ILLUMINATION REQUIRED FOR MEANS OF EGRESS

Disciplines: Fire & Life Safety

History: Revised 05-22-18
Revised 12-22-14
Revised 01-10-12
Revised 09-23-10
Issued 06-22-09

PURPOSE: This Interpretation of Regulations (IR) clarifies code requirements, based on the California Building Code (CBC), for illumination of means of egress as it relates to exit discharge to a public way or safe dispersal area.

DEFINITIONS:

Exit discharge. That portion of a means of egress system between the termination of an exit and a public way.

Public Way: A street, alley or other parcel of land open to the outside air leading to a street that has been deeded, dedicated or otherwise permanently appropriated to the public for public use and which has a clear width and height of not less than 10 feet.

INTERPRETATION:

1. EGRESS ILLUMINATION: The entire exit discharge to the public way is required to be illuminated at any time the building space being served is occupied.

2. SAFE DISPERSAL AREAS: Where safe dispersal area or areas are provided, the entire path to a safe dispersal area need not be illuminated. Illumination of a minimum of 20 feet shall be provided from the building or building complex, or 20 feet beyond after reaching grade level when exiting from bleachers, grandstands or other stadium seating.

Emergency and egress illumination of the exit discharge to a safe dispersal area can be accomplished by providing:

- Lighting at exterior landings.
- Exterior lighting to provide minimum illumination for 20 feet from a building.
- Lighting of grandstands or bleachers aisles to grade and 20 feet beyond where practical.

The illumination shall provide a minimum of not less than one foot-candle at the walking surface.

3. EMERGENCY POWER SUPPLY REQUIREMENTS: See 2016 CBC, Section 1008.3 (2013 CBC, Sections 1006.3 and 1006.3.1) for illumination and performance criteria of the system.

Emergency power shall supply lighting of the exit discharge for a minimum of 90 minutes.

REFERENCES:

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 24
Part 2, California Building Code (CBC), 2013 edition, Sections 1002, 1006.1, 1027.5, and exceptions
Part 2, California Building Code (CBC), 2016 edition, Sections 1002, 1008.1, 1028.5, and exceptions

This Interpretation of Regulations (IR) is intended for use by the Division of the State Architect (DSA) staff and by design professionals to promote more uniform statewide criteria for plan review and construction inspection of projects within the jurisdiction of DSA which includes State of California public elementary and secondary schools (grades K-12), community colleges and state-owned or state-leased essential services buildings. This IR indicates an acceptable method for achieving compliance with applicable codes and regulations, although other methods proposed by design professionals may be considered by DSA.

This IR is reviewed on a regular basis and is subject to revision at any time. Please check DSA’s website for currently effective IRs. Only IRs listed on the web page at www.dgs.ca.gov/dsa/Resources/IRManual.aspx at the time of plan submittal to DSA are considered applicable.