

CHAPTER 10

MEANS OF EGRESS

SECTION 1001 ADMINISTRATION

1001.1 Scope. The provisions of this chapter shall govern the maintenance and utilization of means of egress.

1001.2 Minimum requirements. It shall be unlawful to alter a building or structure in a manner that will reduce the number of exits or the capacity of the means of egress to less than required by the *Uniform Construction Code* in effect at the time of construction or the *Uniform Fire Code*, as applicable.

1001.2.1. A structure shall not be altered in any manner affecting the number or capacity of means of egress without first obtaining a permit from the construction official.

1001.2.2. Structures or portions of structures undergoing repair, renovation, alteration or reconstruction may be occupied as permitted by the construction official.

[B] SECTION 1002 DEFINITIONS

1002.1 Definitions. The following words and terms shall, for the purposes of this chapter and as used elsewhere in this code, have the meanings shown herein.

ACCESSIBLE MEANS OF EGRESS. A continuous and unobstructed way of egress travel from any accessible point in a building or facility to a public way.

AISLE. An exit access component that defines and provides a path of egress travel.

AISLE ACCESSWAY. That portion of an exit access that leads to an aisle.

ALTERNATING TREAD DEVICE. A device that has a series of steps between 50 and 70 degrees (0.87 and 1.22 rad) from horizontal, usually attached to a center support rail in an alternating manner so that the user does not have both feet on the same level at the same time.

AREA OF REFUGE. An area where persons unable to use stairways can remain temporarily to await instructions or assistance during emergency evacuation.

BLEACHERS. Tiered seating facilities.

COMMON PATH OF EGRESS TRAVEL. That portion of exit access which the occupants are required to traverse before two separate and distinct paths of egress travel to two exits are available. Paths that merge are common paths of travel. Common paths of egress travel shall be included within the permitted travel distance.

CORRIDOR. An enclosed exit access component that defines and provides a path of egress travel to an exit.

DOOR, BALANCED. A door equipped with double-pivoted hardware so designed as to cause a semicounterbalanced swing action when opening.

EGRESS COURT. A court or yard which provides access to a public way for one or more exits.

EMERGENCY ESCAPE AND RESCUE OPENING. An operable window, door or other similar device that provides for a means of escape and access for rescue in the event of an emergency.

EXIT. That portion of a means of egress system which is separated from other interior spaces of a building or structure by fire-resistance-rated construction and opening protectives as required to provide a protected path of egress travel between the exit access and the exit discharge. Exits include exterior exit doors at ground level, exit enclosures, exit passageways, exterior exit stairs, exterior exit ramps and horizontal exits.

EXIT, HORIZONTAL. A path of egress travel from one building to an area in another building on approximately the same level, or a path of egress travel through or around a wall or partition to an area on approximately the same level in the same building, which affords safety from fire and smoke from the area of incidence and areas communicating therewith.

EXIT ACCESS. That portion of a means of egress system that leads from any occupied portion of a building or structure to an exit.

EXIT DISCHARGE. That portion of a means of egress system between the termination of an exit and a public way.

EXIT DISCHARGE, LEVEL OF. The horizontal plane located at the point at which an exit terminates and an exit discharge begins.

EXIT ENCLOSURE. An exit component that is separated from other interior spaces of a building or structure by fire-resistance-rated construction and opening protectives, and provides for a protected path of egress travel in a vertical or horizontal direction to the exit discharge or the public way.

EXIT PASSAGeway. An exit component that is separated from all other interior spaces of a building or structure by fire-resistance-rated construction and opening protectives, and provides for a protected path of egress travel in a horizontal direction to the exit discharge or the public way.

FIRE EXIT HARDWARE. Panic hardware that is listed for use on fire door assemblies.

FLOOR AREA, GROSS. The floor area within the inside perimeter of the exterior walls of the building under consideration, exclusive of vent shafts and courts, without deduction for corridors, stairways, closets, the thickness of interior walls, columns or other features. The floor area of a building, or portion thereof, not provided with surrounding exterior walls shall be the usable area under the horizontal projection of the roof or floor above. The gross floor area shall not include shafts with no openings or interior courts.

