



TEAMSTERS Safety & Health FACTS

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EMERGENCY EXITS

29 CFR 1910.36 and 1910.37

These OSHA standards describe requirements for building exits. Every building must be provided with enough exits of the proper capacity to allow every occupant a convenient means of escape in the event of a fire or emergency. The exits should be arranged and maintained to provide free unobstructed escape. Exit doors should not be locked or fastened in a way that would limit escape from inside the building.

Every exit should be:

- ♦ clearly visible. If the direction of travel to the nearest exit is not obvious, there must be signs which indicate the direction of travel with an arrow.
- ♦ marked with readily visible signs which are distinctive in color and contrast with the surroundings. Every exit sign should have letters which are at least six inches tall and the principal strokes of the letters must be at least 3/4 of an inch wide.
- ♦ kept clear, maintained free of obstructions at all times, and must not be obscured by anything such as draperies or mirrors.
- ♦ maintained in a clean, unobstructed state so that at no time would travel through the exit or exit route be impeded. However, if the building is designed in such a way that a blocked exit would endanger the occupants, then the building should be equipped with at least two exits, remote from one another, so that the possibility of both being blocked by a fire would be minimal.

Any doorway or passageway that is not part of an exit or exit route, but could be mistaken as an exit or exit route, should be clearly marked to minimize the likelihood of someone making such a mistake. Any door, passage, or stairway that is not an exit but could be mistaken for one should be marked as 'Not an Exit' or should be identified (labeled 'Closet', for instance).

A door from a room to an exit must be the side-hinged, swinging type and should swing out with the direction of travel, if the room is occupied by more than 50 people.

If a building is equipped with lights, adequate and reliable lights should be provided for all exit facilities. If a building is designed in such a way that all occupants would not be immediately aware of a fire, the building should also be equipped with an alarm system. (For more information, see the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) safety and health factsheet about alarm systems.)

These standards also require that all automatic sprinkler systems shall be kept operable and routinely tested and inspected. All fire alarm systems should also be kept in operable condition as required by 1910.165. All equipment such as sprinkler systems, fire detection and alarm systems, exit lighting, fire doors, and other equipment must be maintained in operating condition at all times.