

**ILLUMINATION REQUIRED FOR MEANS OF EGRESS****Disciplines:** Fire & Life Safety**History:**

Revised 12/22/14

Revised 03/10/11

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**PURPOSE:** This Interpretation of Regulations (IR) clarifies code requirements, based on the 2013 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:** Section 1006.1, states, "***Illumination required.*** The means of egress, including the exit discharge, shall be illuminated at all times the building space served by the means of egress is occupied."

The 2013 CBC Chapter 2 states, "***Exit discharge.*** That portion of a means of egress system between the termination of an exit and a public way."

The 2013 CBC, Section 1027.5 (Section 1024.6 in the 2007 CBC) states, "***Access to a public way.*** The exit discharge shall provide a direct and unobstructed access to a public way.

**“Exception:** Where access to a public way cannot be provided, a safe dispersal area shall be provided where all of the following are met:

“1. The area shall be of a size to accommodate at least 5 square feet (0.46 m<sup>2</sup>) for each person.” (and)

“2. *For other than Group E buildings,* the area shall be located on the same lot at least 50 feet (15 240 mm) away from the building requiring egress. *For Group E buildings, the area shall be located on the same lot at least 50 feet (15 240 mm) away from any building.*” (and)

“3. The area shall be permanently maintained and identified as a safe dispersal area. (and)

“4. The area shall be provided with a safe and unobstructed path of travel from the building.”

**PUBLIC WAY:** Public way is defined, per CBC Section 1002.1, as 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 1 foot-candle at the walking surface.

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**3. EMERGENCY POWER SUPPLY REQUIREMENTS:** See 2013 CBC, Sections 1006.3 and 1006.3.1 for performance of the system.

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

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### REFERENCES:

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 24  
Part 2, California Building Code Code, Sections 1002, 1006.1, 1027.5 and  
Exceptions

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This Interpretation of Regulations (IR) is intended for use by the Division of the State Architect (DSA) staff, and as a resource for 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 (grade 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 the DSA web site for currently effective IRs. Only IRs listed in the document at <http://www.dgs.ca.gov/dsa/Resources/IRManual.aspx> at the time of plan submittal to DSA are considered applicable.