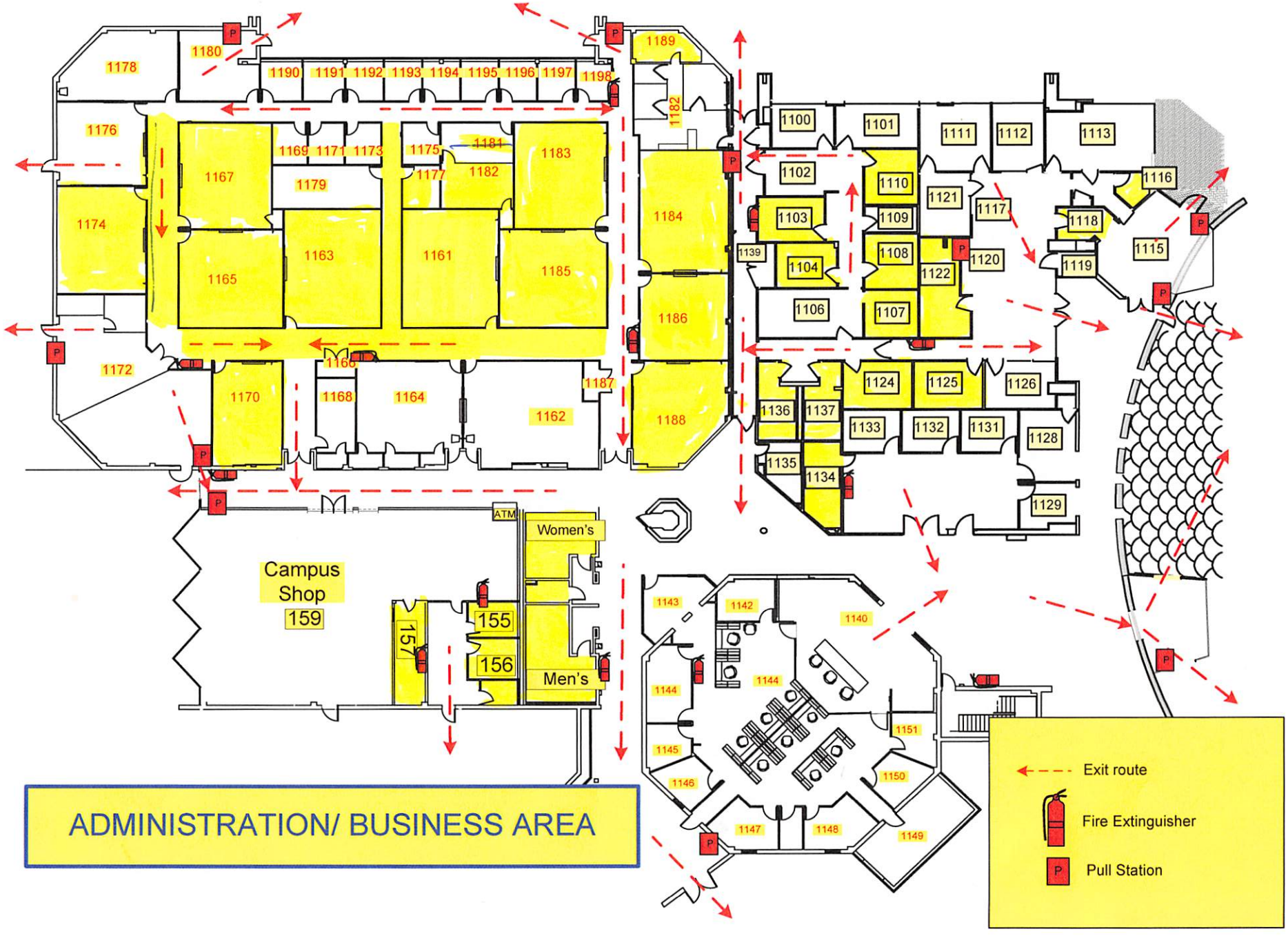
Keep everyone assembled in an orderly manner, in a safe area away from broken glass and other sharp debris, and away from power lines, puddles containing power lines, and emergency traffic areas. While waiting for emergency personnel to arrive, carefully render aid to those who are injured. Keep everyone out of damaged parts of the school. Chunks of debris or even a whole section of the building may have fallen down. Ensure nobody is using matches or lighters, in case of leaking natural gas pipes or fuel tanks nearby. It is very important for faculty and staff to set a calm example for students at the disaster scene, and reassure those who are shaken.

In closing, remember, there is no such thing as guaranteed safety from a tornado. Freak accidents happen; and the most violent tornadoes can level and blow away all but the most intensely fortified structures. Extremely violent EF5 tornadoes are very rare, though; and even within one's path, only a small area has EF5 damage. Most of any tornado's damage track is actually much weaker and can be survived using sound safety practices.

The Police Department will initiate notification that it is safe to move around once the weather conditions desist. We will be conducting Tornado drills in the near future.

Thank you for your attention to these matters and please feel free to contact the Police Department at 912-443-5200 or me directly.

