

1003.2.10 Exit signs

Where required.

Exits and exit access doors shall be marked by an approved exit sign readily visible from any direction of egress travel. Access to exits shall be marked by readily visible exit signs in cases where the exit or the path of egress travel is not immediately visible to the occupants. Exit sign placement shall be such that no point in an exit access corridor is more than 100 feet (30 480 mm) from the nearest visible exit sign.

Exceptions:

1. Exit signs are not required in rooms or areas which require only one exit or exit access.
2. Main exterior exit doors or gates which obviously and clearly are identifiable as exits need not have exit signs where approved by the building official.
3. Exit signs are not required in occupancies in Group R-3 as applicable in Section 101.2, Group U, guestrooms in Group R-1, dwelling units in Group R-2 as applicable in Section 101.2 and sleeping rooms.
4. Exit signs are not required in sleeping room areas in occupancies in Group I-3.
5. In occupancies in Groups A-4 and A-5 that include grandstand seating arrangements, exit signs are not required on the seating side of vomitories or openings into seating areas where exit signs are provided in the concourse that are readily apparent from the vomitories. Egress lighting is provided to identify each vomitory or opening within the seating area in an emergency.

Graphics.

Every exit sign and directional exit sign shall have plainly legible letters not less than 6 inches (152 mm) high with the principal strokes of the letters not less than 0.75 inch (19.1 mm) wide. The word "EXIT" shall have letters having a width not less than 2 inches (51 mm) wide except the letter "I", and the minimum spacing between letters shall not be less than 0.375 inch (9.5 mm). Signs larger than the minimum established in this section shall have letter widths, strokes and spacing in proportion to their height.

The word "EXIT" shall be in high contrast with the background and shall be clearly discernible when the exit sign illumination means is or is not energized. If an arrow is provided as part of the exit sign, the construction shall be such that the arrow direction cannot be readily changed.

Stairway exit signs.

A tactile sign stating EXIT and complying with Chapter 11 shall be provided adjacent to each door to an egress stairway.

Exit sign illumination.

Exit signs shall be internally or externally illuminated. The face of an exit sign illuminated from an external source shall have an intensity of not less than 5 foot-candles (54 lux). Internally illuminated signs shall provide equivalent luminance and be listed for the purpose.

Exceptions:

1. Approved self-luminous exit signs that provide evenly illuminated letters shall have a minimum luminance of 0.06 foot-lamberts (0.21 cd/m²). (*note: self-luminous does not include photo-luminous signs*)
2. Tactile signs required by Section 1003.2.10.3 need not be provided with illumination.

Power source.

Exit signs shall be illuminated at all times. To ensure continued illumination for a duration of not less than 90 minutes in case of primary power loss, the exit signs shall be connected to an emergency electrical system provided from storage batteries, unit equipment or an on-site generator. The installation of the emergency power system shall be in accordance with the ICC Electrical Code.

Exception:

Approved exit signs that provide continuous illumination independent of external power sources for a duration of not less than 90 minutes, in case of primary power loss, are not required to be connected to an emergency electrical system. (*note: photo-luminous signs do not meet this requirement.*)

NOTE: Self-Luminous (Radio-Luminescent) Exit Signs

A self-luminous exit sign is a completely self-powered, illuminated exit marker requiring no external power source or any sort. The Self-Luminous Exit Sign requires no wiring or electrical installation and consumes no power of any kind.

Self-Luminous Exit Signs are illuminated with a light source that consists of glass tubes, internally coated with phosphor and filled with tritium gas. Tritium gas (H-3) is an isotope of hydrogen that emits low energy radiation in the form of beta rays, or electrons. These electrons stimulate the phosphor coating causing the tubes to continuously emit light. The mechanism is exactly the same as an electrical fluorescent lamp with the only exception being that the electrons are provided by the tritium rather than by an electric current. They require no external energy source and as such are the most energy efficient lighting product available today. They are also referred to as radio-luminescent light sources.

