

3.4: Means of Egress

Means of Egress

Exits shall be so arranged and maintained in every building or structure, as to provide free and unobstructed egress from all parts of the building or structure at all times when it is occupied. No lock or fastening to prevent free escape from the inside of any building shall be installed except in mental, penal, or corrective institutions where supervisory personnel are continually on duty and effective provisions are made to remove occupants in case of fire or other emergency.

Exits shall be marked by a readily visible sign. Access to exits shall be marked by readily visible signs in all cases where the exit or way to reach it is not immediately visible to the occupants. Means of egress shall be continually maintained free of all obstructions or impediments to full instant use in the case of fire or other emergency.

Emergency Actions Plans

Any emergency action plan required by a particular OSHA standard shall be in writing and shall cover those designated actions employers and employees must take to ensure employee safety from fire and other emergencies.

Elements of the plan

The following elements, at a minimum, shall be included in the plan:

1. Emergency escape procedures and emergency escape route assignments.
2. Procedures to be followed by employees who remain to operate critical plant operations before they evacuate.
3. Procedures to account for all employees after emergency evacuation have been completed.
4. Rescue and medical duties for those employees who are to perform them.
5. The preferred means of reporting fires and other emergencies.
6. Names or regular job titles of persons or departments who can be contacted for further information or explanation of duties under the plan.

Employee alarm system

The employer shall establish an employee alarm system and if the employee alarm system is used for alerting fire brigade members, or for other purposes, a distinctive signal for each purpose shall be used.

Planning

The employer shall establish in the emergency action plan the types of evacuation to be used in emergency circumstances.

Before implementing the emergency action plan, the employer shall designate and train a sufficient number of persons to assist in the safe and orderly emergency evacuation of employees. The employer shall review the plan with each employee covered by the plan at the following times:

1. Initially when the plan is developed.
2. Whenever the employee's responsibilities or designated actions under the plan change.
3. Whenever the plan is changed.

Communication of plan

The employer shall review with each employee upon initial assignment those parts of the plan, which the employee must know to protect the employee in the event of an emergency. The written plan shall be kept at the workplace and made available for employee review. For those employers with 10 or fewer employees, the plan may be communicated orally to employees and the employer need not maintain a written plan.

Select Definitions

Act: Section 107 of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act, commonly known as the Construction Safety Act (86 Stat. 96; 40 U.S.C. 333).

ANSI: American National Standards Institute.

ASME: American Society of Mechanical Engineers

ASTM: American Society of Testing and Materials

Approved: Sanctioned, endorsed, accredited, certified, or accepted as satisfactory by a duly constituted and nationally recognized authority or agency.

Authorized person: A person approved or assigned by the employer to perform a specific type of duty or duties or to be at a specific location or locations at the jobsite.

Administration: The Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Competent person: One who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them.

Construction work: For purposes of this section, "Construction work" means work for construction, alteration, and/or repair, including painting and decorating.

Defect: Any characteristic or condition, which tends to weaken or reduce the strength of the tool, object, or structure of which it is a part.

Designated person: "Authorized person" as defined in paragraph (d) of this section.

Employee: Every laborer or mechanic under the Act regardless of the contractual relationship which may be alleged to exist between the laborer and mechanic and the contractor or subcontractor who engaged him. "Laborer and mechanic" are not defined in the Act, but the identical terms are used in the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. 276a), which provides for minimum wage protection on Federal and federally assisted construction contracts. The use of the same term in a statute which often applies concurrently with section 107 of the Act has considerable presidential value in ascertaining the meaning of "laborer and mechanic" as used in the Act. "Laborer" generally means one who performs manual labor or who labors at an occupation requiring physical strength; "mechanic" generally means a worker skilled with tools. See 18 Comp. Gen. 341.

Employer: Contractor or subcontractor within the meaning of the Act and of this part.

Hazardous substance: A substance which, by reason of being explosive, flammable, poisonous, corrosive, oxidizing, irritating, or otherwise harmful, is likely to cause death or injury.

NFPA: National Fire Protection Association

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