

CHAPTER 10

MEANS OF EGRESS

User notes:

About this chapter: Chapter 10 provides the general criteria for designing the means of egress established as the primary method for protection of people in buildings by allowing timely relocation or evacuation of building occupants. Both prescriptive and performance language is utilized in this chapter to provide for a basic approach in the determination of a safe exiting system for all occupancies. It addresses all portions of the egress system (exit access, exits and exit discharge) and includes design requirements as well as provisions regulating individual components. The requirements detail the size, arrangement, number and protection of means of egress components. Functional and operational characteristics that will permit the safe use of components without special knowledge or effort are specified.

The means of egress protection requirements work in coordination with other sections of the code, such as protection of vertical openings (see Chapter 7), interior finish (see Chapter 8), fire suppression and detection systems (see Chapter 9) and numerous others, all having an impact on life safety. Chapter 10 is subdivided into four main sections: general (Sections 1003–1015), exit access (Sections 1016–1021), exit (Sections 1022–1027) and exit discharge (Section 1028). Special allowances for the unique requirements for assembly spaces (Section 1029) and emergency escape and rescue openings (Section 1030) complete the chapter. Chapter 10 of this code is duplicated in Chapter 10 of the International Fire Code®; however, the International Fire Code contains one additional section on maintenance of the means of egress system in existing buildings.

Code development reminder: Code change proposals to sections preceded by the designation [F] will be considered by the International Fire Code Development Committee during the 2019 (Group B) Code Development Cycle. See explanation on page iv.

SECTION 1001 ADMINISTRATION

1001.1 General. Buildings or portions thereof shall be provided with a *means of egress* system as required by this chapter. The provisions of this chapter shall control the design, construction and arrangement of *means of egress* components required to provide an *approved means of egress* from structures and portions thereof.

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 minimum width or required capacity of the *means of egress* to less than required by this code.

[F] SECTION 1002 MAINTENANCE AND PLANS

[F] 1002.1 Maintenance. *Means of egress* shall be maintained in accordance with the *International Fire Code*.

[F] 1002.2 Fire safety and evacuation plans. Fire safety and evacuation plans shall be provided for all occupancies and buildings where required by the *International Fire Code*. Such fire safety and evacuation plans shall comply with the applicable provisions of Sections 401.2 and 404 of the *International Fire Code*.

SECTION 1003 GENERAL MEANS OF EGRESS

1003.1 Applicability. The general requirements specified in Sections 1003 through 1015 shall apply to all three elements of the *means of egress* system, in addition to those specific requirements for the *exit access*, the *exit* and the *exit discharge* detailed elsewhere in this chapter.

1003.2 Ceiling height. The *means of egress* shall have a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet 6 inches (2286 mm) above the finished floor.

Exceptions:

1. Sloped ceilings in accordance with Section 1207.2.
2. Ceilings of *dwelling units* and *sleeping units* within residential occupancies in accordance with Section 1207.2.
3. Allowable projections in accordance with Section 1003.3.
4. *Stair* headroom in accordance with Section 1011.3.
5. Door height in accordance with Section 1010.1.1.
6. *Ramp* headroom in accordance with Section 1012.5.2.
7. The clear height of floor levels in vehicular and pedestrian traffic areas of public and private parking garages in accordance with Section 406.2.2.
8. Areas above and below *mezzanine* floors in accordance with Section 505.2.

1003.3 Protruding objects. Protruding objects on *circulation paths* shall comply with the requirements of Sections 1003.3.1 through 1003.3.4.

1003.3.1 Headroom. Protruding objects are permitted to extend below the minimum ceiling height required by Section 1003.2 where a minimum headroom of 80 inches (2032 mm) is provided over any circulation paths, including walks, *corridors*, *aisles* and passageways. Not more than 50 percent of the ceiling area of a *means of egress* shall be reduced in height by protruding objects.

Exception: Door closers and stops shall not reduce headroom to less than 78 inches (1981 mm).