

Whether working on a construction site or in an office, it is important to have **clear access** to areas where a job needs to be performed. **For egress** it is necessary for a site to be laid out with clear routes that allow individuals to leave the location quickly in case of an emergency.

Access may be hampered due to the poor design or poor housekeeping. Problems for proper access/egress may present themselves during any new construction or tenant improvement. It is important to have adequate safety procedures, appropriate planning, and sufficient design criteria in place to allow for safe and easy access to and from a worksite.

Egress

Egress, simply put is the means of leaving a place. For **emergency egress**, the following points are key:

- **Exit routes**
 - The number of exit routes available must correspond to the size and configuration of the workplace and the number of personnel within. A workplace of a complex shape would need to contain more exit routes than a workplace with more direct lines of egress.
- **Adequate lighting**
 - All exit routes must be adequately lit even in the case of power outages. The lighting in these areas must be reliable and should be checked regularly. Exit signs should be self-lighting or made of reflective material in order for them to remain visible during power outages.

- **Evacuation plan**

- An emergency evacuation plan must be in place and adequately communicated to all employees for the quick and safe evacuation of personnel. Individuals should be trained and assigned to assist with the evacuation process.

It is important that all employees:

- Recognize the evacuation signal
- Pay attention to evacuation instructions
- Follow the nearest exit route
- Be aware of the designated meeting/muster area

Access

If a task is to take place at an elevated location, then a means to reach that height must be available and safe for use. Common means of access are.

- Inclined Stairs, ramps, and gangways
- Walkways and passages
- Vertical ladders
- Hatches

Precautions and criteria related to access and egress

Important criteria and guidance that can help reduce incidents pertaining to egress and access.

- **Keep all stairs and walkways clear of debris** and cleaned of slippery substances such as: ice, water, oil and grease.
- Passageways should be clear of tools, equipment, and other materials.
- Walkways and stairs should be used when present.
- Railings should have properly secured. top and mid-rails, posts, and toe boards.
- **Exit routes must be properly lit at all times.**
- Emergency routes and equipment must be kept free of obstructions.

- Outdoor walkways should be salted/gritted to prevent slipping.
- **All electrical cords or hoses crossing walkways** must be properly secured and not interfering with walkways.
- **Evacuation drills** should occur frequently enough to keep all personnel properly trained.
- Items should not be stored in stairways or on either side of a door.
- As always, good housekeeping should always be practiced.