

Seating and Evacuation at Carver-Hawkeye Arena for UI Commencement Ceremonies

The University of Iowa wants all attendees of commencement ceremonies at Carver-Hawkeye Arena to safely enjoy their experience.

The policies described below have been reviewed by the state fire marshal, the UI fire safety coordinator, and the UI Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity to ensure safety and accessibility for UI students, family members, and other attendees at Carver-Hawkeye Arena commencement ceremonies:

- Seating at Carver-Hawkeye Arena is designed to allow emergency evacuation through the exits on the upper concourse and/or the floor tunnel. Because the floor tunnel may become blocked by a fire or other obstruction during an emergency, the university requires that attendees who are unable to navigate the stairs not be seated on or near the floor and must be seated in the Feller Club Room or on the upper concourse level. During a fire or emergency, elevators may not function and floor-seated attendees unable to navigate stairs might not have an exit pathway. Floor seating is generally reserved for graduates, faculty, and special guests. Concourse seating is available for all other attendees.
- Attendees who are unable to navigate the stairs in Carver-Hawkeye Arena may find seating in two places, both of which are level with the West doors entrance and do not require attendees to navigate stairs or use an elevator:
 - Attendees may find seating in the Feller Club Room for themselves and up to two companions. This room is equipped with large television screens and commencement ceremonies can be watched from here. No food or beverage will be permitted in this room.
 - Attendees are also welcome to view the ceremony from the upper concourse level. Wheelchair and scooter spaces can be found in sections K – N on the upper concourse level. The ceremony can be viewed from here or on large screens that can be found in these sections. Attendees should provide their own wheelchair if needed.
- During a UI commencement at Carver-Hawkeye Arena, elevator use may be limited to staff and special event participants, such as faculty or graduates at a graduation ceremony. This is to prevent persons who are unable to navigate the stairs from using the elevator to access the floor, only to be trapped there in the case of a fire or other emergency.
- Attendees who have a Disabilities Parking Permit (plate, placard, or sticker) may park in lot 46, adjacent to Carver-Hawkeye Arena. Public Safety officers will restrict entrance to this lot to only those guests with these state issued permits. From lot 46, attendees should enter the arena through the West doors. All other attendees may use any other parking available and may enter through the South and West doors.

- Graduates who are unable to navigate the stairs of Carver-Hawkeye Arena and who plan to participate in the ceremony should call the Office of the Registrar (Graduation Analysis) at 319-335-0228, email registrar-degree-applications@uiowa.edu, or visit Room 2 Jessup Hall at least one week prior to the ceremony to make necessary arrangements.
- A sign language interpreter will be on-stage to interpret the ceremony.

Frequently Asked Questions

I'm a Hawkeye fan who is unable to go up and down stairs, and I go to games at the Carver-Hawkeye Arena all the time. They've never made me sit on the concourse before. Why do I have to sit on the concourse at a graduation?

Evacuation procedures approved by the state fire marshal require attendees seated on the floor to exit the building through the floor tunnel. However, because the floor tunnel may be blocked by a fire or other obstruction during an emergency, procedures require trained staff to carry persons who are unable to navigate the stairs to concourse exits.

At graduation events, those trained staff are generally not available; therefore the university requires that persons who are unable to navigate the stairs be seated on the upper concourse.

Why can't I just use the elevator?

During a fire, state law requires that the elevators shut down for the safety of attendees. This is to prevent attendees from becoming trapped inside a damaged elevator.

I've attended graduation events at Carver-Hawkeye Arena in 2007 and 2008, and was allowed to sit in floor seating then. Why can't I now?

In May 2012, following building renovations, the state fire marshal, the UI fire safety coordinator, and the UI Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity determined that for safety reasons access to the floor via the elevators during non-university sponsored events should be limited to staff who are working the event and graduates who may need access to the elevator. Accessible seating for those who are unable to navigate the stairs is designated on the concourse.