



Kutztown University Policy A&F-028

Stairway and Corridor Fire Safety Policy

A. Purpose

Day-to-day foot traffic requires consistent, unimpeded corridor space to facilitate smooth flow through buildings. Stairways and corridors are intended for this, and to provide a safe and adequate means by which large numbers of occupants may relocate, or quickly exit the building during an emergency. Corridors and other means of egress must be free of all obstructions or other hazards.

B. Scope

This policy applies, but is not limited to all Kutztown University faculty, staff, students, affiliated organizations, contractors, and the general public. It includes all enclosed buildings and facilities, as well as open air assembly occupancies. Portions of this policy are supported by criteria found in Student Affairs Policy STU-018 (Posting and Chalking Guidelines) as well as the most recent version of the International Fire Code.

C. Definitions

Means of Egress - All parts of an exit pathway, including exit access hallways, exit stairs and protected corridors, and exit discharge doors to the outside.

Rated Fire Door – A self-closing door that has been rated to withstand fire or smoke penetration for a specific length of time

Stairway / Exit Stairway- Any part or portion of an enclosure designed to allow travel from above- or below-grade floors, including steps, landings, areas of refuge, vestibules, and areas beneath stairs.

International Building Code (IBC) – The following excerpt from the International Building Code (IBC), 2009 edition, supports this guide:

2009 IBC 806.1.2: The permissible amount of *decorative materials* shall not exceed 10 percent of the specific wall or ceiling area to which it is attached.

International Fire Code (IFC)-The following excerpts from the International Fire Code (IFC), 2009 edition, support this guide:

2009 IFC 1003.6: Obstructions shall not be placed in the required width of a means of

egress except projections permitted by this chapter.

2009 IFC 1023.1: Exit passageways serving as an exit component in a means of egress system shall comply with the requirements of this section. An exit passageway shall not be used for any purpose other than as a means of egress .

2006 IFC 1030.2 Required exit accesses, exits or exit discharges shall be continuously maintained free from obstructions or impediments to full instant use in the case of fire or other emergency when the areas served by such exits are occupied.

2006 IFC 1030.3: A means of egress shall be free from obstructions that would prevent its use, including the accumulation of snow and ice.

D. Policy & Procedures

Posting of Materials

Similar to Student Affairs Policy STU-018 (Posting and Chalking Guidelines), no postings shall be adhered to any surface of any stairway, fire rated door, window, fire safety equipment or any portion of a wall not specifically designated as a posting station. Postings shall not conceal or obstruct any portion of any life safety device, including but not limited to: fire alarm panels, actuation devices, alerting devices, emergency or exit signage. Postings found in these areas may be removed immediately without notice to the owners. Wall panels (homasote, plywood, etc.), bulletin boards and tack strips shall be positioned so that no more than 10% of a wall surface can be covered with postings. No bulletin board or tack strip will extend more than 20-feet horizontally without a clear 4-foot space between strips, and no more than two parallel tack strips are to be hung on any wall surface.

Fire Rated doors

Fire rated door assemblies are designed to be closed at all times unless an occupant is passing through the door assembly. These assemblies have been strategically placed within the building to minimize the spread of smoke and/or fire, saving occupants as well as the building and contents. Chocking or blocking open any fire-rated door is a direct violation of this policy and the International Fire Code. There are two exceptions to this rule:

- Office entrance doors directly from a corridor may be equipped with hold-open devices such as kick-down door stops or door wedges that may be deployed only when the office is occupied. Any time the space is vacated, including during any emergency evacuation, the device must be disabled, and the door closed.
- Magnetic door holder devices that release the door to automatically close in the event of fire alarm activation are permitted.

Corridors and Stairways

Items in stairways, blocking stairway doors, blocking exit doors, restricting corridors, adding excessive fire load to exit pathways or blocking fire protection equipment constitute serious fire and life safety hazards and violations of the International Fire Code. These items could easily impede the smooth evacuation of building occupants, especially during times of panic, or decreased visibility due to smoke.

The following items are **not acceptable** and are subject to immediate removal without notice to their owner:

- Anything located within a stair enclosure.
- Anything located within an Area of Refuge.
- Storage of any kind within 8 feet of exit doors and stairwell doors.
- Any upholstered, easily ignited or high smoke producing furniture or object in any corridor, stairway or elevator lobby.
- Any items* that restrict the width of any portion of a corridor to less than the designed width requirement of the corridor by more than 10%.
- Any items* that obstruct fire protection equipment (fire alarm pull stations, sprinklers, fire extinguishers, etc.) within the wheelchair access requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA.)
- Any items* which obstructs utility panels, utility valves, or electrical receptacles.
- Any items* that are determined to be an immediate fire or life safety hazard.

* Includes, but is not limited to furniture, equipment, storage, artwork, etc.

The following items and processes are also **unacceptable** in any corridor, stairway, vestibule or elevator lobby and are subject to immediate removal or cessation. Building occupants will be notified of violations so immediate corrective action can be taken.

- Combustible materials outside of enclosed cabinets. This includes journals, papers, books, and boxes.
- Any procedures or processes which involve the storage or use of chemicals, including, but not limited to: aerosols, vapor producing liquids, compressed gas, flammables, poisons, and adhesives, except those used for building maintenance.
- Any items (Including but not limited to furniture, equipment, storage, artwork, etc.) which move easily or could fall over and cause an obstruction.
- Workstations (including copiers, office equipment, coffee stations, desks, tables, literature displays). Handouts and pamphlets may be displayed in a wall- mounted literature rack only.
- Break areas or areas designated for congregation of people, unless the area has been specifically designed for this purpose.
- No chairs will be permitted in any corridor where there exists a lounge or seating area within 75 feet. When no waiting area exists, un-upholstered chairs will be limited to one for every three offices, preferably grouped together.

Corridor Space

The university has a space inventory that specifies those spaces that have been assigned to each department for their use. Public areas, including corridors, are not on the list. Departments, organizations or individuals who wish to use corridor space for purposes other than their intended public use must request approval to do so from the Office of Environmental, Health and Safety, as well as the University Architect. In the event unapproved furnishings impede movement of persons with disabilities and affect normal or emergency movement of building occupants or emergency responders, resulting in injury, death, or additional building damage, the responsible department, organization or individuals may be held liable.

Movement of furnishings or other similar items into the corridor to accommodate new items is prohibited. Please plan for the removal or disposal of your unwanted furnishings, materials or supplies well in advance of delivery of the new items.

E. Exceptions

Exceptions to the requirements listed in this policy must be approved in advance by the Director of Environmental Health and Safety.

F. Effective Date

September 14, 2012

G. Endorsed by:

Administrative Council

H. Last Review:

August, 2013