

U.S. Fire Administration / National Fire Academy

Coffee Break Training

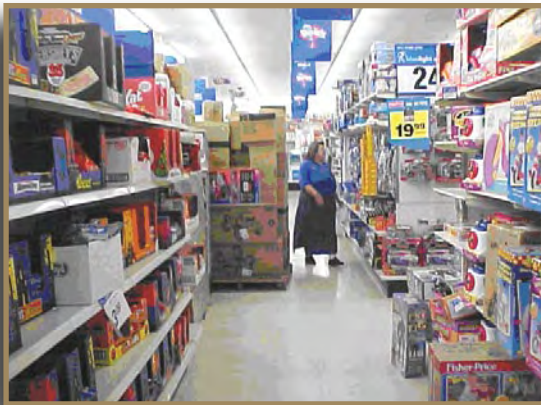
Topic: Aisle Widths in the Exit Access

Learning objective: The student shall be able to determine the minimum aisle width requirements in the exit access in Groups B and M occupancies.

The “exit access” is that portion of the means of egress that leads to an exit, and includes halls, corridors, aisles and other walking or escape paths.

The purpose of maintaining minimum egress widths is to assure that occupants have a clear and unobstructed path to an exit where they can escape dangerous conditions.

In Business (Group B) and Mercantile (Group M) occupancies, the minimum clear aisle width requirement in the public areas is 36 inches. “Non-public” or “mini-aisles” that provide egress from a single office or work station, for example, may be 28 inches wide.



Holiday seasons are particularly problematic for aisle maintenance because retailers are anxious to show customers the variety and quantity of merchandise they have for sale. The fire inspector should work closely with the store management to assure means of egress are maintained at all times, even when store personnel may be the only occupants.

For additional information, refer to International Fire Code®, Chapter 10, NFPA 1, Uniform Fire Code™, Chapter 14, or NFPA 101, Life Safety Code™, Chapter 7.