



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
EXTENSION

MSU DAWG TRACKS

Have you ever gotten lost in a building or turned around and gone the wrong way in an area you're not familiar with? I have, and it's somewhat unnerving for a moment. But that brief unnerving could quickly turn to panic in an emergency. This is why it is important to know, ahead of time, multiple exits routes whether you are in a familiar building or a new area.

Keeping these exit routes continuous and unobstructed is critical to a quick evacuation.

Identify exit route components.

There are 3 parts to an exit route.

1. Exit access – portion that leads to an exit; a hallway or corridor.
2. Exit – separated from other areas to provide a protected way of travel; a fire-rated stairwell.
3. Exit discharge – leads directly outside, or to a street, walkway, refuge area, or open space with access to the outside; the door going outside at bottom of stairwell.

Simply stated an exit route is **a way to, through, and away** from a building.

Recognize hazards.

Anything that creates a bottleneck, blockage, or hazard within this exit route can become tragic in an emergency. Every emergency's outcome is pending on time ... a slow or fast response time. Hazards only add to response and evacuation times.

Common hazards may be ...

- ✗ Items stored in hallways & stairwell.
- ✗ Exit doors locked or chained shut.
- ✗ Exit discharges blocked by overgrown shrubs.

Help ensure safe exit routes.

Check your exit routes routinely to ensure they stay continuous and unobstructed. If there are issues found you cannot correct yourself, immediately communicate the problem with your supervisor, maintenance, or safety personnel that can help.

Maintain exit routes ...

- ✓ Keep exit doors unlocked and easy to open from the inside without keys, tools, or special knowledge.
- ✓ Keep the designed width of the exit clear; avoid items that will cause a bottleneck or decrease the capacity of an exit in the direction of travel.
- ✓ Keep routes free from explosives or flammable furnishings or other decorations.
- ✓ Close any fire doors to prevent or slow down the spread of smoke or fire; do not prop them open.
- ✓ Lighting and marking must be adequate and appropriate. Be able to see where you are going & how to get there. Ensure exit signs & emergency lights are working properly.
- ✓ Outdoor exit route paths must have guardrails to protect unenclosed sides if there is a fall hazard, and protection to minimize falls from ice, mud or other such accumulation.

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Sources:

OSHA 29CFR 1910 subpart E