Chief Mark Gerbino
Savannah Technical College Police Department
mgerbino@savannahtech.edu
Office: 912-433-4787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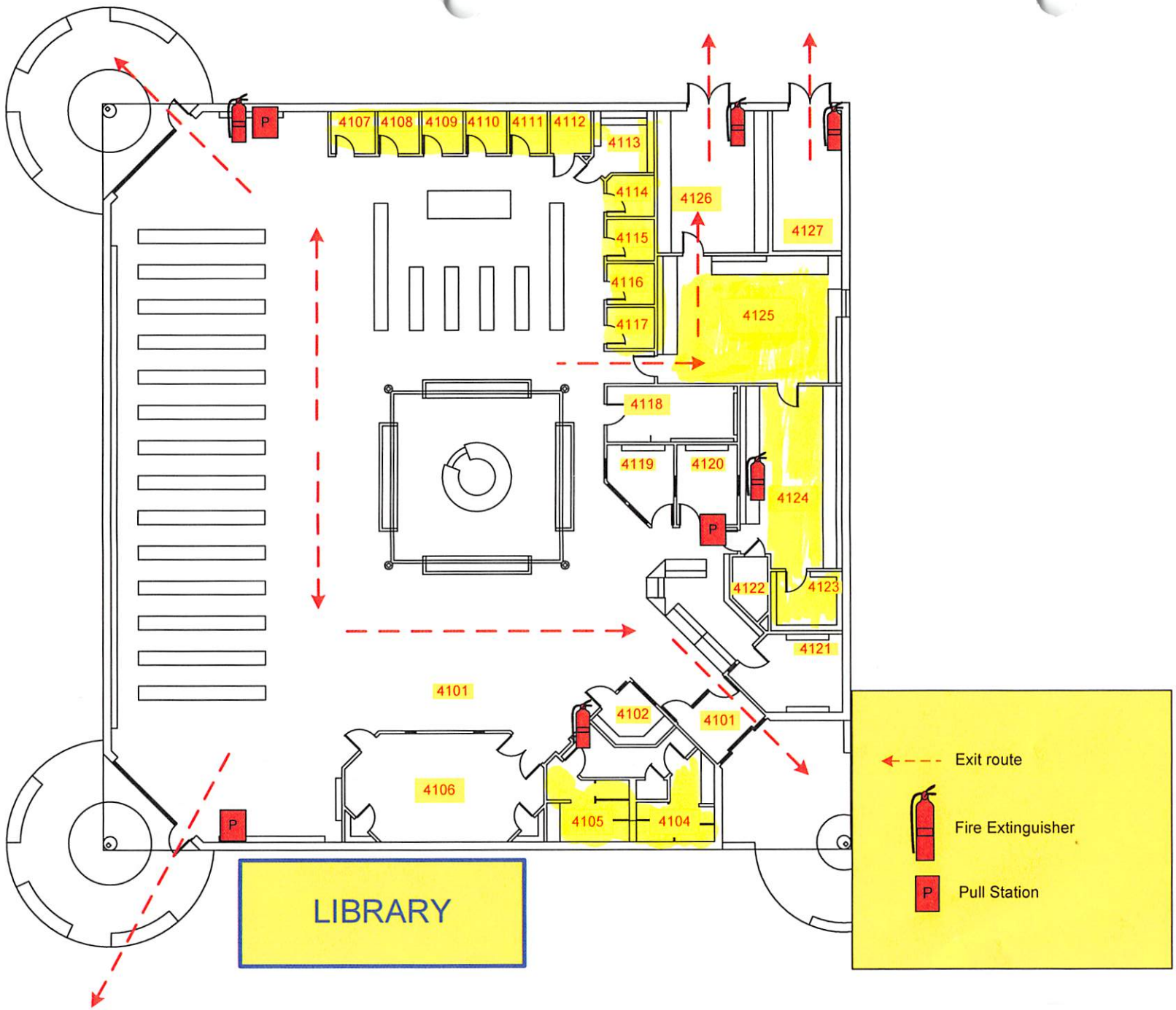
Exit route
Fire Extinguisher
Pull Station