MEANS OF EGRESS

FLOOR AREA, NET. The actual occupied area not including unoccupied accessory areas such as corridors, stairways, toilet rooms, mechanical rooms and closets.

FOLDING AND TELESCOPIC SEATING. Tiered seating facilities having an overall shape and size that are capable of being reduced for purposes of moving or storing.

GRANDSTAND. Tiered seating facilities.

GUARD. A building component or a system of building components located at or near the open sides of elevated walking surfaces that minimizes the possibility of a fall from the walking surface to a lower level.

HANDRAIL. A horizontal or sloping rail intended for grasping by the hand for guidance or support.

MEANS OF EGRESS. A continuous and unobstructed path of vertical and horizontal egress travel from any occupied portion of a building or structure to a public way. A means of egress consists of three separate and distinct parts: the exit access, the exit and the exit discharge.

MERCHANDISE PAD. A merchandise pad is an area for display of merchandise surrounded by aisles, permanent fixtures or walls. Merchandise pads contain elements such as nonfixed and moveable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions from which customers browse or shop.

NOSING. The leading edge of treads of stairs and of landings at the top of stairway flights.

OCCUPANT LOAD. The total number of persons permitted to occupy a building or portion thereof at any one time.

OVERCROWDING. A condition in which the number of occupants exceeds the total number of persons permitted to occupy a structure at any one time.

PANIC HARDWARE. A door-latching assembly incorporating a device that releases the latch upon the application of a force in the direction of egress travel.

PLACE OF ASSEMBLY. A place of assembly shall be a room or space accommodating individuals for religious, recreational, political or social or amusement purposes or for the consumption of food and drink, including all connected rooms or spaces with a common means of egress and entrance.

PUBLIC WAY. A street, alley or other parcel of land open to the outside air leading to a street, that has been deeded, dedicated or otherwise permanently appropriated to the public for public use and which has a clear width and height of not less than 10 feet (3048 mm).

RAMP. A walking surface that has a running slope steeper than one unit vertical in 20 units horizontal (5-percent slope).

SCISSOR STAIR. Two interlocking stairways providing two separate paths of egress located within one stairwell enclosure.

SMOKE-PROTECTED ASSEMBLY SEATING. Seating served by means of egress that is not subject to smoke accumulation within or under a structure.

STAIR. A change in elevation, consisting of one or more risers.

STAIRWAY. One or more flights of stairs, either exterior or interior, with the necessary landings and platforms connecting them, to form a continuous and uninterrupted passage from one level to another.

STAIRWAY, EXTERIOR. A stairway that is open on at least one side, except for required structural columns, beams, handrails and guards. The adjoining open areas shall be either yards, courts or public ways. The other sides of the exterior stairway need not be open.

STAIRWAY, INTERIOR. A stairway not meeting the definition of an exterior stairway.

STAIRWAY, SPIRAL. A stairway having a closed circular form in its plan view with uniform section-shaped treads attached to and radiating from a minimum-diameter supporting column.

WINDER. A tread with nonparallel edges.

SECTION 1003 GENERAL MEANS OF EGRESS

1003.1 Owner responsibility. The owner or lessee of every structure shall be responsible for the safety of all persons in, or occupying, such premises with respect to the adequacy of means of egress therefrom.

1003.2 Egress plan. Where required by Section 404.2, a plan complying with Section 404.3 shall be submitted to the fire official and an approved copy shall be kept on the premises of assembly occupancies.

1003.3 Occupant load. The occupant load for structures shall be maintained pursuant to the *New Jersey Uniform Construction Code* provisions in effect at the time of construction. The occupant load for structures constructed under standards in force prior to adoption of the *New Jersey Uniform Construction Code* shall be calculated in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:70-4.11(f)3.

