

Exits and Exit Routes

What are Exits and Exit Routes?

Every building, new or old, that is designed to be occupied by people, must have pathways and doorways that allow the people inside to evacuate promptly in the case of a fire or other emergency. No business is exempt from this OSHA requirement. The OSHA standards provide the following definitions of exits and exit routes:

Exit means that portion of an exit route that is generally separated from other areas to provide a protected way of travel from the building to the outside. An example of an exit is a two-hour fire resistance-rated enclosed stairway that leads from the fifth floor of an office building to the outside of the building.

Exit route means a continuous and unobstructed path of exit travel from any point within a workplace to a place of safety (including refuge areas).

What are the Requirements for Exits and Exit Routes?

The requirements for exits and exit routes are really a matter of common sense. If you meet these requirements, you'll ensure prompt evacuation in your imaging lab in the case of an emergency.

Exit Markings Exits must be clearly marked with highly visible signs so that anyone in the building can easily tell the direction of escape, from any point in the building. Exit signs must be illuminated, have the word *EXIT* in easy-to-read letters that are at least 6 inches high, and must be of a color and design that makes them readily visible. There can be no furnishings or decorations on any exits that might conceal them. Any door or passageway that is not an exit but that could be mistaken for an exit must be marked. Otherwise, someone may confuse it for an exit and find him or herself trapped in a fire or emergency. This could be the case, for example, with a storeroom or basement. The sign should read Not an Exit or To Storeroom or To Basement, for example.

Exit Passage People must be able to reach the exits from all parts of the building. The exit routes must ALWAYS be free and clear for people to pass. This means keeping materials such as equipment, product, and waste away from the exits, and the aisles and spaces leading to exits. Exits cannot be locked or fastened in any way that would prevent escape.

An exit route cannot take a person through a bathroom or any room capable of being locked. An exit route cannot take a person toward any high hazard area. The exits and exit routes must have adequate and reliable lighting. Exit doors must have side hinges and must swing. If 50 or more people are in your imaging lab at any one time, the exit door must swing out, in the direction of exit travel.

All exits must open directly to the street or to a yard, court or other open space. You must ensure two things about this area into which the exit opens: 1) it is wide enough to accommodate all the people who will be leaving the exit, and 2) it is clear and free from obstruction so that a person will be safe upon leaving the exit.



Exits and Exit Routes

Fire Alarm If an exit is alarmed, that alarm must not prevent using the exit in an emergency, even if the alarm is not working. Some imaging labs are small enough so that if there's a fire, everyone in the lab would know it almost immediately. But if your lab is large enough that people in one part of the building may not know if there was a fire in another part, there must be a fire alarm. The employer is responsible for ensuring the fire alarm is routinely tested and maintained.

Height and Width of Exits The ceiling height of an exit must be at least 7 feet 6 inches. The exit width must be at least 22 inches.

Number of Exits If there's any risk that a fire or smoke from a fire could block an exit, you're required to have at least two exits. These exits must be separate or remote from each other, so that both can't be blocked by the same fire or emergency. Two exits would be the minimum number required imaging labs. While photo processing chemicals can't burn because they're mostly water, there is a lot of packaging and other materials in an imaging lab that can burn. In addition, many imaging labs are located in enclosed malls and could be affected by a fire in another business.

Renovations and Remodeling The regulations for exits apply all the time, including during building renovations or remodeling. People may not occupy a building until all exits are being maintained.

What's the Next Step?

Use the compliance checklist on page 3 to find out whether you meet all of OSHA's requirements.

Where Can I Find More Information?

Use the following PMA and OSHA resources to help you implement fire safety measures. Click on any of the links below.

OSHA Resources

Exit and Exit Route Standards [29 CFR 1910.34](#) [29 CFR 1910.35](#) [29 CFR 1910.36](#) [29 CFR 1910.37](#)
Fact Sheet: Emergency Exit Routes [\(html\)](#) [\(pdf\)](#)
Quick Card: Emergency Exit Routes [\(pdf\)](#)

Publications

Small Business Handbook [\(pdf\)](#)

PMA Resources

Safety and Environmental Answerline (800) 267-7550
PMA Environmental Activities environmental@pmai.org
PMA Regulatory website PMAregs.org



Exits and Exit Routes

Exits and Exit Routes Checklist

Print a copy of this checklist and complete it at least once each year to verify compliance with OSHA's exit and exit route requirements.

Requirement or Activity	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. Exits and exit routes are clearly marked so that anyone in the building can easily tell the direction of escape, from any point in the building.			
2. Exit signs are illuminated.			
3. Exit signs have the word EXIT in easy-to-read letters that are at least 6 inches high.			
4. Exit signs are of a color and design that makes them readily visible.			
5. There are no concealing furnishings or decorations on any exits. There are no mirrors on or near any exit.			
6. Any door or passageway that is not an exit but that could be mistaken for an exit bears a sign.			
7. People can reach the exits from all parts of the building.			
8. The exits are <i>always</i> free and clear for people to pass (i.e., no equipment, product, or waste is blocking the aisles and spaces leading to exits).			
9. Exits cannot be locked or fastened in any way that would prevent escape.			
10. No exit route leads through a bathroom or any room capable of being locked.			
11. No exit route leads toward or through any high hazard area.			
12. The exits and exit routes have adequate and reliable lighting.			
13. Exit doors have side hinges and swing.			



Exits and Exit Routes

Requirement or Activity	Yes	No	Don't Know
14. The exit door swing outs, in the direction of exit travel. (This is a requirement only for businesses that have 50 or more people in the building at any one time.)			
15. All exits open directly to the street or to a yard, court or other open space.			
16. The space the exit discharges to is wide enough to accommodate all the people who will be leaving the exit.			
17. The space the exit discharges to is clear and free from obstruction so that a person will be safe upon leaving the exit.			
18. If an exit is alarmed, the alarm does not interfere with using the door, even if the alarm is not working.			
19. The imaging lab is small enough that everyone would know if there was a fire. (If the answer is <i>yes</i> , skip #20. If the answer is <i>no</i> , complete all items.)			
20. The internal fire alarm in the imaging lab is tested monthly.			
21. No exit has a ceiling height less than 7 feet 6 inches.			
22. No exit has a width less than 22 inches.			
23. The imaging lab has at least 2 exits.			

Signature of person who completed the checklist

Date