ADMINISTRATION/ BUSINESS AREA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Exit route
Fire Extinguisher
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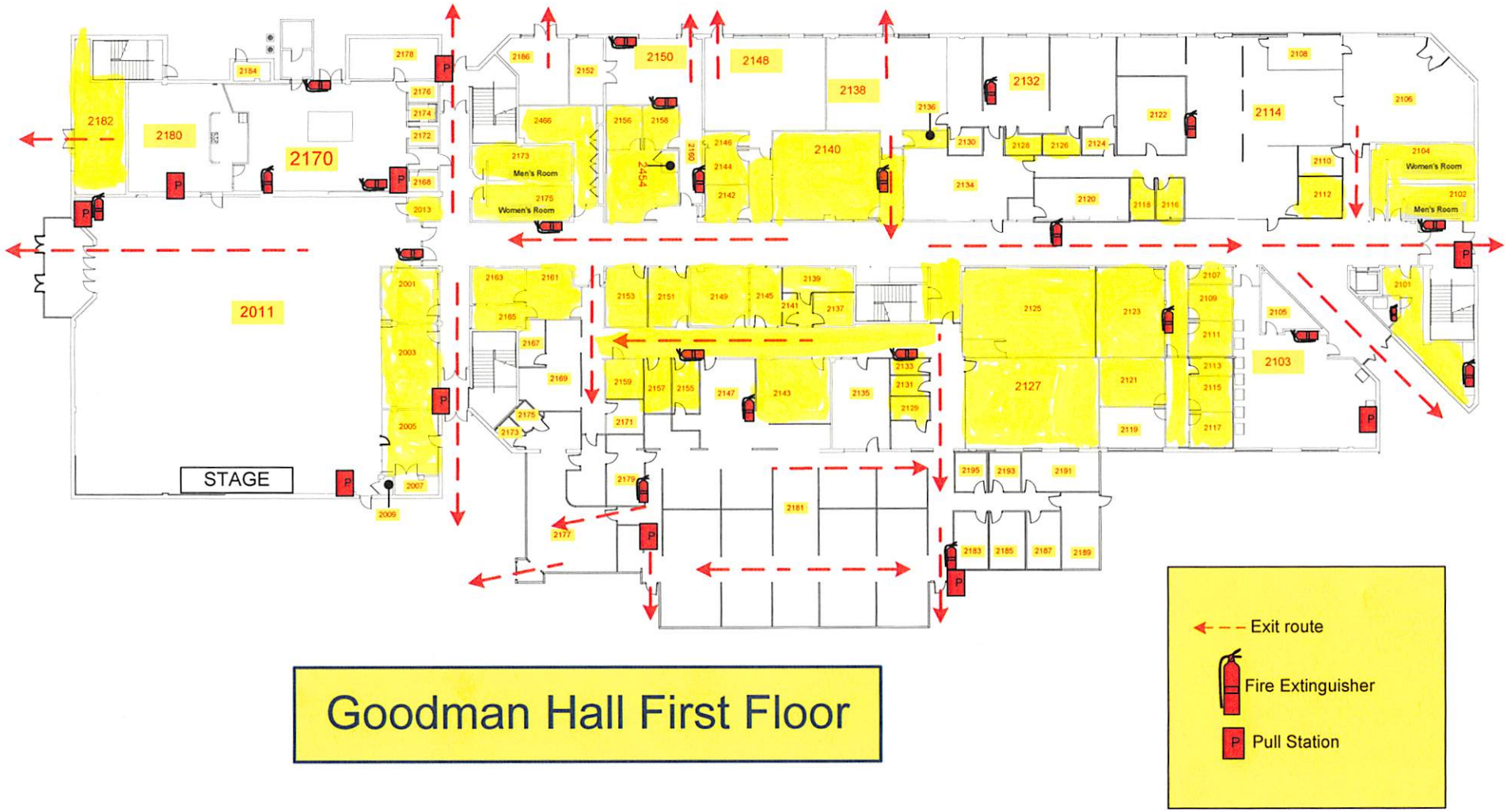
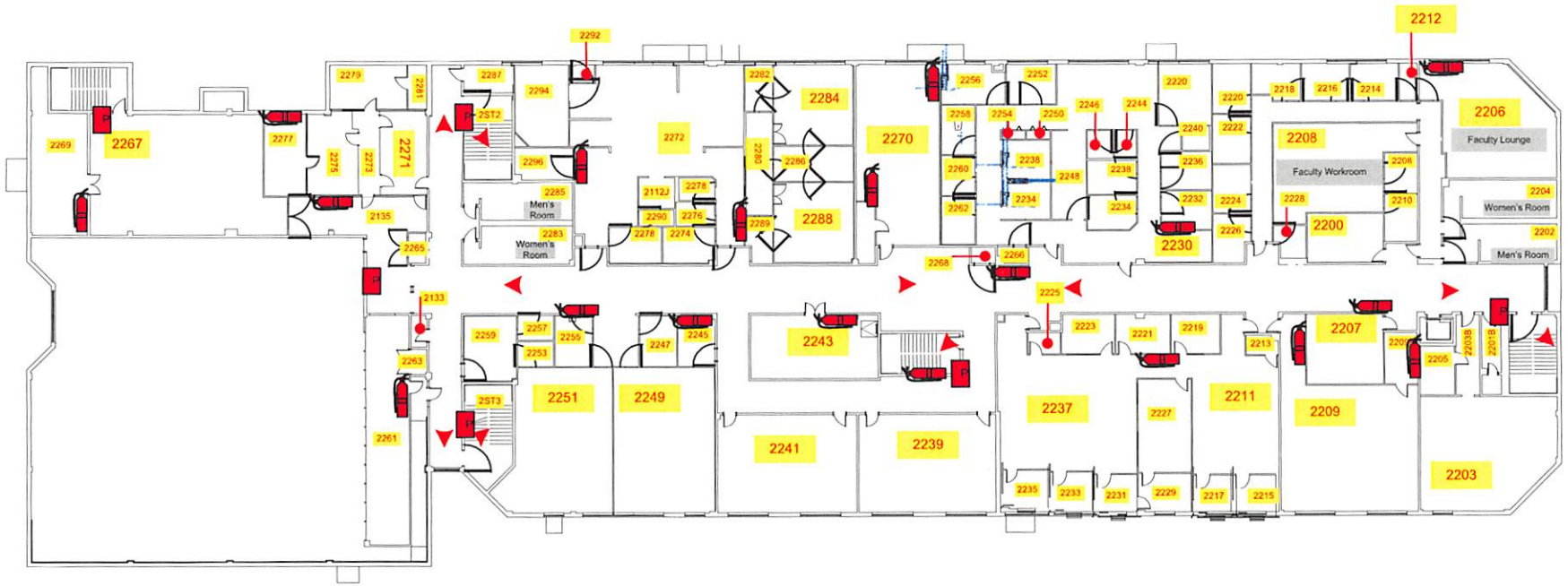
Pull Station