1003.4 Posting of occupant load. An assembly occupancy shall be posted with an approved legible sign in contrasting colors conspicuously located near the main point of egress from the room or space stating the number of occupants permitted within such space. The number of occupants permitted shall be in accordance with the current certificate of occupancy issued pursuant to the *New Jersey Uniform Construction Code* for structures constructed and occupied under the provisions of that code, and shall be in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:70-4.11(f)3 for structures constructed under standards in force prior to adoption of the *New Jersey Uniform Construction Code* for which structures no such certificate of occupancy has subsequently been issued.

1003.5 Overcrowding. A person shall not permit overcrowding or admittance of any person beyond the approved occupant load. The fire official, upon finding overcrowded conditions or obstructions in aisles, passageways or other means of egress, or upon finding any condition which constitutes a hazard to life and safety, shall cause the occupancy, performance, presentation, spectacle or entertainment to be stopped until such a condition or obstruction is corrected and the addition of any further

occupants prohibited until the approved occupant load is reestablished.

1003.6 Operator responsibility. The operator or the person responsible for the operation of an assembly or educational occupancy shall check egress facilities before such building is occupied to determine compliance with this chapter. If such inspection reveals that any element of the required means of egress cannot be accessed, is obstructed, locked, fastened or otherwise unsuited for immediate utilization, admittance to the building shall not be permitted until necessary corrective action has been completed.

1003.7. Deleted.

SECTION 1004 Deleted

SECTION 1005 Deleted

SECTION 1006 MEANS OF EGRESS ILLUMINATION

1006.1 Illumination required. The means of egress, including the exit discharge, shall be illuminated at all times the building space served by the means of egress is occupied.

Exceptions:

1. Occupancies in Group U.
2. Aisle accessways in Group A.
3. Dwelling units and sleeping units.

1006.2 through 1006.4. Deleted.

SECTION 1007 Deleted

SECTION 1008 DOORS, GATES AND TURNSTILES

1008.1 Doors. Doors provided for egress purposes in numbers greater than required by this code shall meet the requirements of this section.

Means of egress doors shall be readily distinguishable from the adjacent construction and finishes such that the doors are easily recognizable as doors. Mirrors or similar reflecting materials shall not be used on means of egress doors. Means of egress doors shall not be concealed by curtains, drapes, decorations or similar materials.

1008.1.1 through 1008.1.3. Deleted.

1008.1.3.1 through 1008.1.3.4. Deleted.

1008.1.3.5 Security grilles. Horizontal sliding or vertical security grilles are permitted at the main exit and shall be openable from the inside without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort during periods that the space is occupied. The grilles shall remain secured in the

full-open position during the period of occupancy by the general public.

1008.1.4 through 1008.1.7. Deleted.

1008.1.8 Door operations. Egress doors shall be readily openable from the egress side without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort.

1008.1.8.1 through 1008.1.8.3. Deleted.

1008.1.8.4 Bolt locks. Manually operated flush bolts or surface bolts are not permitted.

Exceptions:

1. On doors not required for egress in individual dwelling units or sleeping units.
2. Where a pair of doors serves a storage or equipment room, manually operated edge- or surface-mounted bolts are permitted on the inactive leaf.

1008.1.8.5. Deleted.

1008.1.8.6. Deleted.

1008.1.8.7 Stairway doors. Interior stairway means of egress doors shall be openable from both sides without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort.

Exceptions:

1. Stairway discharge doors shall be openable from the egress side and shall only be locked from the opposite side.
2. This section shall not apply to doors arranged in accordance with Section 403.12 of the building subcode of the *Uniform Construction Code*.
3. In stairways serving not more than four stories, doors are permitted to be locked from the side opposite the egress side, provided they are openable from the egress side and capable of being unlocked simultaneously without unlatching upon a signal from the fire command center, if present, or a signal by emergency personnel from a single location inside the main entrance to the building.

