

**Institutional Handbook of Operating Procedures
Policy 08.01.27**

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| Section: Health, Safety, and Security | Responsible Vice President: Executive Vice President of Business and Finance |
| Subject: Health and Safety | Responsible Entity: Environmental Health & Safety |

I. Title

Exit Access Corridor Use Policy

II. Policy

- A. *Audience.* All employees of University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB Health) hospitals and clinics, faculty, contract workers, volunteers, visitors, and students.
- B. *Purpose.* UTMB is committed to maintaining hallways and corridors free of obstructions in order to provide clear and safe exit for patients, students, faculty, staff, volunteers and visitors from within UTMB Health buildings in case of fire or other emergency. Additionally, UTMB Health recognizes that, in certain areas and cases select items may be located in corridors for the personal safety of patients and visitors.

This policy is an effort to mitigate fire safety hazards in UTMB Health buildings resulting from improper use of [Exit Access Corridors](#).

- C. *Policy Statement.* The use of all Exit Access Corridors in every UTMB Health building is subject to UTMB Health policy 2.7.2, “Space Management”. All Exit Access Corridor space is permanently designated as “Unassigned Space” as termed in the aforementioned policy and not subject to assignment except in that the area may be renovated and the new Exit Access Corridor(s) serving the renovated area will become “Unassigned Space”. The effect being that no department shall have operational control of any Exit Access Corridor in order to store nor stage items within the corridor except as provided herein. Security of areas, corridors etc. is not covered by this policy.

This policy is designed to comply with the most recent version of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Life Safety Code as adopted by the Texas State Fire Marshal’s office.

III. Responsibility

- A. Each entity or department is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy in all building areas that it occupies.
- B. UTMB Health personnel - are responsible for:
 - 1. Controlling items under their responsibility in such a manner as to create a code-compliant adequate means of egress so that all occupants may safely exit the building, and;
 - 2. Becoming familiar with this policy and adhering to its provisions.
- C. Environmental Health and Safety - Occupational Safety and Fire Prevention (EHS-OS&FP) is responsible for:
 - 1. Providing additional guidance or interpretation of the provisions of this policy;

2. Conducting periodic inspections of corridors for the purpose of advising each area of conditions requiring corrective action;
3. When necessary, taking immediate action to bring about the removal of items that would prevent safe egress of building occupants.

IV. **Items Specifically Excluded from this Policy**

UTMB Health recognizes that, for the needs of patients, within patient care areas certain wheeled items are necessary and allowed to be maintained in Exit Access Corridors. Such items specifically include the following:

1. Crash carts;
2. Isolation carts;
3. [Wheeled items “in use”](#);
4. Patient lift equipment;
5. Patient transportation equipment;
6. Chairs and benches that are used within the corridor for resting and are installed by Property Services (a.k.a. maintenance) according to NFPA Life Safety Code;
7. Items and areas specifically designed by UTMB Health, Buildings Operations and Facilities (BOF) to be incorporated into Exit Access Corridors, such as a clean linen cart alcove in a fire sprinkled area covered by smoke detection;
8. Items approved by BOF/EHS within Business Occupancies, as defined by NFPA that do not obstruct the clear width of the corridor, such as lockers, coke machines, etc.; and,
9. Emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, etc.

V. **Management of Items Allowed in Exit Access Corridors**

- A. The above-mentioned items that are allowed to be in Exit Access Corridors must be managed to maintain safety for occupants of the building. Management of these items is the responsibility of the department owning them and shall include:
1. Ensuring that any item located within the corridor is specifically allowed by this policy or has been approved, in writing by BOF/EHS;
 2. Ensuring that the department’s fire response plan includes relocating items on wheels during emergencies to allow full access to the corridor, when necessary;

Note: this action may be completed at the outset/upon alarm, partially completed at the outset (e.g. removing just transport equipment, leaving crash carts, etc.) or upon direction of the “Area Alarm Leader” as specified in the department’s written fire plan.

3. Ensuring that all items not actively attended shall be on one side of the corridor;
 4. Within healthcare areas, ensuring that at least 5 feet of the required 8 feet of the corridor is maintained clear;
 5. Ensuring that where patient lift equipment is used, the lift equipment shall be collapsed to leave a minimum of 5 feet clear anytime the equipment is not being used;
 6. Ensuring that where patient transportation equipment is staged, it is located along one side of the corridor.
- B. Items specifically not allowed to be located/stored in any Exit Access Corridor in any occupied building include the following:
1. Laboratory equipment such as centrifuges, refrigerators, etc.;
 2. Unapproved storage areas;
 3. Equipment, furniture waiting to be sent to Surplus, and;
 4. Any hazardous material (e.g. flammable liquids, oxygen etc.).

Note: In some Business or Research areas (not Healthcare), it is permissible, where approved by BOF to stage in the corridor minor amounts of materials like a recycle bag and/or waste bin for collection within the same day by Environmental Services.

- C. Where operational needs necessitate the temporary, partial or full blocking of the corridor, such as in construction or delivery of large pieces of equipment, UTMB Health’s Interim Life Safety Measures procedure shall be followed. Contact EHS, OS&FP at extension 70515 for more details.

Please Note:

Any conditions created that represent an imminent hazard, as determined by the UTMB Health Institutional Safety Officer, shall be considered a priority for correction. At that time, any offending items may be relocated to a safer area as determined by the Institutional Safety Officer. A report of such an incident shall be delivered to the appropriate Vice President, Provost or other senior management in charge of the area and to the Vice President of Business Operations and Facilities.

VI. Relevant Federal and State Statutes

2012 edition, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Life Safety Code Existing and New Healthcare Occupancies (NFPA 2012 ed. 101.18/19)

NFPA 2012 ed. 101.38/39 Life Safety Code for Business Occupancies

[Texas Administrative Code](#) (adoption of 2012 Life Safety Code by reference and inspection guidelines), 28 TAC §§34.301, 34.303, 34.304, 34.320 and 34.340.

VII. Additional References

Texas Joint Commission Life Safety standard, Element of Performance 20; i.e. LS 02.01.20 “Integrity of the Means of Egress”.

VIII. Related UTMB Policies and Procedures

[IHOP - 02.07.02 - Space Management](#)

IX. Contributing Entities

Environmental Health and Safety, Occupational Safety and Fire Prevention

X. Dates Approved or Amended

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|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Originated: 07/06/2015</i> | |
| <i>Reviewed with Changes</i> | <i>Reviewed without Changes</i> |
| | 03/17/2017 |
| | 08/04/2020 |

XI. UTMB Responsible Entity Contact Information

Environment of Care, Life Safety Subcommittee
(409) 747-0515