

MSAD 75
Safety Guidelines
Emergency Egress / Exits

Rev. 0; February 11, 2010

Background:

During a recent Safety Compliance Inspection by the Maine Department of Labor; Division of Worker Safety the district was sighted for **numerous** examples of doorways and Emergency exit routes partially obstructed. In an emergency situation time is critical and a timely, unimpeded, orderly exit can make the difference between life and death. Fire Marshall Investigations regarding loss of life have shown on numerous occasions that panic has set in when exits are blocked or impeded and that loss of life could have been avoided.

Requirements:

OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910.36 “Design and construction requirements for exit routes”, section (g) (4) objects that project into the exit route must not reduce the width of the exit route to less than the minimum width requirements for exit routes.

Compliance:

Each exit route that COULD be used in an emergency must meet the above requirement. This means if there are two routes both must, AT ALL TIMES meet the minimum width requirement. Whether or not you have a direct exit outside, all exit paths from the occupied room to an evacuation site must remain clear. Many first floor rooms have two exits (directly outside and through an interior hallway to a building hallway exit). Most upper story rooms have primary and secondary emergency exit routes once you exit the room entrance.

MINIMUM WIDTH REQUIREMENTS – This value varies depending upon the expected number of inhabitants the architect assumed in his/her design of the building. You will notice that generally the doorways from a discrete room are narrower than the doorway at the end of a hallway where the whole or part of a wing is expected to exit. The same logic applies to the different doorway widths in a public building such as a school verses a private resident.

In order to be compliant the paths going to ALL doorways (primary and secondary emergency exit routes) that COULD be used in an emergency must be clear of any permanent or transient obstruction that could block the minimum design width.

Since we are not architects here is a “rule of thumb” that works:

The isle/pathway minimum width = the width of the Smallest Doorway in the emergency exit route. This typically is the entrance/exit from the room and, if on the first floor could be the door that goes directly outside if one exists.

In summary – Keep all routes to all potential emergency exit routes clear of all permanent and transient obstructions. Clearance must be no less than the width of the smallest doorway of the exit route.