Goodman Hall First Floor

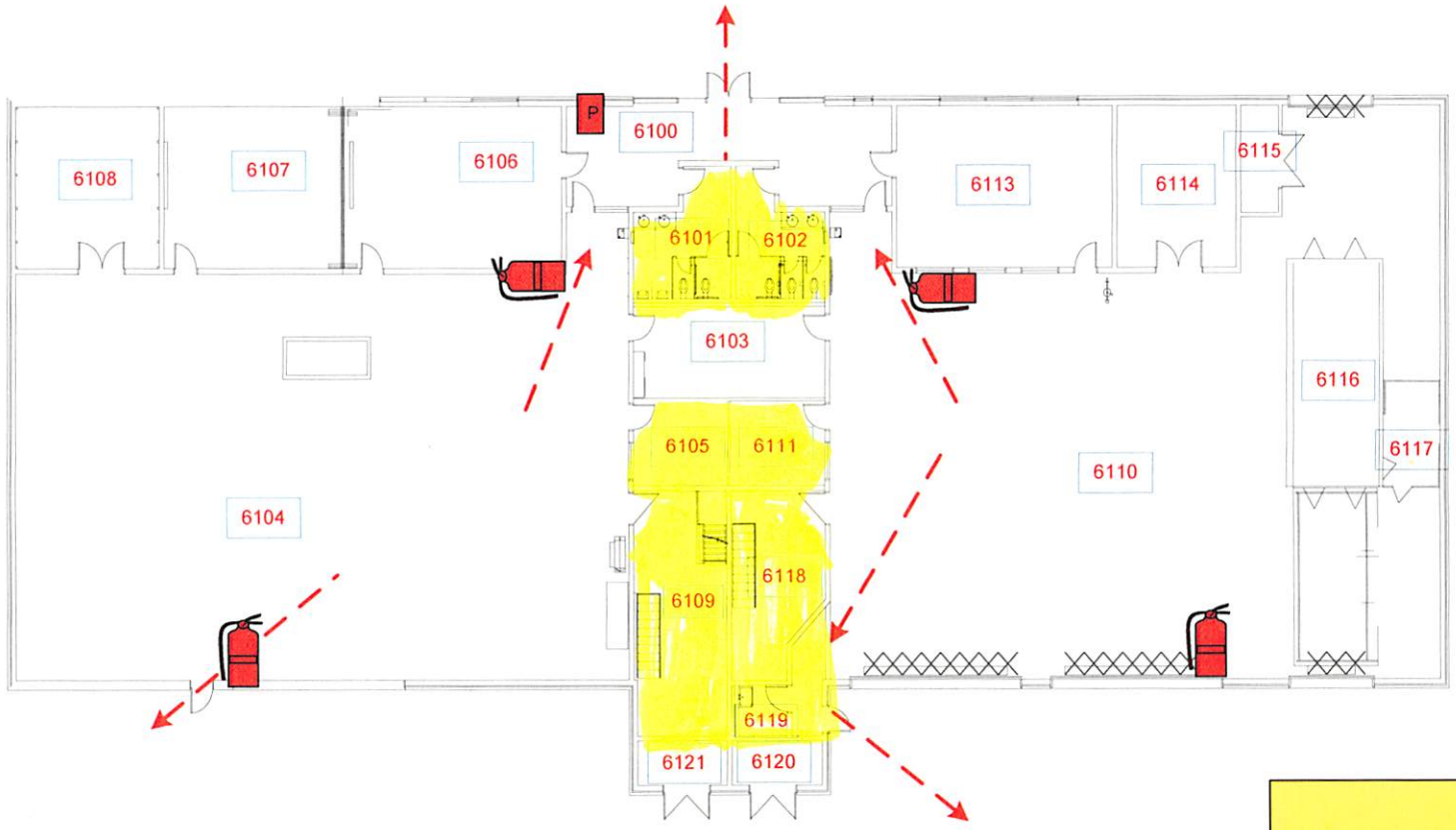


Second Floor Goodman Hall

Exit route

Fire Extinguisher

P Pull Station

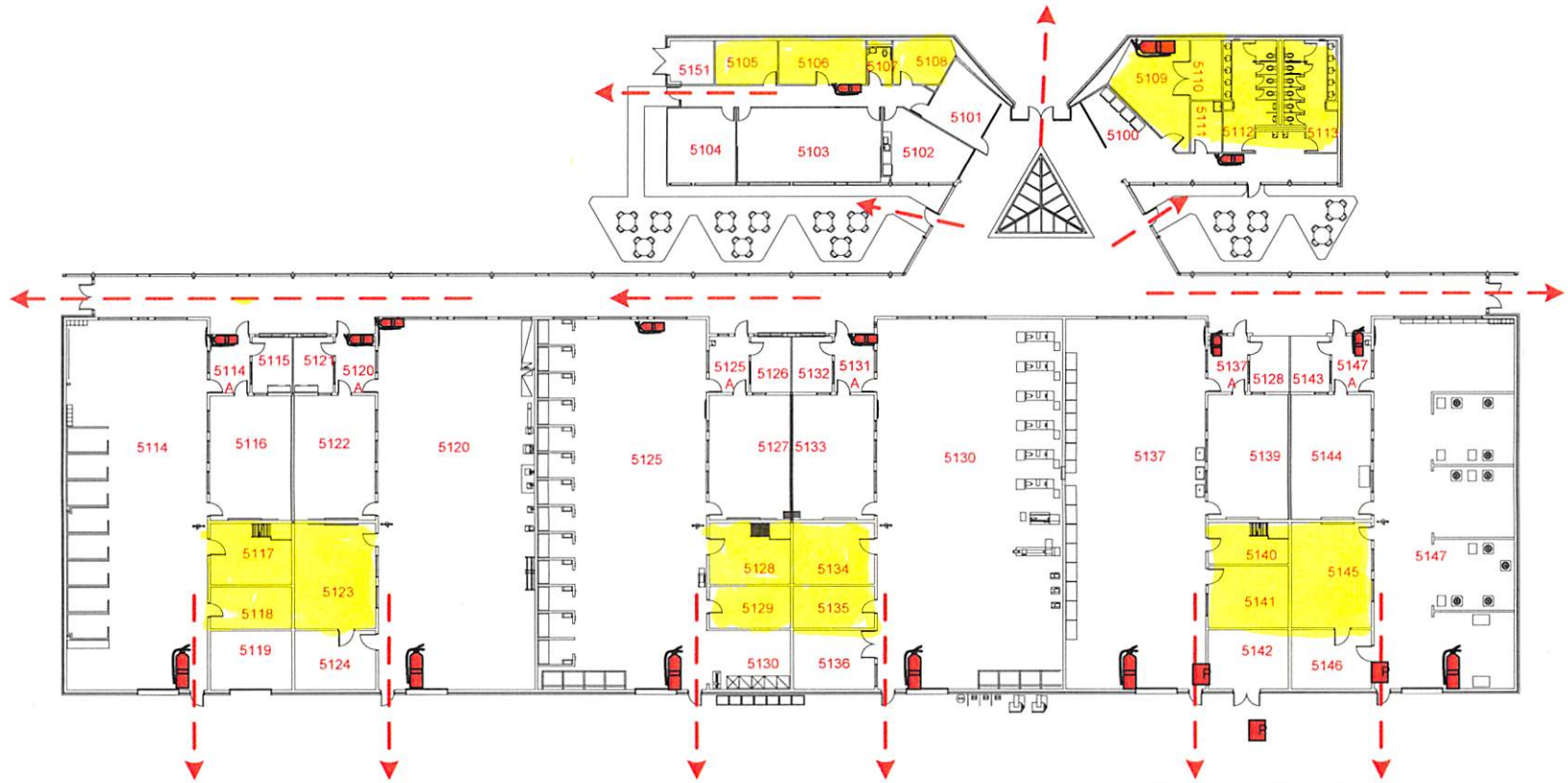


AUTOMOTIVE BUILDING

Exit route

Fire Extinguisher

P Pull Station

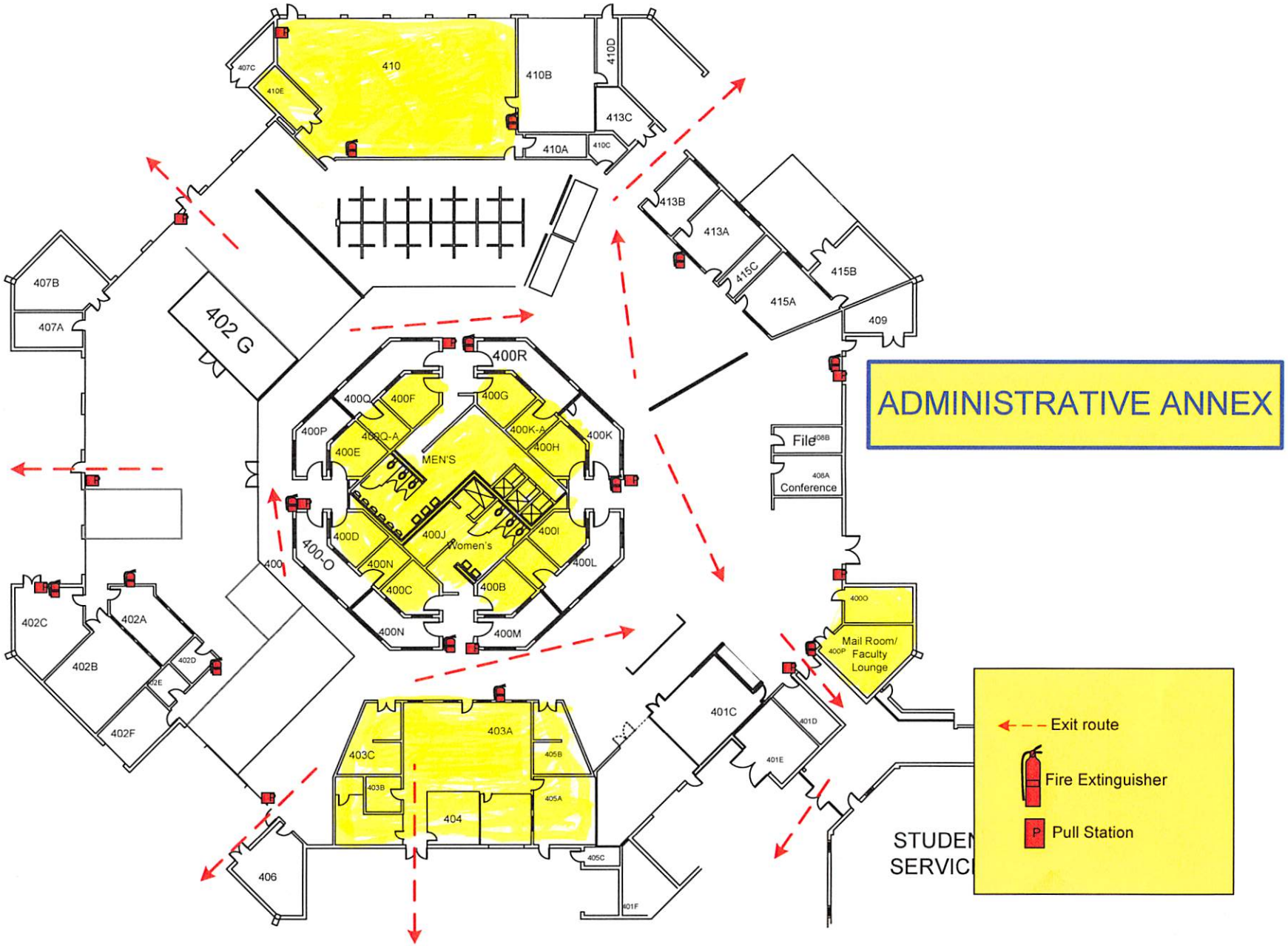


INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY

Exit route

