Emergency Egress

How would you evacuate from your workplace in an emergency?

- Identify primary and alternate route/exits
- Ensure unlocked doors and clear or unobstructed exit path
- Make note of any existing hazards that may complicate a safe evacuation
- Plan ahead and allow for accountability of all personnel

What is a means of egress or exit route?

A means of egress is a continuous and unobstructed way of exit travel from any point within a workplace to a place of safety and consists of three distinct parts:

1. **Exit Access** – The portion of an exit route that leads to an exit
2. **Exit** – The portion of an exit route that is generally separated from other areas to provide a protected path of travel to the exit discharge.
3. **Exit Discharge** – The part of the exit route that leads directly outside or to a street, walkway, refuge area, public way, or open space with access to the outside.

What can be considered an emergency exit?

In order to be considered an emergency exit, an opening must, by law, open wide enough for occupants to get out, and to allow a fully outfitted firefighter to get in. Emergency egress must also be low enough to the floor that it is easy for people to use.

How many exit routes must a workplace have?

Normally, a workplace must have at least two exit routes to permit prompt evacuation of employees and other building occupants during an emergency. More than two exits may be required depending on the number of employees and size of the building. Exit routes must be located as far away as practical from each other in case one is blocked by fire, smoke or debris.

What are some other requirements for exit routes?

1. Exit routes must be a permanent part of the workplace.

2. Exit discharges must lead directly outside or to a street, walkway, refuge area, public way or open space with access to the outside.

3. Exit stairs that continue beyond the level on which the exit discharge is located must be interrupted at that level by doors, partitions, or other effective means that clearly indicate the direction of travel leading to the exit discharge.

4. Exit route doors must be unlocked from the inside. They must be free from devices or alarms that could restrict use of the exit route if the deice or alarm fails.
5. Side-hinged exit doors must be used to connect rooms to exit routes. These doors must swing out in the direction of exit travel if the room is to be occupied by more than 50 people or if the room is a high hazard area.
6. Exit routes must support the maximum permitted occupant load for each floor served.
7. Ceilings of exit routes must be 7 feet, 6 inches high.
8. An exit access must be at least 28 inches wide at all points.
9. Outdoor exit routes are permitted but must meet the minimum height and width requirement for indoor exit routes and must:
    a. have guardrails to protect unenclosed sides if a fall hazard exists
    b. be covered if snow or ice is likely to accumulate
    c. not have a dead-end longer than 20 feet

Please refer to OSHA Standard 1910.36 & 1926.34