

## Keep exit routes clear

How would workers escape from your workplace in an emergency? Do they know where all the exits are in case their first choice is too crowded? Are exit doors unlocked?

Knowing the answers to these questions could keep you and your workers safe during an emergency.

### **Number of exit routes**

Usually, a workplace must have at least two exit routes for prompt evacuation. However, more than two exits are required if the number of employees, size of the building, or arrangement of the workplace will not allow a safe evacuation.

Exit routes must be located as far away as practical from each other in case one is blocked by fire or smoke.

### **Requirements for Exits**

- Exits must be separated from the workplace by fire resistant materials — that is, a one-hour fire-resistance rating if the exit connects three or fewer stories, and a two-hour fire-resistance rating if the exit connects more than three floors.
- Exits can have only those openings necessary to allow access to the exit from occupied areas of the workplace or to the exit discharge. Openings must be protected by a self-closing, approved fire door that remains closed or automatically closes in an emergency.
- Keep the line-of-sight to exit signs clearly visible always.
- Install “EXIT” signs using plainly legible letters.

### **Safety features**

- Keep exit routes free of explosives or highly flammable furnishings and other decorations.
- Arrange exit routes so employees will not have to travel toward a high-hazard area unless the path of travel is effectively shielded from the high-hazard area.
- Ensure that exit routes are free and unobstructed by materials, equipment, locked doors, or dead-end corridors.
- Provide lighting for exit routes adequate for employees with normal vision.
- Keep exit route doors free of decorations or signs that obscure their visibility of exit route doors.
- Post signs along the exit access indicating the direction of travel to the nearest exit and exit discharge if that direction is not immediately apparent.
- Mark doors or passages along an exit access that could be mistaken for an exit “Not an Exit” or with a sign identifying its use (such as “Closet”).
- Renew fire-retardant paints or solutions when needed.
- Maintain exit routes during construction, repairs, or alterations.
- Check your work area to make sure exit routes are adequate. If they are not, notify your safety manager, unless you can correct the issue yourself.