

Definitions

A **means of egress** is a continuous unobstructed path of vertical or horizontal egress travel from any occupied portion of a building or structure to a public way.

A **public way** is any street, alley, or similar parcel of land that is deeded, dedicated, or otherwise permanently appropriated to the public for public use.

Emergency Escape Window vs. Means of Egress

An emergency escape window or rescue opening is a specific type of window designed for emergency escape and rescue, while means of egress refers to the overall system of pathways and exits used to evacuate a building.

Disclaimer

This publication is intended to be a guide to assist in answering general inquiries. This publication does not include all aspects of the relevant codes. Code requirements vary depending on numerous factors. For specific questions, please contact our office.

Permits

Permits are required for constructing, enlarging, altering, repairs, moving demolishing or changing the occupancy of a structure. All electrical, heating, and plumbing work is to be completed by licensed contractors under permit. Applications for permits may be obtained through the Permits office on the 3rd floor of City Hall. Questions about permits call 301-739-8577 Ext. 123 or email permits@hagerstownmd.org

Phone: 301-739-8577, Ext. 103

Fax: 301-791-2650

Email: codecompliance@hagerstownmd.org

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Department of Housing & Community Development
One East Franklin Street, Suite 300
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Means of Egress



Requirements



1 E. Franklin St. Suite 300
Hagerstown, MD 21740

301-739-8577 Ext. 103

Means of Egress

Maintenance

Means of Egress are to be maintained in good repair, structurally sound and free from combustible materials.

Rubbish, garbage, or other materials shall not be stored or allowed to accumulate in stairways, passageways, doors, windows, fire escapes or other means of egress.

Every handrail or guard shall be firmly fastened and capable of supporting normally imposed loads and shall be maintained in good condition.

Where two or more exits are required, all occupants shall have access to at least two exits.

Residential Use Buildings

Every story exceeding two stories above grade shall be provided with not less than two independent exits.

Non-Residential Use Buildings

Every occupied story more than six stories above grade shall be provided with not less than two independent exits.

Third story single-family home

A habitable third floor in a single family home may not need another means of egress.

Apartment buildings three stories or more

Each residential apartment unit does not require its own fire escape but it must have access to two independent means of egress that can be shared by the other apartments on that floor as long as the means of egress does not travel through another apartment.

Rooftop Egress

Where the roof is to be used as a means of Egress, guardrails and a designated walking surface must be installed the entire length of the walking surface to the exit access stairway leading to the exit discharge.

Lighting a Means of Egress

Means of egress stairways shall be adequately illuminated at all times the building is occupied.

Exit Signs

All required means of egress in multiple unit residential structures with more than three stories above grade shall be indicated with approved EXIT SIGNS. All exit signs shall remain visible and be maintained per City Code.

Locked doors

All doors shall be readily openable from the side which egress is to be made without the need for keys, special knowledge or effort.

Arrangement

Exits from dwelling units, rooming units, guestrooms and dormitory units shall not lead through other such units, or through toilet rooms or bathrooms.

Handrail Requirements

Every exterior and interior flight of stairs having four or more risers shall have a handrail on one side of the stair.

All handrails shall be of an approved type to provide grasp-ability.

- Type I—Handrails with a circular cross section between 1 1/4 inches and 2 inches
- Type II—Non-circular handrails are to have a perimeter between 4 inches and 6 1/4 inches with a maximum cross section of 2 1/4 inches. Edges are to be rounded.

Guardrail Requirements

Existing guards shall not be less than 30 inches high above the floor of the landing, balcony, porch, deck, ramp or other walking surface. Newly installed guards must be no less than 36 inches.

Guard opening limitations require intermediated balusters or ornamental closures which do not allow the passage of a sphere 4 inches or more in diameter.