1008.1.9. Deleted.

1008.2. Deleted.

1008.3. Deleted.

1008.4 Locks permitted. Locks or fasteners shall not be installed on egress doors, except in accordance with the following conditions:

1. In mental, penal or other institutions where the security of inmates is necessary, in which case properly trained supervisory personnel shall be continuously on duty and approved provisions shall be made to remove occupants safely in case of a fire or other emergencies.
2. In problem security areas, special-purpose door alarms or locking devices shall be approved prior to installation. Manually operated edge or surface-molded flush bolts shall be prohibited.

3. Where the door hardware is in compliance with the *Uniform Construction Code*.

1008.5 Special performance features. All hardware systems or assemblies utilized in the operation of a door, including special performance features, shall be inspected for proper operation. The inspection shall determine that the hardware operates as required by this code.

1008.6 Panic hardware. All doors equipped with latching devices serving rooms or spaces with an assembly or educational occupancy with an occupant load greater than 100 shall have the approved panic hardware maintained in compliance with the construction code in effect at the time of first occupancy.

1008.7 Closing. All fire doors shall comply with Section 703.

**SECTION 1009
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**SECTION 1010
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**SECTION 1011
EXIT SIGNS**

1011.1 Exit signs. All means of egress shall be indicated with approved "Exit" signs where required by the construction code in effect at the time of first occupancy or N.J.A.C. 5:70-4 et seq., as applicable. All "Exit" signs shall be maintained visible, and all illuminated exit signs shall be illuminated at all times the structure is occupied. Supplemental internally illuminated directional signs, when necessary, shall be installed in accordance with the technical requirements of the *Uniform Construction Code* indicating the direction and way of egress.

1011.2 Information signs. A sign shall be provided at each floor landing in all interior stairways more than three stories above grade, designating the floor level above the floor of discharge. All elevator lobby call stations on all floor levels shall be identified by approved signs in accordance with the requirements for new buildings in the *Uniform Construction Code*.

Exception: The emergency sign shall not be required for elevators that are part of an accessible means of egress complying with the construction code in effect at the time of first occupancy.

1011.3 Mistaken egress. All doors, passageways and stairways that are neither a means of egress nor provide access to a means of egress and are located or arranged so as to be mistaken for a means of egress, shall be properly identified as to their purpose.

1011.4 Sign obscuration. Decorations, furnishings and equipment impairing the visibility of egress signs shall not be permitted. Brightly illuminated signs for other than egress purposes, displays or objects shall not be located in or near the line of vision to the required egress sign when of a character so as to detract attention from the egress sign such that the sign will not be noticed.

1011.5. Deleted.

**SECTION 1012
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**SECTION 1013
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**SECTION 1014
EXIT ACCESS**

1014.1 Aisles. In each room where chairs or tables and chairs are utilized, the arrangement shall provide for ready access by aisle accessways and aisles to each egress door. The minimum clear width of each aisle in occupancies in Use Groups A, E and I-2 shall be maintained in accordance with the construction code in effect at the time of first occupancy. In all other occupancies, aisles shall have a minimum required clear width of 44 inches (1118 mm) where serving an occupant load greater than 50, and 36 inches (914 mm) where serving an occupant load of 50 or less. The clear width of aisles shall not be obstructed by chairs, tables or other objects.

**SECTION 1015
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**SECTION 1016
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**SECTION 1017
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**SECTION 1018
EXITS**

1018.1 General. An exit shall not be used for any purpose that interferes with its function as a means of egress. Once a given level of exit protection is achieved, such level of protection shall not be reduced until arrival at the exit discharge.

1018.2. Deleted.

**SECTION 1019
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**SECTION 1020
VERTICAL EXIT ENCLOSURES**

1020.1 Enclosures required. An exit enclosure shall not be used for any purpose other than means of egress.

1020.1.1 through 1020.1.7.2. Deleted.