Fire Extinguisher

P Pull Station


ADMINISTRATIVE ANNEX
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Fire Extinguisher
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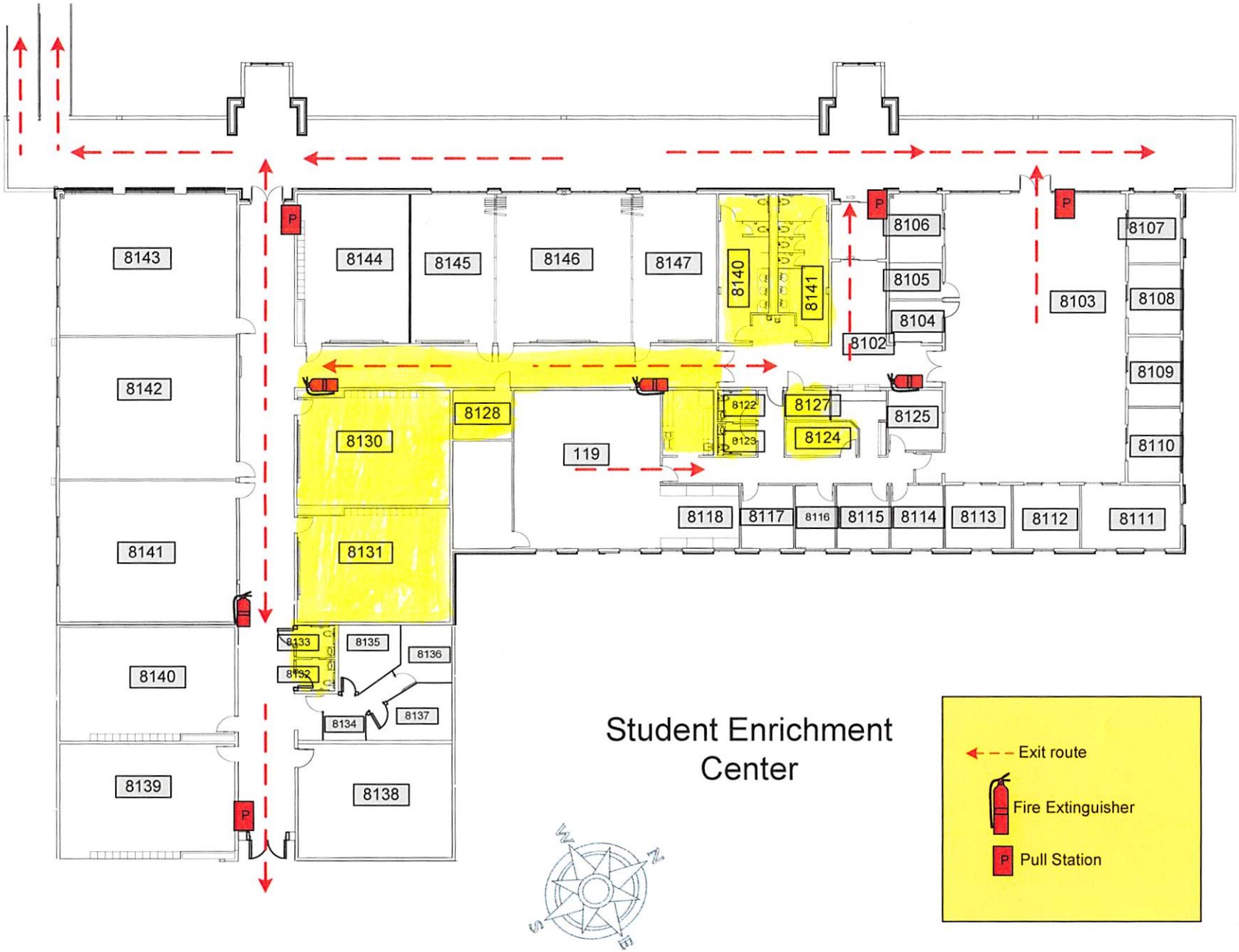
Pull Station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Student Enrichment Center
Exit route
Fire Extinguisher
Pull Station

