Tool Box Talk

Access & Egress

Access and Egress Definitions

- Access— the means/route of *entering* a worksite
- Egress the means/route of *exiting* a worksite

Why Access and Egress is Important

Access and egress is a vital necessity for a safe work environment. Doorways, hallways and emergency exits can easily get cluttered or completely blocked. When this happens, this creates a major safety issue that can cause tripping/puncture injuries and create evacuation or medical response restrictions. Keeping these areas clean and clear will ensure workers remain safe and allow for quick and effective evacuation or medical response.

Legislation

Listed below are relevant legislative sections that refer to access and egress requirements:

- Section 3-1(d): Covers "General Duties of an Employer"
- Section 16-1: Covers "General duty re entrances, exits"
- Section 16-2: Covers "Doors"
- Section 16-3: Covers "Travelways"
- Section 16-4: Covers "Stairs"
- Section 9-10: Covers "Handrails"

Common Hazards

Listed below are a few common situations that may arise on a construction site which can cause access and egress issues:

- Material build-up and improper storage areas
- Actively used tools and equipment
 - o Extension cords
 - Tool belt and large power tools
- Ice and snow build-up
- Improperly marked or forgotten red tape
- Improperly parked PMEs
- Lack of lights and signs
- Lack of stairs, ramps, handrails, etc.

Additionally, miscommunication can lead to access and egress being impeded by exits being temporarily blocked due to work being completed and no alternative means of access and egress. To effectively control the risks on site associated with access and egress, ensure:

- Ice and snow are cleared off of stairs and walkways
- Tripping hazards are removed (extension cords, boxes, tools, etc.) and materials are stored in the appropriate place
- Corridors or stairways are not being used for storage or office/ laboratory operations
- Quality and proper lighting—whether natural or artificial—is used (without glare or shadows)
- Structural ramps used solely for access/egress are designed by a competent person
- Ramps are structurally sound and do not create a tripping hazard
- Surface treatments are used on ramps to prevent slipping
- Means of egress are fixed and secure
- Any staircase with five or more steps has a handrail the length of the stairs

Emergency Situations

Emergency access and egress are crucial during emergency situations, such as a fire or an onsite injury requiring medical attention.

Some of the questions to keep in mind, are:

- Can a stretcher (gurney) easily get onsite and wheel across the floor/ground? Is there uneven ground that would further impact the condition of an already injured worker? (e.g. neck injury)
- Are all means of egress kept clean, clutter-free, and unobstructed?
- Are hazardous materials or equipment placed in their appropriate places and not in areas used for evacuation?
- Are fire doors kept closed at all times to act as smoke barriers and limit the spread of a potential fire?



