



New Proposed Edition of NFPA 101 Released

By Dana Glenn Peterson, AIA

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has released the final standard with proposed text for the 2015 edition of NFPA 101, to be voted on by the NFPA membership at the Association Technical Meeting scheduled for June 11-12 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

As this particular code is employed broadly across the U.S., affecting many APPA member institutions, the APPA Standards and Codes Council wishes to report on the changes that are proposed for inclusion within the 2015 code version. Unless you are in a jurisdiction that automatically updates the code to “the latest edition,” the 2015 edition will require adoption through a public process in your jurisdiction and with an effective date established. Typically this is a year or more after the date of edition.

The changes outlined below are the Council’s best assessment and interpretation of the most impactful changes found in the final standard that will be voted on in June. This is intended as a good overview of what will likely be coming up, rather than a detailed evaluation. Changes that on the surface appeared to be simply a restatement of current language, minor changes in terminology, or grammatical corrections have not been included.

CHAPTER 7—MEANS OF EGRESS

- Clarifies that it is the walking surfaces of a means of egress that must be slip resistant, rather than walking surfaces in general.
- Requires 13" minimum depth treads

- when there is a change in level of less than 21" in a means of egress.
- Permits floor levels to be lower than the bottom of a door opening onto to them, but only if the space is not normally occupied, and no lower than 8".
- Is stricter on how much the swing of a door can project into required egress widths.
- Removes the permissible conditions under which an outside stairway cannot be separated from a corridor.
- Provides additional restrictions on fire barriers between buildings or areas where there are horizontal exits.
- Permits “industrial stairs” where fire escape ladders are permitted.
- The occupancy load table for calculating occupancy has been revised.
- Permits stairs greater than 44" in width to have a greater capacity.
- Removes the provision to permit delaying of discharge at the exits while the nature of an alarm is being investigated.
- Removes the provision that stairs and ramps be arranged to make clear the direction to the public way.
- Increases the lighting requirement for exit paths to 2 footcandles.

CHAPTER 8—FEATURES OF FIRE PROTECTION

- New requirement that fire separation assemblies that are not symmetrical need to be tested from both sides of the assembly.
- Permits Authority Having Jurisdiction’s to approve unlabeled steel door frames.

- Replaces existing table for ratings of opening protective with new.
- Prohibits convenience stairs from connecting more than four stories.
- Requires that new escalators be protected only by NFPA 13 design method sprinklers or other method as approved by AHJ.

CHAPTER 9—BUILDING SERVICE AND FIRE PROTECTION EQUIPMENT

- Prohibits smoke detectors from being installed within 36" of a door to a bathroom that contains a shower or a bathtub unless the detector is rated for.

CHAPTER 10—INTERIOR FINISH, CONTENTS, AND FURNISHINGS

- “Grandfather’s” existing films, veneers, and coatings less than 9 mm thick from having to be tested for surface burning characteristics.

CHAPTER 11—SPECIAL STRUCTURES AND HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS

- New requirement for real-time video monitoring system in exist stairways in high-rises with an occupant load of more than 4,000.

CHAPTER 12/13—ASSEMBLY OCCUPANCIES

- Modifications to required widths of stairs and ramps under certain conditions.
- Removes separate requirements for transitions in aisle stairs.
- Provides new requirements for aisle stair risers, landings, and handrails.
- Prohibits alcohol-based hand sanitizers

around cooking equipment. (Requirements for or prohibition of alcohol-based hand sanitizers is a common change across many chapters.)

- Requires Facility Management Operational plans.
- Requires training for Crowd Managers.

CHAPTER 14/15—EDUCATIONAL OCCUPANCIES

- Sets requirements for alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Requires security for recall signal activation in voice/alarm systems, and for signal to be distinctive from alarm signal.

CHAPTER 16/17—DAY CARE OCCUPANCIES

- Provides a definition for “level of exit discharge.”
- Sets requirements for alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

CHAPTER 18/19—HEALTHCARE OCCUPANCIES

- Sets conditions under which egress doors may be disguised by wall murals.
- Requires sliding doors to latch.
- Establishes minimum corridor widths and addresses obstructions thereto.
- Establishes maximum travel distances from “sleeping suites.”
- Defines hazardous areas requiring a one-hour separation (labs covered under NFPA 45 are removed from the list).
- Requires medical gas areas to be regulated under NFPA 99.
- Requires smoke zoning and smoke doors.
- Table for hazardous area protection re-done.
- Adds fire safety plan requirements.

CHAPTER 20/21—AMBULATORY HEALTHCARE OCCUPANCIES

- New fire drill requirements.

CHAPTER 28/29—HOTELS AND DORMITORY OCCUPANCIES

- Removes exception that permits new

unsprinklered buildings where doors open directly to the exterior.

CHAPTER 32/33—RESIDENTIAL BOARD AND CARE OCCUPANCIES

- Provides a definition for “level of exit discharge.”
- Sets conditions under which doors in a means of egress can be locked.
- Sets conditions under which a cooking facility can be provided that is open to a corridor.

CHAPTER 36/37—MERCANTILE OCCUPANCIES

- Sets conditions under which un-enclosed vertical openings may be permitted.
- Deletes requirements for manual pull stations where sprinklers are in place.
- Sets construction requirements for kiosks.

CHAPTER 38/39—BUSINESS OCCUPANCIES

- Removes the specific parameters to calculate occupancy load.
- Sets conditions under which stairs and ramps can serve floors located below grade.
- Sets conditions under which un-enclosed vertical openings may be permitted.

CHAPTER 40—INDUSTRIAL OCCUPANCIES

- Removes provision permitting delayed egress. 

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