

**MINNEAPOLIS FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU POLICY #10-2  
EXIT SIGNS & EMERGENCY LIGHTING**

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Page 1 of 1

**ISSUE:**

Exit signs & emergency lighting.

**CODE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. *Exit signs are required in exitways where the exits are not obvious. Exit signs must always be lighted (either internally or externally). The signs must have emergency power or be self luminous when emergency lighting is required.*
2. *Emergency lighting for existing buildings is not mentioned in the fire code. A catchall paragraph states that buildings are to be maintained in accordance with the building code in effect at the time the building was constructed unless the condition is considered a distinct hazard.*

**PROBLEM:**

Lack of emergency lighting in large buildings is considered as a distinct hazard. Not having objective criteria for requirements for emergency lighting would result in inconsistent enforcement and some buildings not having needed lighting.

**ACCEPTABLE MEANS OF COMPLIANCE:**

1. Exit signs are required in all exitways. (MSFC)
2. Emergency lighting is required in multi-unit residential buildings that exceed 20,000 sq. ft. gross floor area or that have maze like exit systems where the exits are not easily recognizable. (MFD Policy)  
Justification: The previous MSFC requires (which we enforced) emergency lighting when a building's occupant load was 100 or more. The 20,000 sq. ft. criteria is based on one (1) person per 200 sq. ft. x 100 occ. Load = 20,000 sq. ft. The easiest way to determine the gross floor area is to measure the exterior of the building and multiply it by the number of floors that contain dwelling units.