Fire Extinguisher

Pull Station

Exit Route

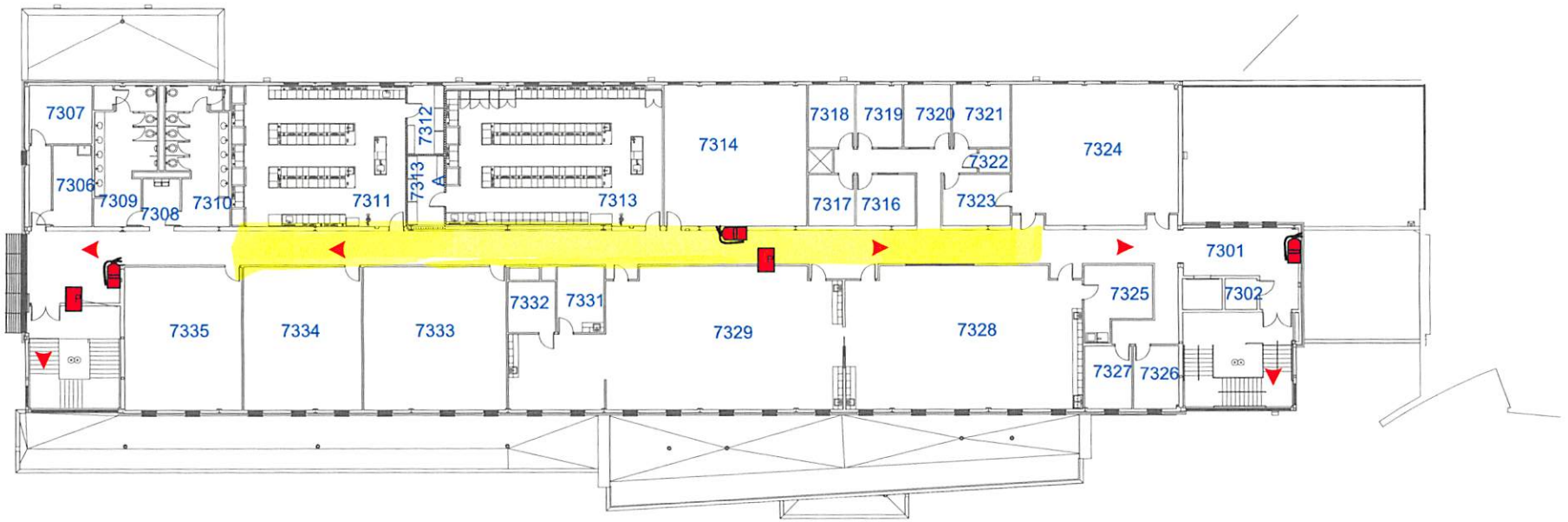
Academic Commons
First Floor

Academic Commons
Second Floor

Exit route

Fire Extinguisher

P Pull Station



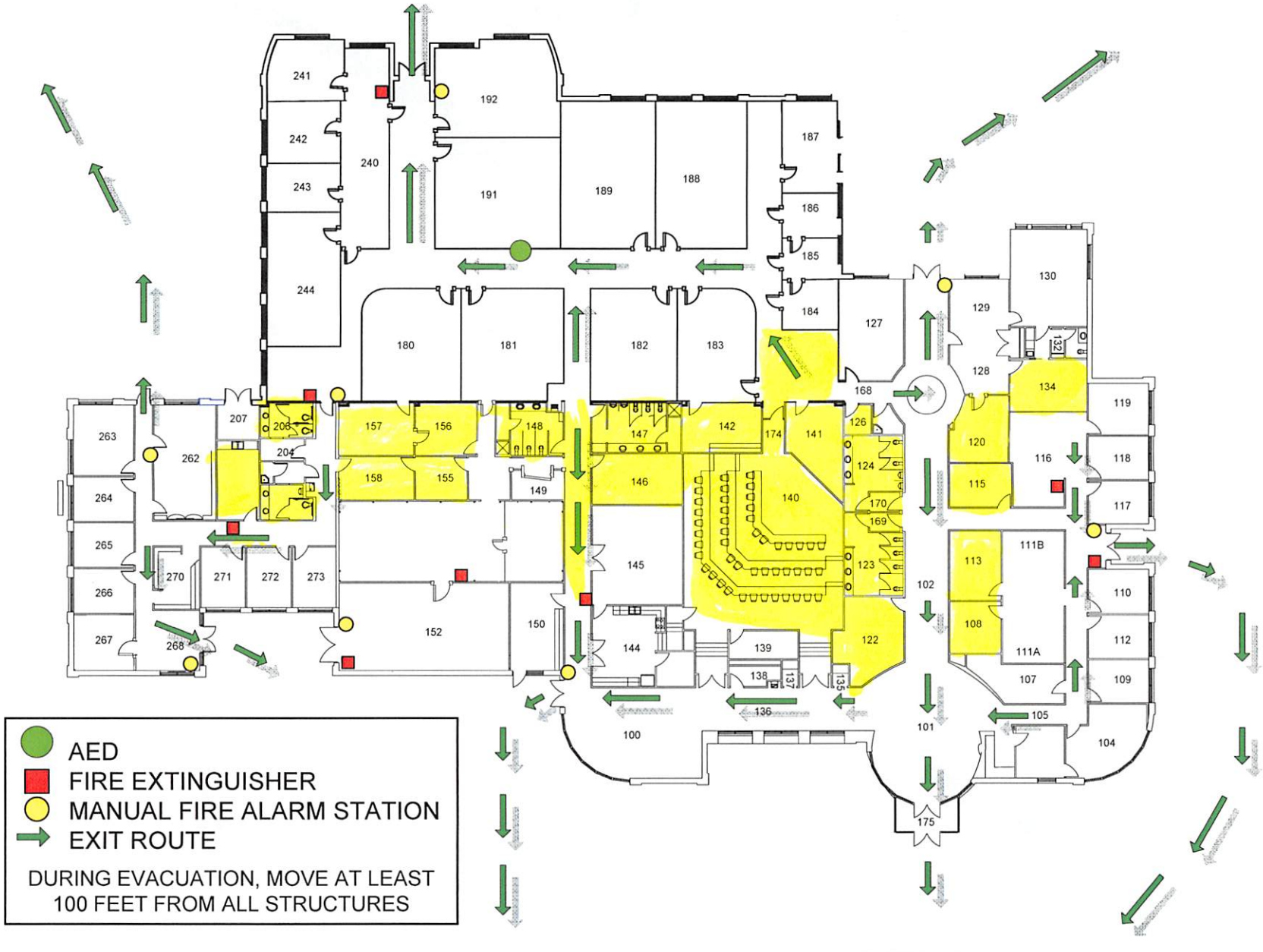
Academic Commons
Third Floor

Exit route

Fire Extinguisher

P Pull Station

EVACUATION MAP

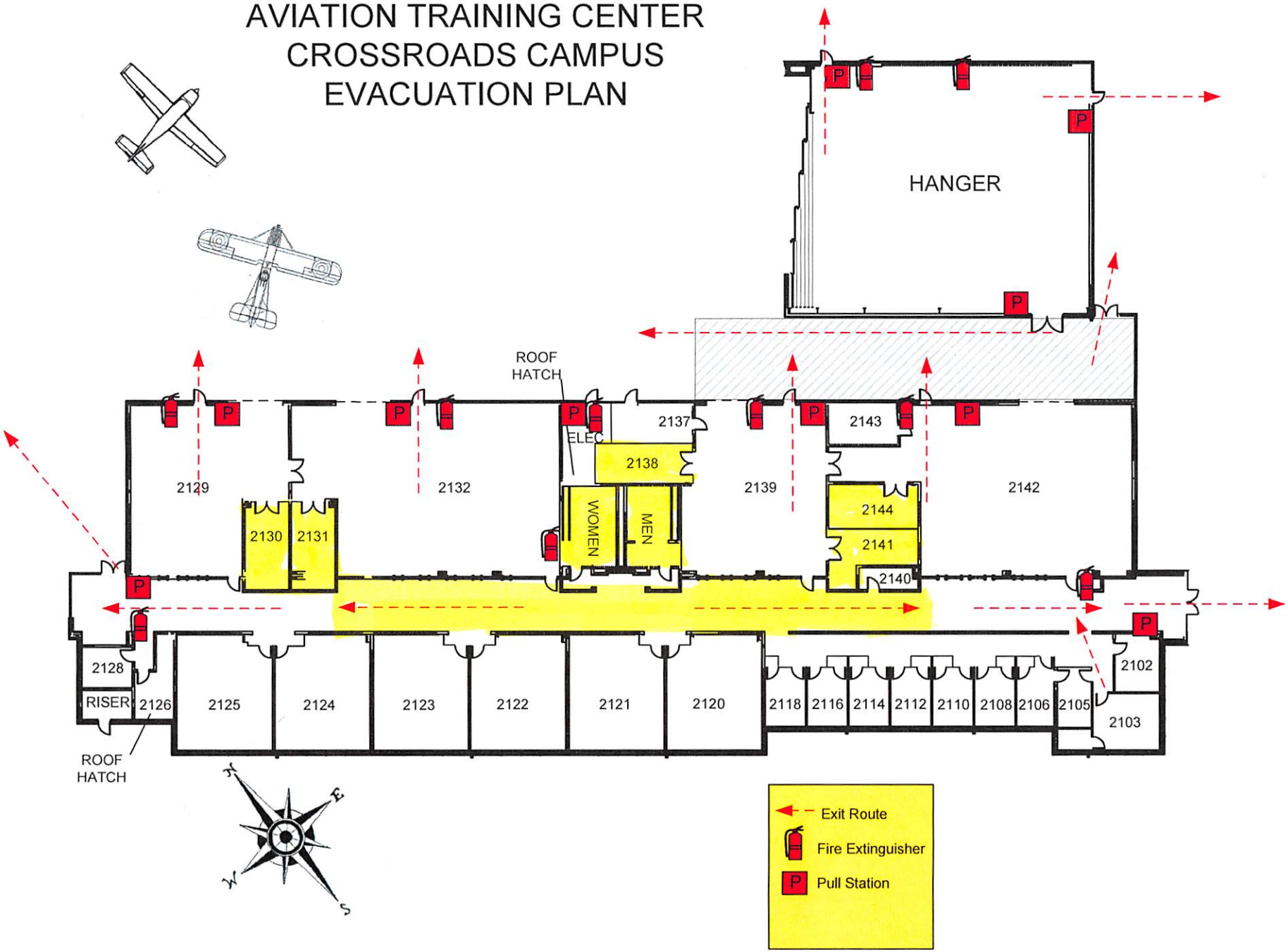


