

Fire Inspector I & II

CHAPTER FIVE PERFORMING AN INSPECTION

Part 2



Slide 1	Welcome to Chapter 5 – Part 2
Slide 2	Welcome to Part 2 Performing the Inspection. In this part we will look at:
	 Conducting the interior inspection
	Means of Egress
	• Exits
	Exit signs
	Emergency lighting
	Compartmentation of Buildings
	Fire Separations
	Fire Doors
	Holes in fire separations
	Fire stopping
	Fire Detection & Suppression systems
Slide 3	 When conducting the interior inspection steps should be taken to ensure a thorough & complete inspection of the property. These steps include: Allow yourself adequate time to perform the complete inspection including reviewing any documentation required for the premises. Follow a predetermined & structured route through the building such as top to bottom or front to back or left or right. Document your inspection as you go. In this way you are unlikely to miss or forget something that requires further attention, Ensure all rooms or areas are inspected if possible. If a property representative cannot accompany you then ask for keys to the locked rooms. If it is not possible to inspect certain rooms or areas in the building, then document which rooms or areas you did not see & why. For example, "Access to operating room number 2 was not possible due a surgery being performed".
	 Most important: Be thorough but do not rush. If the owner must cut the inspection short you can reschedule & return at a later date to complete the full inspection.
Slide 4	All buildings are somewhat unique depending on their building & occupancy classifications, but all fire protection features should be in working order & be regularly inspected. During your interior inspection you should be looking for items such as:
	Active & Passive fire systems
	Means of egress
	Exit Signs & Emergency Lighting

	Fire separations
	Interior finish & contents
	Fire detection systems
	Fire suppression systems
	HVAC Systems
	Occupant load signs
	Commercial cooking systems
	Laundry facilities
	Refuse & Linen Chutes
	Elevators & escalators
	During an inspection it may be necessary to enter or observe enclosed spaces,
	or areas above suspended ceilings to ensure there are no breaches in required
	fire separations. For your safety & the safety of others you must follow your
	organizations protocols for confined space entry.
Slide 5	During the inspection fire protection systems, both active & passive, should be
	a top priority as these are the systems that reduce the spread of fire, detect
	the presence of smoke & fire, alert occupants, notify the fire department,
	activate fire suppression systems, close fire doors, open smoke vents, &
	control heating, ventilation, & air conditioning systems.
	You should have a working knowledge of all these systems & the code
	requirements for installation & maintenance of them. You should conduct a
	visual inspection of each system & review the inspection, testing &
	maintenance documentation provided by a qualified technician, but you
	should not do any physical testing of the systems due to potential liability for
	yourself & your employer.
Slide 6	One of the most important life safety features in any building is the provision
	of adequate exiting. Not only is adequate exiting required it must be
	accessible whenever the building is occupied.
	An exit route consists of three parts:
	Exit access – is the portion of an exit route that leads to an exit.
	Exit - the portion of an exit route that is generally separated from other areas
	to provide a protected way of travel to the exit discharge. This could be a stair
	tower or a corridor.
	Exit discharge - is the part of the exit route that leads directly outside or to a
	street, walkway, refuge area or open space with access to the outside.
Slide 7	Access to exit means a clear path from any point in a room or area to the exit.
	In the event of an emergency people need to quickly leave the building.
	People should be able to see an exit sign from where they are & be able to
	reach it without obstructions.

	Access & egress means the path of travel to an exit including corridors, doorways, gates, stairs etc. which may provide a means of exit. When conducting your inspection follow these guidelines to promote safe evacuation in corridors, stairways & exits: • There must be at least 44 inches clear width of unobstructed, clutter-free space in all corridors, stairways & exits. • Keep all means of egress clean, clutter-free & unobstructed. • Do not store materials or equipment in areas that are used for evacuation. • Do not use corridors or stairways for operations related to the use of the building. Reference:
	http://codes-guides.nrc.ca/IA/05NFC/intentframe.html
Slide 8	The fire code says that exit doors must be maintained so that they open freely when a force 90 Newtons is applied. That means that the door must open freely in the direction of exit travel when a force of about 20 pounds is applied to the hardware. The requirement may change for accessibility for people with disabilities so you may have to do further building & fire code research depending on the situation. Section 3.8 of the building code is concerned with the design & construction of buildings & occupancies to make them accessible.
	Access or Accessible is a defined term in the building code which means an area & its facility, or both, as required by this Code, which is easy to approach, enter, exit, operate, participate in, pass to & from, & use safely & independently by persons with disabilities.
Slide 9	The building code note goes on to say "Exits include doors or doorways leading directly into an exit stair or directly to the outside. In the case of an exit leading to a separate building, exits also include vestibules, walkways, bridges or balconies."
Slide 10	Horizontal exits allow people to move seamlessly from one building to another, but most people don't even know they are doing it.
	Horizontal exits are common is schools, hospitals, office buildings & in residential apartment buildings that are divided by fire walls. Note that the doors swing in opposite directions so exiting can be done in both directions depending where the fire is.
Slide 11	This photograph shows a horizontal exit. When a building is divided into compartments by fire separations, openings through the fire separation must be protected by closers. This is most common in hospitals & care facilities where, in the event of an emergency, it may not be practical to move

occupants out of the building. Hospitals often move patients from the area where the event is taking place to the other side of the fire separation which is deemed to be a safe area.

