

## Assembly Exiting:

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is responsible for adopting rules and regulations for the construction and maintenance of exits, fire alarms, smoke detection systems, and fire suppression equipment in all buildings except one- and two-family dwellings. As a result of inspections across Kansas, it appears that a large number of conference rooms, classrooms, restaurants, lobbies, taverns, bars, county fair buildings, youth centers and other similar spaces throughout the state may not provide an acceptable level of life safety.

The exiting requirements have been the same for these spaces for more than 20 years. It is unknown how these areas became non-conforming to these requirements.

It is not practical to inspect every facility statewide, but it does not diminish the expectation that owner/operators of facilities must provide safe exiting for all occupants. Single rooms or areas that provide standing or sitting space for over 50 occupants are considered assembly occupancies.

A room or area is deemed to provide SAFE exiting for 50-500 occupants when occupants are able to evacuate unobstructed from a point in the room or area using one of two separate paths to a public way or yard. Detailed exiting requirements are:

- Two separate and remote exit doors
- The exit door provides a clear opening of at least 32 in clear width
- The exit doors must swing toward the outside
- The exit paths are not blocked by construction or movable items
- Exit doors can be opened from the inside without special knowledge or effort, a tool, or a key
- The main entrance may have access-controlled doors provided the following:
  - System must be approved
  - Must unlock by signal or loss of power to motion sensor
  - Manual unlocking device within 5 ft of the door with sign "Push to Exit"
  - Must unlock upon activation of fire alarm or sprinkler system
- Doors cannot be secured from the egress side
- Exit signs must be provided over exit doors. The signs must be illuminated
- Emergency lighting must be provided in the room and in the entire exit path
- A written emergency plan shall be maintained

If these features are not provided, your facility probably does not provide proper exiting per the Kansas Fire Prevention Code. You are expected to contact an architect or engineer for professional services to verify the condition and make any necessary changes to assure safe exiting is provided OR you may voluntarily reduce your occupant load to 49 or fewer occupants.

In buildings in occupancy Group A having an occupant load of 300 or less, Groups B, F, M and S, and in places of religious worship, the main exterior door or doors are permitted to be equipped with key-operated locking devices from the egress side provided:

- The locking device is readily distinguishable as locked
- A readily visible durable sign is posted on the egress side on or adjacent to the door stating: THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED WHEN BUILDING IS OCCUPIED. The sign shall be in letters 1 inch (25 mm) high on a contrasting background,
- The use of the key-operated locking device is revocable by the building official for due cause.

**What is a remote exit?**

Remote exits are separate, distinct ways out of a room or space that are at least a specific distance apart. For a sprinklered facility, these exits must be a minimum of  $\frac{1}{3}$  the room diagonal apart; in non-sprinklered facilities, they must be a minimum of  $\frac{1}{2}$  the room diagonal in separation. To find the diagonal of square or rectangular room, measure from one corner to the opposite corner. (These corners will NOT be along the same wall.) This measurement is your diagonal. To find the minimum separation for your exits, divide this number by 2 or 3, depending on whether your facility is sprinklered or non-sprinklered. For an irregular or oddly shaped room, use the two furthest points as the diagonal or consult an architect or design engineer.