

MSC Guidelines for Review of Access to stairtowers

Plan Review Guidance #: SOLAS-26

Effective Date

11/15/2002

Regulations

- SOLAS 2001 Cite: II-2/13.3.2.3
 - SOLAS 1974 Cite: II-2/29.2
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Contact Information

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Reference Text

“Stairway enclosures in accommodation and service spaces shall have direct access to the corridors and be of a sufficient area to prevent congestion, having in view the number of persons likely to use them in an emergency. Within the perimeter of such stairway enclosures, only public toilets, lockers of non-combustible material providing storage for non-hazardous safety equipment and open information counters are permitted. Only public spaces, corridors, lifts, public toilets, special category spaces and open ro-ro spaces to which any passengers carried can have access, other escape stairways required by paragraph 3.2.4.1 and external areas are permitted to have direct access to these stairway enclosures. Small corridors or "lobbies" used to separate an enclosed stairway from galleys or main laundries may have direct access to the stairway provided they have a minimum deck area of 4.5 m², a width of no less than 900 mm. and contain a fire hose station.”

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Guidance

Not all public spaces should be allowed direct access to stairs. Only large public spaces such as halls, dining rooms, and lounges should be permitted as they present other issues such as the need to rapidly egress a large number of people. This need is balanced with the risk of introducing smoke and fire to a stairway. Shops, smaller lounges, reading rooms, beauty parlors, gyms, reception areas, and smoking rooms for example, should not have direct access to stairs because the risk of introducing smoke into the stair is higher compared to the need to evacuate the small number of people. In these cases, alternative escape routes (category 3 or 4) should be provided. Additionally, while the back stage of a theater can be considered common with the theater (and therefore a public space), it is generally not accessible to passengers and not outfitted as a public space. Therefore, these and similar areas should not open directly into a stair.

Background

Not Applicable