



DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS INSPECTION CHECKLIST

If you are applying for certain business licenses, including **liquor and public place of amusement**, and/or applying for an **occupancy capacity sign (required when the total occupancy by the public is 100 persons or more)**, Department of Buildings (DOB) inspectors will inspect your establishment to ensure that the building and commercial space provide a safe environment for patrons, customers and employees. DOB inspections focus on the safety of occupants. For example, a building inspector will check to make sure fire separation is included, an adequate number of exits are provided and are not blocked, and that an occupancy sign/drawing is posted, if required. Additionally, your license application may require an inspection from a DOB electrical, ventilation, and or plumbing inspector and other city departments who review your space for compliance to their respective codes.

A DOB building inspector, from Special Inspections (SIP), will check for the following, based on the applicability to your business (Disclaimer: The below list is indicative only and non-exhaustive. For more information, including the “Chicago Building Code” and “Code Clarifications and Interpretations,” go to www.cityofchicago.org/buildings)

Exit Requirements (see Figure 1 for a diagram)

- Sufficient number of exits

<i>Capacity</i>	<i>Minimum Number of Exits</i>
50 or less	1
51 to 300	2
301 to 1000	3
1000+	4

A minimum of two exits are required from every building, floor, space or room, except as outlined in Municipal Code (13-160-050). Also refer to the Municipal Code (13-196-050, 13-88-160, 13-84-170)

- Exits must be free of obstructions. Refer to the Municipal Code (13-160-070, 15-4-880)
- Where more than one means of exit is required from any room, space or floor of a building, they must be located remotely from one another
- Revolving doors may be used as required exits in occupancies of 100 persons or less. Refer to the Municipal Code (13-160-270)
- The means of exit from one story to another and to an outside exit must be continuous and uninterrupted
- From any point in the establishment, the travel distance to the nearest exit must be less than 150 ft
- Exit doors must swing in the direction of exit (i.e., swings out from inside to outside). This includes all doors along the exit path.
- Exit doors must be at least 36 inches wide
- Exit doors cannot have a key face lockset on the exiting side. This includes no slide-blots or similar devices.
- Exit doors cannot project onto a public way without the use of public way approval and must be protected with wheel stops/fixed barricade on the alley or parking side. Refer to the Municipal Code (13-160-070, 15-4-090, 15-4-880) See Figure 1
- Panic hardware must be installed on exit doors when total capacity exceeds 200
- Every exit and its pathway (e.g., public hall and stair well) must be well illuminated
- Exits designated with electric, battery back-up, exit signs, in good working order and in a metal frame housing

Stairway Requirements (see Figure 2 for a diagram)

- Stairways must be clear of debris and no storage under stairways
- Stairways must be constructed of noncombustible materials when occupancy exceeds 100 persons. Refer to the Municipal Code (13-160-330)
- The underside of stairways of combustible stairways (when allowed) must be protected by noncombustible materials to provide at least 1-hour fire resistance
- All stairs and corridors used as exits must be at least 44 inches wide. Stair width is defined as the clear width of the stair tread used as the walking surface.
 - Exception: Stairs and corridors in buildings with a total occupancy of 50 persons or less above the grade level, shall not be less than 36 inches wide.
- If a stairway is used as an exit, it cannot have winder steps; generally wedge shaped.
- Vertical height of a flight of stairs between landings or between a floor and a landing must be 9 ft. or less, when occupancy exceeds 100 persons
- The width of a stairway, including the landing, shall not decrease in the line of travel. Refer to the Municipal Code (13-160-210 and 13-160-310)
- Depending on occupancy classification, the height of each stair riser must be 7.5 inches or less and they all must be equal in height. The minimum width of a tread must be 10 inches. The surface of treads and landings should not cause danger of slipping. Refer to the Municipal Code (13-160-300). All new stairs are required to have 7 inch risers and 11 inch treads.
- The ends of handrails must be returned and joined into the wall
- Height to the top of handrail(s) must be between 34 – 38 inches, measured from the stair tread or floor
 - If the width of stairs is less than 44 inches, then a handrail on at least one side must be provided
 - If the width of stairs exceeds 44 inches, handrails must be provided on both sides
 - If the width of stairs is greater than 88 inches, an intermediate handrail(s) must be provided
- Guardrails, installed at a minimum height of 42 inches above the finished floor, cannot have balusters or a pattern providing a ladder effect. Balusters spaced at 4 inches apart. See Figure 2