**SECTION 1021
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SECTION 1022
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SECTION 1027
MEANS OF EGRESS FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS

1027.1. Means of egress conforming to the requirements of the building code under which they were constructed shall be considered as complying means of egress if, in the opinion of the fire code official, they do not constitute a distinct hazard to life.

1027.2 through 1027.20. Deleted.

SECTION 1028
MAINTENANCE OF THE MEANS OF EGRESS

1028.1 General. An exit shall not be utilized for any purpose that interferes with its function as a means of egress, except as otherwise approved. The means of egress from each part of the structure, including exits, stairways, egress doors and any panic hardware installed thereon, aisles, corridors, passageways and similar elements of the means of egress, shall at all times be maintained in a safe condition and available for immediate utilization and free of all obstructions. Security devices affecting means of egress shall be subject to approval.

1028.1.1 Storage. Combustible or flammable material shall not be placed, stored or kept in any portion of an exit, elevator car or hoistway, or at the bottom of a stairway, fire escape or other means of escape, unless such space is enclosed and protected as required by the construction code in effect at the time of first occupancy. Such storage shall be located so the presence or burning of the materials will not obstruct or render hazardous the means of egress.

1028.2 Exit capacity. The capacity of exits serving a floor shall be sufficient for the occupant load thereof as determined by the construction code in effect at the time of first occupancy or N.J.A.C. 5:70-4 et seq., as applicable.

1028.3 Reliability. Required exit accesses, exits or exit discharges shall be continuously maintained free from obstructions or impediments to full instant use in the case of fire or other emergency when the areas served by such exits are occupied. Security devices affecting means of egress shall be subject to approval of the fire code official.

1028.4 Continued maintenance. All means of egress devices and safeguards that are required by this chapter or which were required by a previous statute or another code when the structure was erected, altered or repaired, shall be maintained in good working order.

1028.5 Obstructions. A means of egress shall be free from obstructions that would prevent its use, including the accumulation of snow and ice.

1028.6 Exterior egress. All exit discharge, exterior stairways and fire escapes shall be kept free of snow and ice. Any fire escape or exterior stairway found to be in a state of deterioration or determined to be unsafe by the fire official shall be repaired immediately. Depending upon the structural condition, a load test of any fire escape shall be conducted before the escape is returned to service in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:23, the *Uniform Construction Code*.

1028.7 Exit signs. Exit signs shall be installed and maintained in accordance with Section 1011. Decorations, furnishings, equipment or adjacent signage that impairs the visibility of exit signs, creates confusion or prevents identification of the exit shall not be allowed.

1028.8 Furnishings and decorations. Furnishings, decorations or other objects shall not be placed so as to obstruct exits, access thereto, egress therefrom, or visibility thereof. Hangings and draperies shall not be placed over exit doors or otherwise be located to conceal or obstruct an exit. Mirrors shall not be placed on exit doors. Mirrors shall not be placed in or adjacent to any exit in such a manner as to confuse the direction of exit.

1028.9 Display. Aisles, passageways or stairways in any structure shall not be obstructed with tables, showcases, holiday displays, vending machines or other obstructions during hours when the structure is open to the public, nor shall such obstructions be located in such a manner as to interfere with firefighting access. Display boards, signs, coat racks and any other movable equipment that obstructs the path of egress travel shall be prohibited. A mirror shall not be placed in or adjacent to any means of egress in such a manner as to confuse the direction of egress. Draperies and similar hangings shall not obscure an exit.

1028.10 Emergency escape openings. Required emergency escape openings shall be maintained in accordance with the code in effect at the time of construction, and the following: Required emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys or tools. Bars, grilles, grates or similar devices are allowed to be placed over emergency escape and rescue openings provided the minimum net clear opening size complies with the code that was in effect at the time of construction and such devices shall be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool or force greater than that which is required for normal operation of the escape and rescue opening.

1028.11 Testing and maintenance. All two-way communication systems for areas of refuge shall be inspected and tested on a yearly basis to verify that all components are operational. When required, the tests shall be conducted in the presence of the fire code official.

