

E110-24

IBC: 1028.2; IFC: [BE] 1028.2

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2024 International Building Code

Revise as follows:

1028.2 Exit discharge.

Exits shall discharge directly to the exterior of the *building*. The *exit discharge* shall be at grade or shall provide a direct path of egress travel to grade. The *exit discharge* shall not reenter a *building*. The combined use of Exceptions 1 and 2 shall not exceed 50 percent of the number and minimum width or required capacity of the required *exits*.

Exceptions:

1. Not more than 50 percent of the number and minimum width or required capacity of *interior exit stairways* and *ramps* is permitted to egress through areas, including *atriums*, on the level of discharge provided that all of the following conditions are met:
 - 1.1. Discharge of *interior exit stairways* and *ramps* shall be provided with a free and unobstructed path of travel to an exterior *exit* door and such *exit* is readily visible and identifiable by exit signage from the point of termination of the enclosure.
 - 1.2. The entire area of the *level of exit discharge* is separated from areas below by construction conforming to the *fire-resistance rating* for the enclosure.
 - 1.3. The egress path from the *interior exit stairway* and *ramp* on the *level of exit discharge* is protected throughout by an *approved automatic sprinkler system*. Portions of the *level of exit discharge* with access to the egress path shall be either equipped throughout with an *automatic sprinkler system* installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2, or separated from the egress path in accordance with the requirements for the enclosure of *interior exit stairways* or *ramps*.
 - 1.4. Where a required *interior exit stairway* or *ramp* and an *exit access stairway* or *ramp* serve the same floor level and terminate at the same *level of exit discharge*, the termination of the *exit access stairway* or *ramp* and the *exit discharge* door of the *interior exit stairway* or *ramp* shall be separated by a distance of not less than 30 feet (9144 mm) or not less than one-fourth the length of the maximum overall diagonal dimension of the *building*, whichever is less. The distance shall be measured in a straight line between the *exit discharge* door from the *interior exit stairway* or *ramp* and the last tread of the *exit access stairway* or termination of slope of the *exit access ramp*.
2. Not more than 50 percent of the number and minimum width or required capacity of the *interior exit stairways* and *ramps* is permitted to egress through a vestibule provided that all of the following conditions are met:
 - 2.1. The entire area of the vestibule is separated from areas below by construction conforming to the *fire-resistance rating* of the *interior exit stairway* or *ramp enclosure*.
 - 2.2. The depth from the exterior of the *building* is not greater than 10 feet (3048 mm) and the length is not greater than 30 feet (9144 mm).
 - 2.3. The area is separated from the remainder of the *level of exit discharge* by a *fire partition* constructed in accordance with Section 708.

Exception: The maximum transmitted temperature rise is not required.
 - 2.4. The area is used only for *means of egress* and *exits* directly to the outside.
3. *Horizontal exits* complying with Section 1026 shall not be required to discharge directly to the exterior of the *building*.

2024 International Fire Code

Revise as follows:

[BE] 1028.2 Exit discharge.

Exits shall discharge directly to the exterior of the building. The *exit discharge* shall be at grade or shall provide a direct path of egress travel to grade. The *exit discharge* shall not reenter a building. The combined use of Exceptions 1 and 2 shall not exceed 50 percent of the number and minimum width or required capacity of the required *exits*.

Exceptions:

1. Not more than 50 percent of the number and minimum width or required capacity of *interior exit stairways* and *ramps* is permitted to egress through areas, including atriums, on the *level of discharge* provided that all of the following conditions are met:
 - 1.1. Discharge of *interior exit stairways* and *ramps* shall be provided with a free and unobstructed path of travel to an exterior exit door and such *exit* is readily visible and identifiable by exit signage from the point of termination of the enclosure.
 - 1.2. The entire area of the *level of exit discharge* is separated from areas below by construction conforming to the *fire-resistance rating* for the enclosure.
 - 1.3. The egress path from the *interior exit stairway* and *ramp* on the *level of exit discharge* is protected throughout by an *approved automatic sprinkler system*. Portions of the *level of exit discharge* with access to the egress path shall either be equipped throughout with an *automatic sprinkler system* installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2, or separated from the egress path in accordance with the requirements for the enclosure of *interior exit stairways* or *ramps*.
 - 1.4. Where a required *interior exit stairway* or *ramp* and an *exit access stairway* or *ramp* serve the same floor level and terminate at the same *level of exit discharge*, the termination of the *exit access stairway* or *ramp* and the exit discharge door of the *interior exit stairway* or *ramp* shall be separated by a distance of not less than 30 feet (9144 mm) or not less than one-fourth the length of the maximum overall diagonal dimension of the building, whichever is less. The distance shall be measured in a straight line between the exit discharge door from the *interior exit stairway* or *ramp* and the last tread of the *exit access stairway* or termination of slope of the *exit access ramp*.
2. Not more than 50 percent of the number and minimum width or required capacity of the *interior exit stairways* and *ramps* is permitted to egress through a vestibule provided that all of the following conditions are met:
 - 2.1. The entire area of the vestibule is separated from areas below by construction conforming to the *fire-resistance rating* of the *interior exit stairway* or *ramp* enclosure.
 - 2.2. The depth from the exterior of the building is not greater than 10 feet (3048 mm) and the length is not greater than 30 feet (9144 mm).
 - 2.3. The area is separated from the remainder of the *level of exit discharge* by a *fire partition* constructed in accordance with Section 708 of the International Building Code.

Exception: The maximum transmitted temperature rise is not required.
 - 2.4. The area is used only for *means of egress* and *exits* directly to the outside.
3. *Horizontal exits* complying with Section 1026 shall not be required to discharge directly to the exterior of the building.

Reason: Through the 2015 editions of both the IBC and NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, these two codes were consistent in their language and interpretation regarding exit discharge of interior exit stairways and ramps through areas of the building on the level of exit discharge. The 2018 edition of NFPA 101 included an amendment to Section 7.7.2(3) that clarified the intent of the code to permit the use of exit signage to direct occupants discharging from an exit enclosure to the nearest exterior exit door:

“The interior exit discharge shall lead to a free and unobstructed way to the exterior of the building, and such way shall be readily apparent or shall be identifiable by exit signage from the point of discharge from the exit.”

The 2018 IBC and subsequent 2021 and 2024 editions have lagged behind NFPA 101 and have not yet amended Section 1028.2 Exception 1.1 to provide this clarification.

This proposal will clarify that exit signage is permitted to be used for this purpose and will remove the common misconception that an exterior exit discharge must be visible from the point of exit enclosure termination. The proposal will also bring the IBC back into alignment with NFPA on this issue, as had long been the case until 2018.

Bibliography: NFPA 101, Life Safety Code

Cost Impact: The change proposal is editorial in nature or a clarification and has no cost impact on the cost of construction

Justification for no cost impact:

The proposed text clarifies the original intent to allow utilization of exit signage to achieve interior exit stairway discharge through areas of the building on the level of exit discharge. The exit signage required for this purpose would already be required by Section 1013.1 and thus adds no cost.”

E110-24
