

Safety Zone



Egress

Means of egress is an important part of your loss control activities. Proper means of egress allows for a quick, unobstructed evacuation during an emergency. Emergency lighting, exit signage and alarm systems will assist in evacuation. During a self-inspection of a facility, the means of egress, emergency lighting, exit signage and alarms should be checked and any deficiencies should be corrected.

Child – Window Guards

Install approved window child guards in all apartments and public hallway windows where children under the age of 11 reside, or when requested by tenant. Windows should not open more than 4 ½ inches above the window guard; window stoppers must be placed on window frames to prevent the window from opening more than the specified (4 ½ inches) height. In addition, window guards must be installed using one-way or tamperproof screws.

Exceptions are limited to:

- The window provides access to the fire escape
- The window is a secondary egress in a first floor apartment where there are fire escapes on upper floors
- A window has a permanently mounted and properly installed air conditioner



Doors – Operation of Exit

Establish a procedure to ensure that all exit doors open freely from the inside whenever the building is occupied.

Doors – Locked After Hours

Maintain all doors that are difficult to open against door pressure, such as those with slide bolts, hasps, hooks and eyes or similar types of locking devices, unlocked during occupied hours. Where doors are locked during closed hours, post signs or placards (containing letters at least 1 inch high on a contrasting background) stating “THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED DURING BUSINESS HOURS.”

Doors – Panic Hardware

Replace locking hardware with exit panic hardware. If security is a concern, include an alarm that sounds when the door is opened.

Doors – Releasing Devices

Provide exit doors with lock release mechanisms such as a knob, handle, panic bar or other simple type of releasing device, which requires a simple single movement to open the door. Slide bolts, hasps, hooks and eyes or similar types of locking devices, which are difficult to open against door pressure, are not to be installed or used. Where doors are locked during closed hours, post signs or placards (containing letters at least 1 inch high on a contrasting background) stating “THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED DURING BUSINESS HOURS.”

Doors – Egress

Post signs or placards (containing letters at least 1 inch high on a contrasting background) stating “THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED DURING BUSINESS HOURS” where exterior exit doors are protected by double cylinder deadbolts.

Emergency Evacuation Plan

Develop and provide a written emergency evacuation plan covering perils of fire, earthquake, bomb threat, etc. Include assignment of responsibility, publicize to all occupants and conduct frequent practice drills.

Emergency Exit Diagrams

Install emergency evacuation diagrams on all floors. This will provide all occupants with the routes of primary and secondary egress from the premises. This will enhance evacuation procedures and reduce this liability exposure.

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Emergency Lighting (HAB – more than 4 floors or 12 units, basements or where warranted)

Install emergency lighting throughout each floor. This should remain operable during a power outage or other emergency, to provide adequate lighting in major areas of the facility and along designated paths of egress.

Emergency Lighting/Illuminated Exit Signs – Inspection and Testing

Test emergency lighting systems in monthly documented inspections to assure that lighting is operable during a power outage emergency. Annually also test for 1-1/2 hour duration. Repair or replace exits sign/emergency lighting that does not illuminate during test mode, as this indicates they will not function properly in a power failure when needed most.

Evacuation Maps

Provide evacuation maps, with designated exit routes, affixed in strategic areas throughout the facility. The maps should depict the employee's location and at least two (2) routes of travel to designated exits and relocation zones.

Exit Doors

Ensure all exit doors are kept unlocked from the inside to facilitate a quick and safe evacuation in the event of a fire emergency. If locking is necessary for security reasons, the existing hardware should be replaced with panic bars.

Exit Signs – Directional

Place signs reading "EXIT" to indicate each exit or exit route. Where the path of travel is not readily apparent, signs with an arrow should be used to indicate the direction of travel.

Exit Signs (Internally Illuminated – HAB – more than 4 floors or 12 units, basements or where warranted)

Properly mark required routes of egress and exits, throughout each floor, with appropriate internally illuminated EXIT signs in accordance with NFPA 101 - Life Safety Code. In all cases, EXIT or directional signs need to be conspicuously mounted on every floor, and of a color readily discernible from surrounding/background colors. Non-exits need to also be clearly identified by purpose or "NO EXIT" to prevent them from becoming points of entrapment in the event of fire.

Exit Signs (Commercial Use)

Properly mark required routes of egress and exits throughout each floor with internally illuminated EXIT signs in accordance with NFPA 101 - Life Safety Code. In all cases, EXIT signs need to be conspicuously mounted, and of a color readily discernible from surrounding / background colors. Non-exits need to also be clearly identified "NO EXIT" to prevent them from becoming points of entrapment in the event of fire.

Exits – Aisle Width

Maintain clear aisle space for access and egress at least 28 inches throughout the premises.

Exits – Basement Apartment, Sleeping/Living Quarters

Obtain and submit a copy of Certificate of Occupancy for your building to confirm basement apartments/occupants are permitted occupancies. If the basement has any apartments/spaces that are not permitted occupancies, obtain a current Certificate of Occupancy for the applicable apartments/spaces.

Exits – Egress and Common Area Lighting

Provide sufficient illumination in all egress and common areas during periods of darkness. Lighting may be continuous, timer or motion activated. Proper lighting aids in safe use, reducing chances of trip and falls, during normal or emergency egress use.

Exits – Emergency Lights

Install emergency lighting throughout each floor, which would remain operable during a power outage or other emergency, to provide adequate lighting in major areas of the facility and along designated paths of egress.

Exits – Fire Escapes - Obstruction

Maintain fire escapes free from obstructions or interference. Prohibit storage or any obstruction of escape paths.

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Exits – Fire Escapes – Obstruction (Air Conditioner)

Relocate air conditioners so they do not interfere or obstruct the use of exterior fire escapes. When relocating, install proper metal brackets to support protruding individual air conditioning units on windows to prevent any falling hazard, and remove any loose objects (such as wood blocking, bricks, etc.) which may be used to support or level an A/C unit.

Exits – Secondary Means of Basement Egress - Unconfirmed

Provide or document existence of a separate and remote secondary means of egress for all occupancy units located below the ground floor. These secondary means of egress must conform to NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, which specifies standards for acceptable secondary means of egress in terms of hardware, location and placement. An alternative may be to provide full and complete automatic fire sprinkler protection throughout the entire building, fire rated stairwell(s) and post emergency evacuation plans on all floors.

Exits – Storage in Hallways, Stairs and Along Exit Routes

Eliminate storage of any materials in the common hallways, stairs, and along egress routes, as such storage is a potential obstruction during an emergency and should be strictly forbidden. Not only does such storage inhibit rapid egress, it increases the likelihood that fire may start in or spread to these key escape routes.

Exits Blocked

Remove all items blocking exits. According to NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, all emergency egress routes should be free of any obstacles that might impede an emergency evacuation. It is required that all exit routes are kept clear at all times. The doors should be fitted with panic bars on the inside and properly working locks to prevent unauthorized entry.

Exits - Obstructions

Maintain all means of egress free from any obstruction to full and instant use in case of fire or other emergency.

The above information was compiled from our internal authorized recommendations. For additional resources and other safety and risk management subjects, visit the AmTrust Loss Control website:

<https://amtrustfinancial.com/loss-control>

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