

A fire at an assembly occupancy can be devastating because of the dense occupant load and the challenge of evacuating the facility. The following are safety items to keep in mind when planning an assembly event:



Maximum Occupant Load

- Know the maximum allowable occupant load. A sign must be posted in the assembly area.

Occupant Load Factors (sq. ft. per occupant)

- Assembly Standing Only = 5
- Assembly Seating Only = 7
- Assembly Tables and Chairs = 15

Min. # of Exits for Occupant Load (per story)

- One for up to 49 occupants (1 story only)
- Two for 50-500
- Three for 501-1,000
- Four for more than 1,000

Main Exit

- Must be sufficient to accommodate 50% of occupant load for occupant load > 300.

Exception: Where there is no well-defined main exit, exits shall be permitted to be distributed around the perimeter

Means of Egress

- Evaluate exit paths to make sure that they are adequate. They must be free from obstructions. Exit doors shall not be locked or blocked. Doors must have panic or fire exit hardware when the occupant load is 50 or more (Except the main entrance to an assembly area with an occupant load of 300 or less).

Egress Components

- Stairway Width (inches per occupant) = 0.3
- Other Components Width (inches per occupant) = 0.2

Maximum Travel Distance to Exit Door

- Without Fire Sprinklers = 200'
- With Fire Sprinklers = 250'

Exit Signs and Emergency Lighting



- Exit signs are required and must be illuminated when there are two or more required exits. Emergency lighting is required in Assembly occupancies having 50 or more occupants or occupancies used exclusively for religious purposes having an occupant load of 300 or more.

Announcements

- Pre-performance announcements shall be made for non-continuous programs.

Seating Plan

- Have an approved seating plan (approved by Fire Department) in place ahead of time when using loose tables and/or chairs. This is basically a floor plan of the assembly area showing the seating arrangement, exit doors and exit aisles.
- See the diagram for the following information:
 - Loose seats
 - Travel distance along seats
 - Minimum aisle widths
 - Minimum widths between seats

Fire Drills

- Shall be conducted quarterly for employees

Fire Extinguishers

- Minimum rated 2A10BC
- Readily visible and mounted
- Maximum travel distance to get to an extinguisher is 75'



Decorative Combustible Materials

- Consider what materials are used and where they are placed. There are specific requirements for corridor wall and ceiling finishes. There are also specific restrictions on foam plastic materials. Decorations shall never obstruct the means of egress.



Candles and Open Flame Devices

- Caution should be applied when planning to use candles or open flame devices. They are prohibited where people stand, or in an aisle or exit. Candles on tables are allowed if securely supported on substantial noncombustible bases and the candle flames are protected. Contact us for more information.

Fire Safety and Evacuation Plans

- A fire safety and evacuation plan is required for assembly occupancies.



Exception: Assembly occupancies used exclusively for purposes of religious worship that have an occupant load less than 2,000.

These plans shall be reviewed and updated annually and shall be available in the workplace for reference and review by employees, and copies shall be furnished to the fire code official for review upon request. They shall include the fire evacuation plans and fire safety plans.

