



# Five Minutes to *Fire Safety*

## Topic: Weather and Exit Discharge

In the last edition of "Five Minutes to Fire Safety," we talked about the three different parts of an exit - exit access, the exit itself, and exit discharge.

This week we're looking specifically at the exit discharge, which is the part of the means of egress that goes from the exit door to a street or alley. Our Kansas weather provides some specific challenges to keeping the exit discharge clear and accessible for use.


For schools and childcare facilities, we get our inspection requirements from the 1991 edition of the NFPA Life Safety Code, also known as NFPA 101. An entire chapter of this document is devoted to exiting, and section 5-1.7.3 actually states, "Means of egress shall be free of obstructions that would prevent its use, including the accumulation of snow and ice." (Remember, means of egress includes the exit access, exit, and exit discharge.)

What does this mean? Two things. First, **snow and ice are considered an obstruction from exiting.** Whatever the surface of the exit discharge is constructed of, it must be something that can be cleared of snow and ice. One of the unique challenges to living in Kansas is that the weather can be quite unpredictable. Floods, droughts, snow and ice storms, and waves of extreme heat come to us in no particular order. If your exit discharge path from a required exit is something that is not reliable or is something that may turn soggy or muddy after a heavy downpour, it may not be acceptable.

Second, **your exit discharges must be clear of ice and snow.** We understand that in the middle of a snow shower or freezing rain, there will be some accumulation. However, any accumulation must be removed within a reasonable amount of time. This holds true for each required exit.

As we move closer to winter weather, get in the habit of checking all required exits from your building. When snow and ice hit, make sure ALL exits - not just the main ones - get cleaned off and are easy and ready to use.

To access this and previous topics online, visit us online at [www.accesskansas.org/firemarshal](http://www.accesskansas.org/firemarshal).



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