

Subject: Access and Egress

A. PURPOSE

The safety of all members of the campus community is a primary concern of the University of Houston. The University of Houston demonstrates this concern through compliance and enforcement of federal, state, local, and University of Houston System rules and regulations to which the University is subject. These laws include the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Life Safety Code published by the National Fire Protection Association.

It is the intent of the University of Houston to provide obstacle-free access and egress for all facilities on the University of Houston campus. The Facilities Access and Egress Procedure will ensure obstacle-free access and egress for all facilities by establishing responsibilities, requirements, and a uniform standard operating procedure for the removal of all items deemed obstacles to the normal flow of pedestrian traffic in and around facilities on the University of Houston campus.

B. SCOPE

The scope of this procedure is to establish uniform methods for assuring obstacle-free access and egress to University of Houston facilities and in doing so to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Life Safety Code. The procedure shall apply to any item which may obstruct the normal flow of traffic in and around all facilities. This includes, but is not limited too, items such as bicycles, motorcycles, desks, books, laboratory equipment, machinery, cabinets, gas cylinders, furniture, etc.

This scope shall apply to all faculty, students, staff, and to all facilities. The policy shall also apply to all visitors, vendors, and contractors/subcontractors while on University of Houston property.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. Access: Access shall be defined in accordance with the NFPA current meaning. This is presently "any path of travel, either exterior or interior, which provides access either into or throughout a facility. This would include, but shall not be limited to, interior and exterior walkways, stairs, stairwells, ramps and corridors."
2. Accessible: Describes a site, building, facility, or portion thereof that complies with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

3. Accessible Means of Egress: Accessible Means of Egress shall be defined in accordance with the NFPA current meaning. This is presently "a path of travel usable by a person with a severe mobility impairment that leads to a public way or an area of refuge."
4. Accessible Route: The ADA defines an accessible route as a continuous unobstructed path connecting all accessible elements and spaces of a building or facility. Interior accessible routes may include corridors, floors, ramps, elevators, lifts, and clear floor space at fixtures. Exterior accessible routes may include parking access spaces, curb ramps, crosswalks at vehicular ways, walks, ramps, and lifts.
5. ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990.
6. DPS: Department of Public Safety
7. Egress: Any path of travel used to exit a building. This would include, but shall not be limited to, interior and exterior walkways, stairs, stairwells, ramps and corridors.
8. Egress, Means of: ADA, TAS, and NFPA define means of egress as a continuous and unobstructed way of exit travel from any point in a building or facility to a public way. A means of egress consists of vertical and/or horizontal travel; also may include intervening room spaces, doorways, hallways, corridors, passageways, balconies, ramps, stairs, enclosures, lobbies, horizontal exits, courts and yards.
9. UHFMO: University of Houston Fire Marshal's Office
10. NFPA: The National Fire Protection Association
11. Obstruction: Any item which interferes with the normal flow of pedestrian traffic in a facility access or egress path. This would include, but shall not be limited to, items such as bicycles chained to handrails, motorcycles parked in facility entrance areas, office furnishings, laboratory equipment, boxes of books, and any other items which might hinder access or egress.
12. Repeat Violations: When an item has been issued an Access/Egress Violation and is removed within 24 hours but is repeatedly returned to the same location or a similar location so as to cause an obstruction.
13. UHPD: The University of Houston Police Department
14. TAS: Texas Accessibility Standards

D. REFERENCED MATERIALS

1. NFPA 101 Life Safety Code
2. University of Houston Fire and Life Safety Code

E. RESPONSIBILITY

1. The Department of Public Safety, Fire Marshal's Office, shall be responsible for: Identifying items as obstacles and documenting the obstruction; providing notification to departments, contractors, subcontractors, and/or individuals to remove the item in question; immediate removal of obstructions where imminent danger exists and/or notifications have been ignored.
2. Departments shall be ultimately responsible for obstacle-free access and egress within the confines of their jurisdiction and are therefore responsible for all expenses which may be incurred for the removal and storage of any items or damage thereto which are departmental property and are found to be obstacles.
3. Individuals shall be responsible for all personal property which is found to be obstructing normal traffic and are ultimately responsible for expenses incurred during the removal and storage of said property or damage thereto.
4. All visitors, vendors, contractors and sub-contractors shall adhere to the facility access and egress procedures and shall be responsible for expenses incurred during the removal and storage of any items which may obstruct the normal flow of traffic in and around all facilities.

F. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Access and egress paths shall be free from any and all obstacles which may hinder normal traffic flow.
2. Handrails and guardrails shall be kept free and clear and shall not be used to secure bicycles or any other object which might interfere with or hinder normal pedestrian traffic flow.
3. Motorized bikes shall not be parked in such a place as to potentially create an immediate fire or life safety hazard
4. All non-motorized bicycles shall be parked in designated bike racks or areas that do not impede access or egress to a building/area.

5. Office furnishings, laboratory equipment, boxes of books, and any other items which might hinder the normal flow of pedestrian traffic shall not be stored in an access or egress pathway.
6. The University will not be responsible for any locks, chains, and/or cables etc. which may be removed, nor for any damage or loss which may result from the removal and storage of the property. Departments, contractors/subcontractors, vendors and/or individuals shall be responsible for all costs of removal and storage of property which is removed.

G. ENFORCEMENT

1. The Department of Public Safety Fire Marshal's Office shall:
 - a. Identify items as obstacles and document the obstruction
 - 1) UHFMO will investigate all reports of obstacles to access and/or egress paths upon receipt of a complaint call, hazard report or personal observation by a UHFMO staff member.
 - 2) The investigative report shall determine if the allegations are factual and shall document pertinent information for determining ownership of the item (i.e., description of property, property tag number, department name, color, make, serial number, company name, etc.).
 - b. Provide notification to departments, contractors/subcontractors, and/or individuals to remove the item in question
 - 1) A warning will be issued to departments, contractors, subcontractors, vendors and/or individuals for items which are initially identified as obstructions advising that the item is an obstruction and should be removed within 24 hours. This warning will be in writing.
 - 2) If the item has not been removed a second warning in writing will be issued with a statement that if the item has not been removed within 24 hours, it will be removed and placed in storage at the University of Houston Police Department's (UHPD) Lost and Found.
 - 3) When an item is found to have repeated violations within a 24 hour period, (e.g. a bicycle that is chained/locked to a handrail, removed but then returned on a daily basis) it shall be subject to parts a.2. and b.2. above.

- c. Remove any obstruction which constitutes an immediate danger to the occupants of the facility.
 - 1) UHFMO shall have the authority to remove any item which, in their opinion, poses an immediate danger to the occupants of the facility.
- 2. Colleges, divisions, departments, auxiliaries, etc., may initiate any additional requirements that exceed the requirements of this policy deemed necessary to control access and/or egress obstacles within the confines of their jurisdiction.