Enclosure Requirements

- All stairways must be enclosed with wall and partitions providing fire resistance
 - A building that is three stories or lower: One-hour rated fire resistance
 - A building that is higher than three stories: Two-hour rated fire resistance
- Heating plants and boilers must be enclosed by walls, partitions, floors and ceilings
 - For occupancies less than 200: One-hour rated fire resistance
 - For occupancies over 200: Two-hour rated fire resistance
- All assembly rooms
 - Capacity under 300: One-hour rated fire resistance
 - Capacity over 300: Two-hour rated fire resistance
- To prevent spread of fire from floor to floor, all stairs, shafts and openings in floors and roof must be enclosed
- Basements with a capacity of over 100 persons, in restaurants and nightclubs, must be sprinklered
- Class A fire doors or shutters installed on both sides of openings in a fire wall
- Class B fire doors provided at openings in vertical shafts, stair wells, and other openings
- Minimum one hour fire resistant ceiling provided between basement and first floor
- Fire doors cannot be propped open

Miscellaneous Requirements

- Proper building permits must be present for any construction and have received final construction approvals from the required inspection trades; as well as Certificate of Occupancy letter issued (if required for that permit)

- Foundation must be sound (e.g., no cracks)
- Exterior facade must be in sound condition (e.g., no tuck pointing required)
- Fire extinguishers must have up-to-date tags and be properly charged
- One carbon monoxide detector must be installed on every floor
- Curtains, scenery, and decorations shall be flame retardant for occupancies over 100 persons. Refer to the Municipal Code (15-4-620)
- The building must not have any structural problems (e.g., ceilings, floors, and roof are in good condition)
- Occupancy capacity sign is correct and properly displayed with the city approved and stamped drawing belonging to that specific issued occupancy capacity sign; the current physical space/layout must match that drawing. Exit diagrams must be posted for public places of amusements. Refer to the Municipal Code (13-84-400 and 4-156-380)

Figure 1: An Example of Exit Requirements

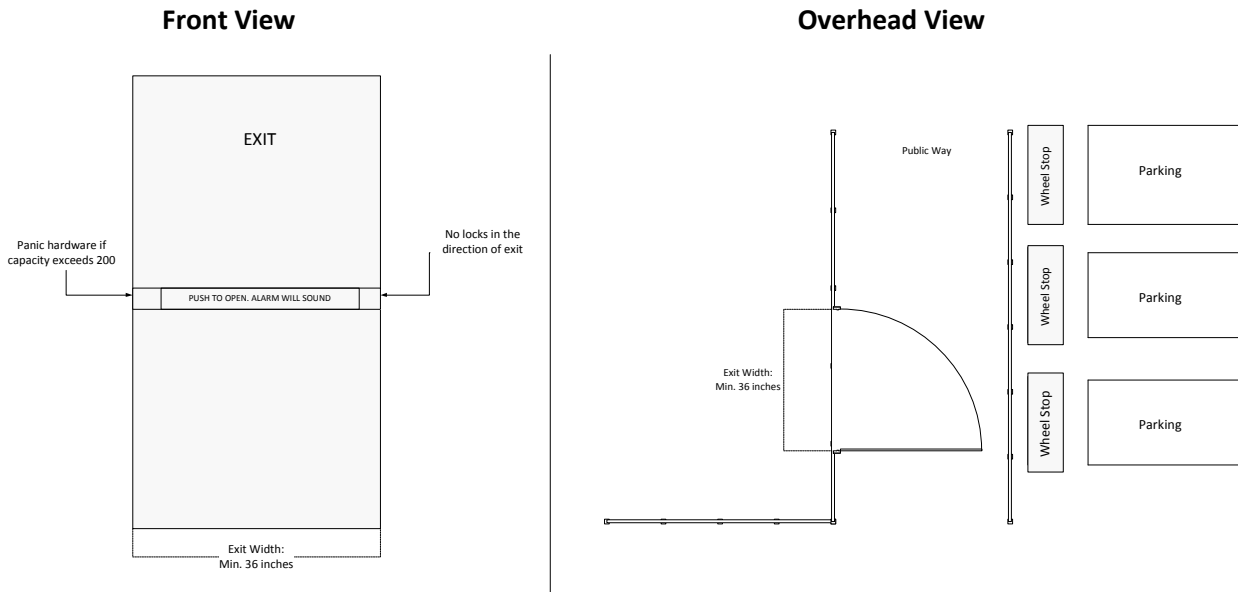


Figure 2: An Example of a Stairway

