



Corridor and Common Area Use Guideline

A. Summary

Among the most important methods of ensuring fire and life safety in a building or occupancy is the elimination of corridor storage. Corridors are part of a “means of egress” and are considered escape avenues for all occupants of a given area, floor, or building in the event of an emergency. Nevertheless, Fire Departments around the country are constantly being asked, “What can we put in the corridors?”

The answer is simple corridors must be maintained free of storage or obstacles that protrude into the exit path.

B. Corridor Storage



The above left photo shows the difficulty occupants would have making a safe exit in the event of an emergency. In a fire, visibility could be reduced to virtually zero by heavy smoke. If smoke is present in the exit corridors, it can become very difficult to see. As a result, escape becomes extremely difficult, especially when you must navigate around protrusions and obstacles through dark smoke. Because corridors are designed for use as a safe haven for occupant use during building evacuation, storage of combustible materials or the use of door wedges is not permitted.

In the photograph of a similar hallway (above, right), safe exit would be much easier during an emergency and emergency responders would be capable of conducting a much more effective search of the area if necessary. In addition, most corridors have a one-hour fire and smoke wall that theoretically protects the safe haven for up to one hour should a fire emergency occur inside an adjacent room.