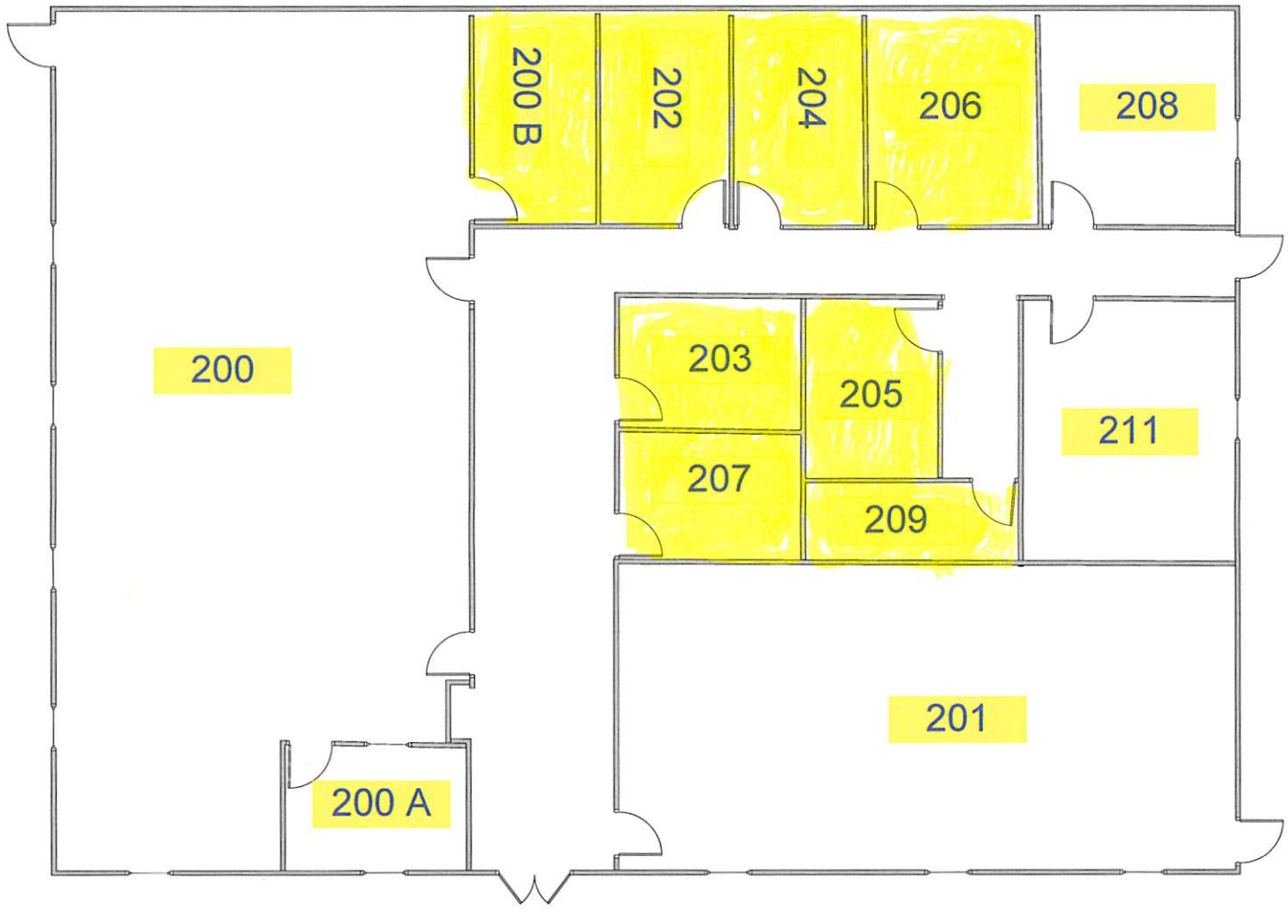
- AED
- FIRE EXTINGUISHER
- MANUAL FIRE ALARM STATION
- EXIT ROUTE

DURING EVACUATION, MOVE AT LEAST
100 FEET FROM ALL STRUCTURES

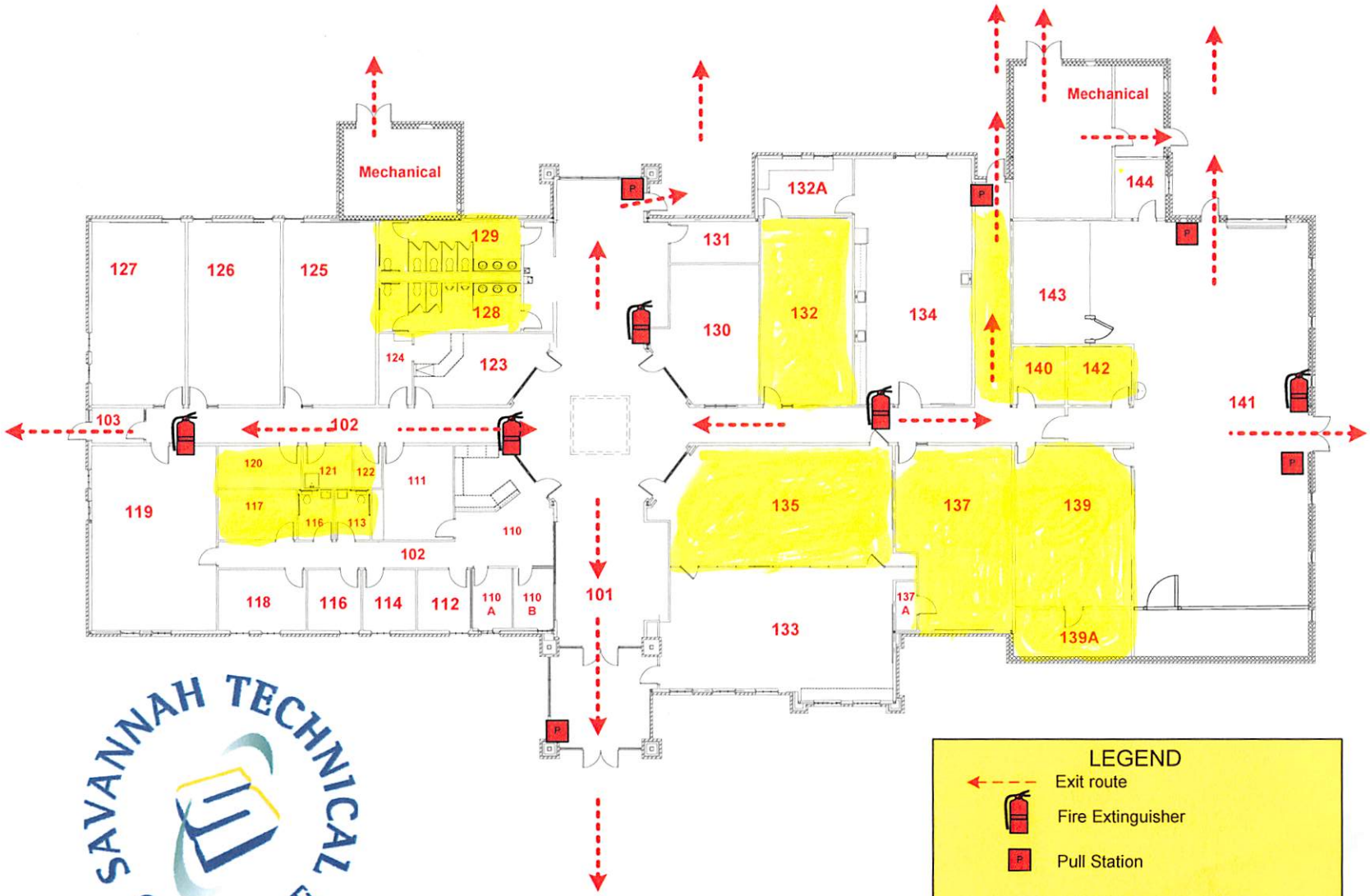
CROSSROADS CAMPUS

AVIATION TRAINING CENTER
CROSSROADS CAMPUS
EVACUATION PLAN



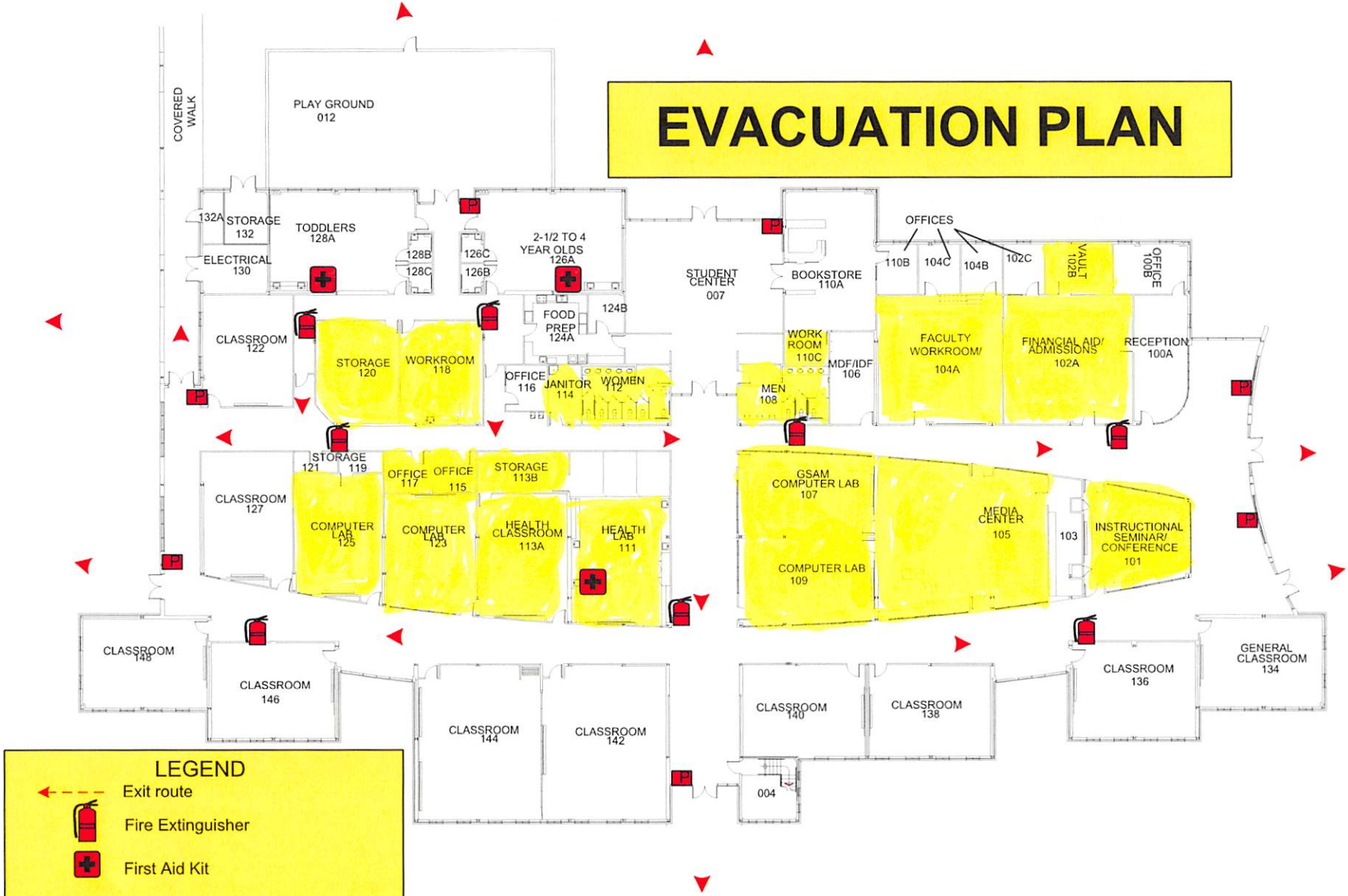


Cosmetology Building
Effingham Campus



SAVANNAH TECHNICAL COLLEGE
Effingham Campus

EVACUATION PLAN



LEGEND

- Exit route
- Fire Extinguisher
- First Aid Kit

AFTER EVACUATING, MOVE AT LEAST 100 FEET FROM ALL STRUCTURES

LIBRTY CAMPUS

EVACUATION PLAN

LEGEND

Exit route

Fire Extinguisher

First Aid Kit

AFTER EVACUATING, MOVE AT LEAST
100 FEET FROM ALL STRUCTURES

LIBRTY CAMPUS

RENE KEMP BUILDING