

Overview

All buildings must have a way of allowing occupants fast exit to the outside or a safe place of refuge in case of an emergency. Emergency exit routes are not something that you think about all of the time, but a lot of effort goes into making sure they are safe and ready to use.

What is an exit route?

An "exit route" is a clear path of exit travel from any point in a workplace to a place of safety. The exit route can include aisles, stairs, ramps, etc. A workplace must have at least two exit routes that are remote from each other. If a fire or other emergency blocks access to one exit route, the other exit route can be used.

Exit routes must be kept free of obstructing material or equipment, and they must have enough lighting. The purpose of an exit route is to reach an exit—the exit route cannot lead employees toward a dead end or through a room that can be locked.

The exit route must be wide enough to handle all of the people who may use it.

Signs must be posted along the exit route to show the direction of travel to the nearest exit.

The exit route may not direct employees toward areas where there are unprotected materials that burn very quickly, emit poisonous fumes, or are explosive.

What is an exit?

An "exit" is part of the exit route. Exits are separated from other areas and provide a protected way of travel to the exit discharge. Exits must be separated from the rest of the workplace, and they must be protected by a self-closing fire door.

Each exit must be easy to see and marked with an "Exit" sign.

Any door that might be mistaken for an exit must be marked "Not an Exit" or with a sign showing what the door leads to ("To Basement," "Storeroom," "Linen Closet," etc.).

Exit doors must be easy to open without having to use keys or tools.

Exits must lead to a safe area with enough room for all of the people who are likely to use the exit.

What must my employer do?

Your employer will explain how to locate exits in your facility and what you should do if you are required to exit the building in an emergency.

What must I do?

You must know at least two exits from your area of the workplace.

You must not block or obstruct exits or paths of exit, and alert your employer if you notice exits are blocked.

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