
FIRE PREVENTION AND BUILDING SAFETY COMMISSION
Department of Homeland Security**Written Interpretation of the State Building Commissioner****Interpretation #:** CEB-2022-16-2014 IBC-1011.1**Building or Fire Safety Law Interpreted**

675 IAC 13-2.6 2014 Indiana Building Code, Section 1011.1 (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. The path of egress travel to exits and within exits shall be marked by readily visible exit signs to clearly indicate the direction of egress travel in cases where the exit or the path of egress travel is not immediately visible to the occupants. Intervening means of egress doors within exits shall be marked by exit signs. Exit sign placement shall be such that no point in an exit access corridor or exit passageway is more than 100 feet (30,480 mm) or the listed viewing distance for the sign, whichever is less, from the nearest visible exit sign.*

Exceptions:

1. Exit signs are not required in rooms or areas that require only one *exit* or *exit access*.
2. Main exterior *exit* doors or gates that are obviously and clearly identifiable as *exits* need not have exit signs where *approved* by the *building official*.
3. Exit signs are not required in occupancies in Group U and individual *sleeping units* or *dwelling units* in Group R1, R-2, or R-3.
4. Exit signs are not required in dayrooms, sleeping rooms, or dormitories in occupancies in Group I-3.
5. In occupancies in Groups A-4 and A-5, 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.

Issue

Whether Section 1011.1 of the *2014 Indiana Building Code (IBC)* requires exit signs in spaces that require only one exit.

Interpretation of the State Building Commissioner

No, Section 1011.1 of the *2014 IBC* does not require exit signs in spaces that require only one exit.

Rationale

Section 1011.1 includes several exceptions to the requirement for installed exit signs. The first of these is for spaces that, for reasons of size and/or occupant load, require only one exit or exit access. In such spaces, the assumption is the area is small enough, and the occupants familiar enough with it, that in an emergency they can readily identify the exit without the assistance of signage. In many such cases, the only way out of the space is the door used to enter it.

However, it is important to understand occupant load is not the only factor to consider in the question of where exit sign placement is required. The designer must differentiate between and correctly identify spaces for which occupant loads are derived by size and use (i.e., spaces occupied in the course of the building's typical use), and spaces that are occupied during egress as a portion of the means of egress system (i.e., exits). For the former, the need for more than one exit (and therefore the need for more than one exit sign) is determined by the requirements of Section 1015.1, in conjunction with the occupant load factors of Table 1004.1.2. A corridor, on the other hand, may be small enough that a calculated occupant load would suggest it is exempt from the requirement for exit signage, but as an exit, or part of an exit, it may still require an exit sign if the exit path is complex or potentially confusing. This is the condition the regulation refers to when it requires exit signs at "intervening means of egress doors within exits".

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