

1027.2 Use in a means of egress. *Exterior exit stairways* shall not be used as an element of a required *means of egress* for Group I-2 occupancies. For occupancies in other than Group I-2, *exterior exit stairways* and *ramps* shall be permitted as an element of a required *means of egress* for buildings not exceeding six stories above *grade plane* or that are not *high-rise buildings*.

1027.3 Open side. *Exterior exit stairways* and *ramps* serving as an element of a required *means of egress* shall be open on not less than one side, except for required structural columns, beams, *handrails* and *guards*. An open side shall have not less than 35 square feet (3.3 m²) of aggregate open area adjacent to each floor level and the level of each intermediate landing. The required open area shall be located not less than 42 inches (1067 mm) above the adjacent floor or landing level.

1027.4 Side yards. The open areas adjoining *exterior exit stairways* or *ramps* shall be either *yards*, *courts* or *public ways*; the remaining sides are permitted to be enclosed by the *exterior walls* of the building.

1027.5 Location. *Exterior exit stairways* and *ramps* shall have a minimum fire separation distance of 10 feet (3048 mm) measured at right angles from the exterior edge of the *stairway* or *ramps*, including landings, to:

1. Adjacent *lot lines*.
2. Other portions of the building.
3. Other buildings on the same lot unless the adjacent building *exterior walls* and openings are protected in accordance with Section 705 based on *fire separation distance*.

For the purposes of this section, other portions of the building shall be treated as separate buildings.

Exception: *Exterior exit stairways* and *ramps* serving individual *dwelling units* of Group R-3 shall have a minimum *fire separation distance* of 5 feet (1525 mm).

1027.6 Exterior exit stairway and ramp protection. *Exterior exit stairways* and *ramps* shall be separated from the interior of the building as required in Section 1023.2. Openings shall be limited to those necessary for egress from normally occupied spaces. Where a vertical plane projecting from the edge of an *exterior exit stairway* or *ramp* and landings is exposed by other parts of the building at an angle of less than 180 degrees (3.14 rad), the exterior wall shall be rated in accordance with Section 1023.7.

Exceptions:

1. Separation from the interior of the building is not required for occupancies, other than those in Group R-1 or R-2, in buildings that are not more than two stories above *grade plane* where a *level of exit discharge* serving such occupancies is the first story above *grade plane*.
2. Separation from the interior of the building is not required where the *exterior exit stairway* or *ramp* is served by an *exterior exit ramp* or balcony that connects two remote *exterior exit stairways* or other *approved exits* with a perimeter that is not less than 50 percent open. To be considered open, the opening shall be not less than 50 percent of the

height of the enclosing wall, with the top of the openings not less than 7 feet (2134 mm) above the top of the balcony.

3. Separation from the open-ended *corridor* of the building is not required for *exterior exit stairways* or *ramps*, provided that Items 3.1 through 3.5 are met:

- 3.1. The building, including open-ended *corridors*, and *stairways* and *ramps*, shall be equipped throughout with an *automatic sprinkler system* in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2.
- 3.2. The open-ended *corridors* comply with Section 1020.
- 3.3. The open-ended *corridors* are connected on each end to an *exterior exit stairway* or *ramp* complying with Section 1027.
- 3.4. The *exterior walls* and openings adjacent to the *exterior exit stairway* or *ramp* comply with Section 1023.7.
- 3.5. At any location in an open-ended *corridor* where a change of direction exceeding 45 degrees (0.79 rad) occurs, a clear opening of not less than 35 square feet (3.3 m²) or an *exterior stairway* or *ramp* shall be provided. Where clear openings are provided, they shall be located so as to minimize the accumulation of smoke or toxic gases.

4. In Group R-3 occupancies not more than four stories in height, *exterior exit stairways* and *ramps* serving individual *dwelling units* are not required to be separated from the interior of the building where the *exterior exit stairway* or *ramp* discharges directly to grade.

SECTION 1028 EXIT DISCHARGE

1028.1 General. *Exits* shall discharge directly to the exterior of the building. The *exit discharge* shall be at grade or shall provide a direct path of egress travel to grade. The *exit discharge* shall not reenter a building. The combined use of Exceptions 1 and 2 shall not exceed 50 percent of the number and minimum width or required capacity of the required exits.

Exceptions:

1. Not more than 50 percent of the number and minimum width or required capacity of *interior exit stairways* and *ramps* is permitted to egress through areas on the level of discharge provided that all of the following conditions are met:
 - 1.1. Discharge of *interior exit stairways* and *ramps* shall be provided with a free and unobstructed path of travel to an exterior *exit* door and such *exit* is readily visible and identifiable from the point of termination of the enclosure.
 - 1.2. The entire area of the *level of exit discharge* is separated from areas below by construc-