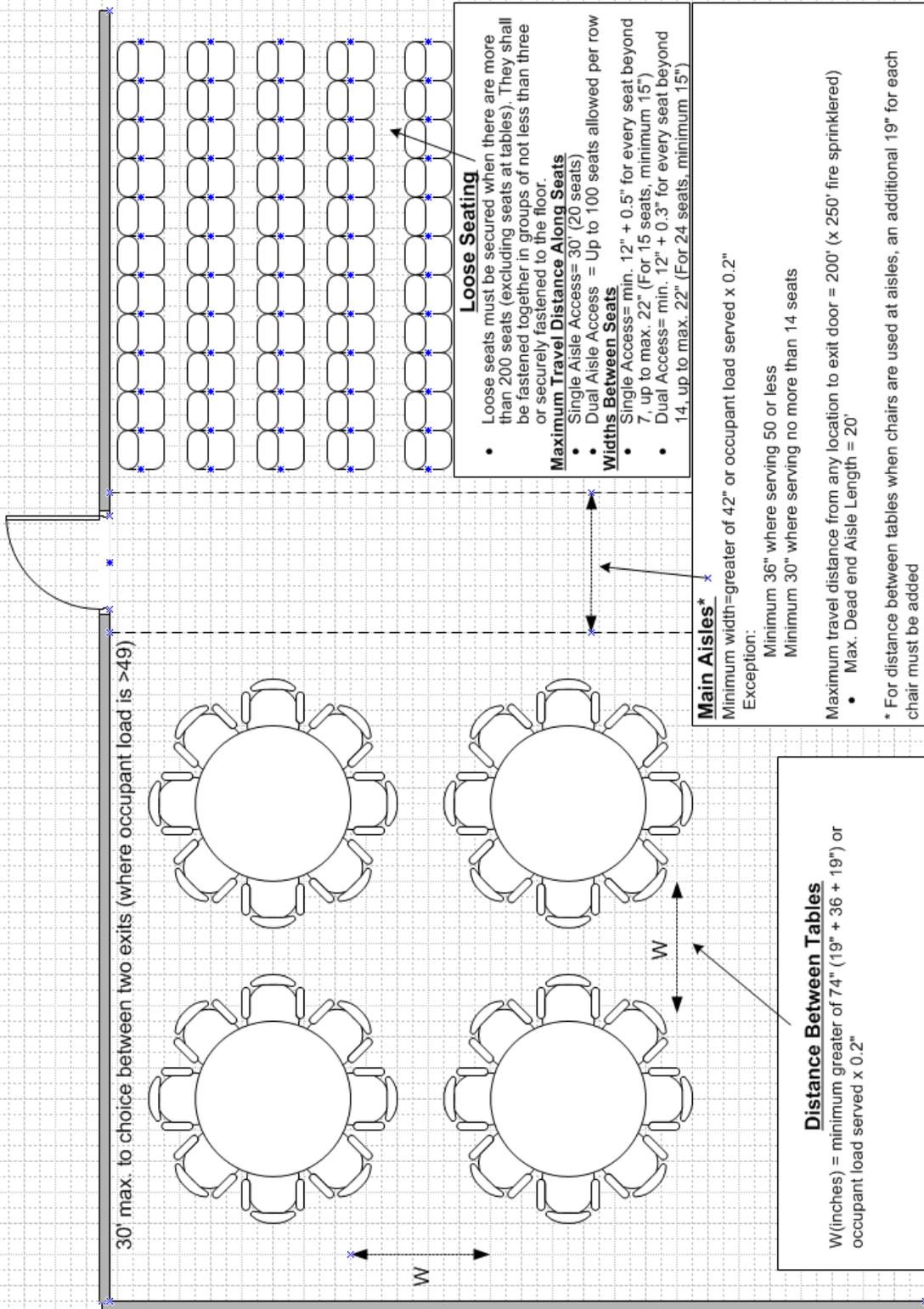
Fire Evacuation Plans

- Emergency egress or escape routes and whether evacuation of the building is to be complete or, where approved, by selected floors or areas only.
- Procedures for employees who must remain to operate critical equipment before evacuating.
- Procedures for accounting for employees and occupants after evacuation has been completed.
- Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for rescue or emergency medical aid.
- The preferred and any alternative means of notifying occupants of a fire or emergency.
- The preferred and any alternative means of reporting fires and other emergencies to the fire department or designated emergency response organization.
- Identification and assignment of personnel who can be contacted for further information or explanation of duties under the plan.
- A description of the emergency voice/alarm communication system alert tone and pre-programmed voice messages, where provided.

Fire Safety Plans

- The procedure for reporting a fire or other emergency.
- The life safety strategy and procedures for notifying, relocating, or evacuating occupants.
- Site plans indicating the occupancy assembly point, the locations of fire hydrants and fire appliances, and the normal routes of fire department vehicle access.
- Floor plans identifying the exits, primary evacuation routes, secondary evacuation routes, accessible egress routes, areas of refuge, manual fire alarm boxes, portable fire extinguishers, occupant-use hose stations, fire alarm annunciators and controls, and area separation fire walls.
- A list of major fire hazards associated with the normal use and occupancy of the premises, including maintenance and housekeeping procedures.
- Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for maintenance of systems and equipment installed to prevent or control fires.
- Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for maintenance, housekeeping and controlling fuel hazard sources.

Seating Arrangement and Aisles



For more information, contact the Medford Fire-Rescue Fire & Life Safety Division or visit: www.medfordfirerescue.org

Fire Safety at Assembly Occupancies



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