

Pull Stations:

The lack of sufficient fire alarm pull stations along exit paths is considered an impediment to speedy notification and results in a slower evacuation of the building occupants. The Office of the State Fire Marshal considers building occupant notification second in importance to exiting for most existing occupied buildings. The impact of fire related injuries or deaths would most likely be reduced if occupants could exit a building by the shortest exit route and notify the rest of the building occupants by activating the fire alarm system.

Occupancies utilizing NFPA 72, 1999 & 2007 Editions:

Manual fire alarm pull stations shall be located:

- within 5 ft of the exit doorway of each exit on each floor, and
- at intervals of no more than 200 feet apart within the building

Education Occupancies utilizing IBC 2006 Edition:

Manual fire alarm pull stations shall not be required where all of the following apply:

- Corridors have smoke detection with alarm verification; and
- Auditoriums, cafeterias, gyms, etc. have heat detectors or other approved detection; and
- Shops and labs have heat detectors or other approved detection; and
- Off-premises monitoring is provided; and
- Can activate the evacuation signal from a central point; and
- Normally occupied spaces have two-way communication with a constantly attended location where the evacuation signal can be sounded

Classroom and Resident Room- Direct Exit

Many buildings constructed under the earlier Building Codes have opted to provide exterior exit doors from their classrooms and resident rooms. Due to the availability of the exterior exit, the earlier Building Codes might have allowed the rated corridor protection to be deleted. The normal path of exit from these classrooms is then directly to the exterior. Even with this added feature, which allows occupants to exit the building without entering any other building atmosphere, each room exit to the exterior must have a pull station.

Consider a multiple classroom building where each classroom has a direct exit to the outside. If a fire starts in one of these classrooms, the immediate threat to the room occupants may not be the most serious concern. All room occupants would be able to exit safely using their exterior exit door, but without the rated corridor or other design features meant to contain the fire to one location, students in other classrooms would be threatened. With the fire alarm pull station located by this exterior door, the students and teacher would be able to notify the rest of the building of the imminent threat, even as they are evacuating the building.

Manual fire alarm pulls are expected to be at logical locations, which is why they are required at exterior doors used as exits. When manual fire alarm pulls are not in these required areas, we ask our inspectors to identify this as a distinctly hazardous condition. The building owners and operators and the Office of the State Fire Marshal may collectively develop an acceptable response to this distinctly hazardous condition, assuring that all building occupants will evacuate the building as quickly as possible.