

FAST+TALK™

Are my Exit Doors Compliant?

How would you escape from your workplace in an emergency? Do you know where all the exits are in case your first choice is too crowded? Are you sure the doors will be unlocked, and that the exit access, such as a hallway, will not be blocked during a fire, explosion, or other crisis? Knowing the answers to these questions will get you out safely during an emergency.

Exit Routes

An exit route is a continuous and unobstructed path of exit travel from any point within a workplace to a place of safety. An exit route consists of 3 parts:

EXIT ACCESS - The portion of the exit route that leads to the exit.

EXIT - The portion of the exit route that provides a protected way to exit discharge.

EXIT DISCHARGE - The part of the exit route that leads directly outside or to a street, walkway, refuge area, public way, or open space with exit access.

How many exits are required?

Workplaces are generally required to have at least two exit routes, but this may differ for a number of reasons. More than two exits are required if two exit routes would not allow safe evacuation based on number of employees, building size, or arrangement of the workplace. (OSHA attempts to clarify this subjective requirement by referring employers to NFPA 101-2009, Life Safety Code or International Fire Code (IFC)-2009.)

Exit routes cannot go through rooms that might be locked.

If access to the door that leads outside requires employees to go through an office, lunchroom, or some other room with lockable doors, that is not an exit route and should not be labeled as such.



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OSHA's Design and Construction Regulations (OSHA 1910.36, Means of Egress)

- ☒ Exit discharge leads must be large enough to accommodate the building occupants likely to use the exit route.
- ☒ Exit stairs that continue beyond the level on which the exit discharge is located must be interrupted at that level by doors, partitions, or other effective means that clearly indicate the direction of travel leading to the exit discharge.
- ☒ **An exit door must be unlocked.** Employees must be able to open an exit route door from the inside at all times without keys. A panic bar or similar device that locks only from the outside is permitted on exit discharge doors.
- ☒ **The exit door must be side-hinged.** Also, a side-hinged door must be used to connect any room to an exit route.
- ☒ **The door that connects any room to an exit route must swing out in the direction of exit travel** if the room is designed to be occupied by more than 50 people, or if the room is a high hazard area (contents are likely to burn or explode)
- ☒ **An exit route must meet minimum height and width requirements.** Ceilings of exit routes must be at least 7 feet 6 inches high. An exit access must be at least 28 inches at all points. Where there is only one exit access leading to an exit or exit discharge, the width of the exit and exit discharge must be at least equal to the width of the exit access. Objects that project into the exit must not reduce this width.
- ☒ **An exit must be separated by fire-resistant materials.** Construction materials used to separate an exit from other parts of the workplace must have a 1-hour fire resistance rating if the exit connects three or fewer stories and a 2 hour fire resistance rating if the exit connects 4 or more stories.

*Don't get caught – maintaining proper exit routes is essential to employee safety.
Are your emergency exit routes compliant?*