

MEANS OF EGRESS

INSPECTION AND TESTING

1. GENERAL

1.01 This section outlines suggestions for routine inspections and, where appropriate, tests of the various means of egress generally common to telephone buildings, and is offered as a reference in supplementing the inspection services of Marsh & McLennan in preserving safe and effective exit facilities.

1.02 The means of egress covered include halls, corridors, passageways, interior and exterior stairs, fire towers, fire escapes, horizontal exits, doorways and windows required to furnish safe access to the street or other point of refuge in the event of fire.

1.03 This section is reissued to:

- (a) Indicate the codes upon which the recommendations herein are based and which contain certain detail regarding the subject for reference use which is not covered herein.
- (b) Refer to Section H32.610, "Stairway Planning and Construction" of Bell System Practices.
- (c) Recommend the frequency of inspection of fire escapes and outside stairways.
- (d) Include changes in certain wording and rearrangement of the text. Arrows are used to indicate changes throughout the text.

1.04 For operation and maintenance application, this section is double numbered with this issue and the same issue number is assigned for uniformity.

1.05 Codes and Ordinances: The recommendations contained in this section are based in general on the Building Exit Code of the National Fire Protection Association and the Building Code recommended by the National Board of Fire Underwriters. Where the following procedures conflict with or are exceeded by corresponding requirements of local or state legislation, the legislated requirements should, of course, apply.

1.06 It is desirable that routine inspections of all means of egress and tests of certain exit facilities be made at sufficiently

frequent intervals to ensure maintaining a maximum degree of safety. The inspections and tests are preferably made by assigned employees who are specially instructed in these procedures. Any faulty conditions disclosed by the routine investigations or that become evident at any time should be corrected at once.

2. HALLS AND PASSAGEWAYS

2.01 Halls, corridors and passageways, including exitways from rooms which lead through other rooms, should be kept free from obstructions. Furniture, items of building or telephone equipment, etc., should not be placed or stored within exitway space, nor should vehicles be parked or materials located where they might interfere with free egress from the building. The amount of scaffolding placed for maintenance operations in exitways should be kept to a minimum, located so as to cause least obstruction and be removed as soon as possible.

3. STAIRWAYS AND FIRE ESCAPES

3.01 Stairs, landings and platforms of interior and exterior stairways, fire towers and fire escapes should be maintained free from all obstructions. Balustrades, hand rails, brackets and newels should be examined for loose connections and anchorages. Electric light or power wires should not be placed above or within 3 feet of outside stairs or fire escapes unless the wires are enclosed in rigid conduit.

3.02 Outside stairs and fire escapes should be inspected at least annually, and should be scraped and painted as often as necessary to maintain them in proper condition at all times. All anchorages, metal supports, brackets and other fastenings for outside stairs or fire escapes should be examined for looseness or excessive corrosion.

3.03 Where the lower flight of fire escape stairs is counterbalanced, its bearings should be kept lubricated and the entire device including its latching arrangement tested by actual operation. When lowering or raising the counterbalanced section it is desirable that care be taken to avoid excessively jarring or stressing the structure. No obstruction should be permitted at any time in the space under a counterbalanced section.

→ 3.04 The landings, platforms, and the treads of all outside stairs and fire escapes are designed so that the accumulation of snow and ice thereon will be reduced to a minimum. The landings, platforms and the treads of outside stairs and fire escapes should be promptly cleaned of snow and ice.

3.05 Section H32.610 of Bell System Practices outlines desirable arrangements for the number and layout of stairways and stairway enclosures in telephone buildings and general features of construction.

#### 4. DOORS AND WINDOWS

4.01 Doors and sash in openings serving as required exits should be tested for proper operation and inspected for sound physical condition. Doors should swing easily and sash move freely without undue effort on the part of the operator. Where necessary, locks, latches, hinges and closing devices should be adjusted to operate smoothly and effectively.

4.02 Revolving doors in required exits should be tested by pressure for release of the wings from each other so that each will swing independently. Where used, revolving doors should not constitute more than 50% of the required door width.

4.03 Automatic fire doors are usually tested for operation by temporarily removing the fusible link.

4.04 It is important that practices of blocking open self-closing doors with wedges, or of tying them open, be discouraged. These doors while closed prevent the passage of smoke through the opening which might otherwise render the adjoining area of refuge untenable. It is recognized that there may be certain cases in which the volume of personnel movement and the urgency of need for additional ventilation may possibly outweigh the matter of smoke protection involved to the extent that management may wish to grant specific approval permitting the doors in such cases to be held open. In this event it is recommended that such doors be equipped with and held open by an automatic door closer having a hold open device the automatic release of which is controlled by a fusible link.

#### 5. EXIT LIGHTS AND SIGNS

5.01 Exit signs and regular and emergency lighting for the several means of egress should be kept clean and the control switches checked for proper operation. Burned out lamp bulbs should be replaced promptly with new lamps of proper wattage.