Horizontal exits are also common in apartment buildings. In most cases the designer has chosen to divide the building into fire compartments based on the size requirements of the applicable Building Code thus avoiding the need to install a fire sprinkler system. The space on each side of the fire separation is considered a separate building. In order to prevent the spread of fire it is critically important that the doors be kept closed & positively latched or they be held open with an approved magnetic hold open device that allows the door to return to the closed position upon activation of the fire alarm system.

Slide 12

Key components of a horizontal fire separation are fire rated doors, magnetic release hardware, a self-closing device, fire alarm pull stations on both sides of the doors, smoke detectors in both compartments near the exit, & exit signs on both sides of the doors. If the building is equipped with hose stations, there should be one on each side of a horizontal exit.

When performing a fire inspection, the doors should be pulled free of the magnets that hold them open & allowed to close by themselves. Operating properly, they will close & positively latch. If they do not close & latch, maintenance is required.

Slide 13

Exits must always be in operable condition when the building is occupied. They must swing freely in the direction of exit travel. Any security devices that prevent the intended operation of the door must be removed when the building is occupied.

With the exception of contained use areas, exit doors must not be equipped with locking hardware that would allow an occupant to be locked inside the room or space. They cannot be equipped with secondary locking devices, such as a deadbolt or slide bolt, etc. It should be possible to open any designated exit door using a single motion, without the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge.

In some situations when certain conditions are met Electromagnetic Locks are permitted to keep exit doors in the closed position, but this requires the maglocks to be released by a motion sensor, emergency push-button, power failure, or an activation of the fire alarm or sprinkler system.

No storage or accumulation of materials should be allowed in the path of exit travel.

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Slide 14	During your inspection make sure the exit doors open freely outward. Make sure there is nothing on the outside of the building that can interfere with the door's operation or can block the swing of the door. Make sure that vehicles cannot accidently block the exits. If they can, suggest to the building owner that barriers be placed so the door cannot be blocked.
Slide 15	Codes & standards that regulate a building's egress system can be very complex & will vary depending on the use of the particular building, area, or room & the specific requirements of the Authority Having Jurisdiction. Here are some basic requirements that apply to most exits but again they can vary depending on the applicable codes.
	The number of exits required, & the size of the exit is based on the size, use & occupant load of the building. In most cases floor areas should be served by at least 2 exits. There are some exceptions for small buildings & floor spaces. For example, a floor area in a building not more than two stories high can have one exit as long as the total occupant load served by the exit is not more than 60 & the travel distance to the exit is not more than what is shown in this slide. If the building is sprinklered the maximum floor area increases considerably.
Slide 16	For any room or space with only one exit, the maximum occupant load should not exceed 60 people.
	If you are asked if an exit door may be closed or blocked off, you will need to calculate the exit requirements for the building or area the exit serves. It is recommended that you consult with the building inspector for your area as many factors determine the need for the exit. The best position to take is, when a safety installation is present it must always be maintained in operable condition until such time approvals have been granted to make a change.
Slide 17	The distance between 2 exits from a floor area should be one half the maximum diagonal dimension of the floor area. In other words, the exits should be spread some distance apart.
	Except for doors serving a single dwelling unit & some sliding & revolving doors, all exit doors should be the swing type that open outward in the direction of exit travel. If a revolving door is used a swing door providing equivalent exiting capacity should be located next to it. For buildings & rooms with more than 100 occupants, doors should be equipped with panic hardware.
	There should be no mirrors, drapes or other items placed in or adjacent to an exit in a manner that would confuse the direction of exit travel.

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Slide 18	Automatic sliding doors can obstruct the path of exit travel so a traditional
	swing type door may also be required to allow effective & unobstructed escape for the building occupants. When traditional swing type doors are not
	provided the release hardware on the sliding doors should automatically open
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	the doors in the event of a power failure. Many automatic sliding doors have
	breakaway devices to permit the doors to swing on their vertical access in the
	event of a power failure. These must be identified as a swinging door by
	means of a label or decal affixed to the door.
Slide 19	In case of fire, it's good to have 2 means of exit because smoke or heat can
	block the path to safety. In this example, a scissor stair provides two means of
	egress for residents of this apartment building. However, this corridor has two
	dead ends. This means that in case of fire, residents coming out of apartment
	203 have 2 directions to choose from but the rest of the apartments have only
	one possible direction they can go to get to an exit stair. Therefore, most
	building codes limit dead end corridors to about 6 meters or 20 feet.
	Alterations to buildings can create dead end corridors. If a dead-end corridor
	longer than 6 meters is found during your inspection, you should identify it &
	check to see if there have been any alterations to the building. If there have
	been alterations, was a building permit taken out & are as-built drawings
	available? Depending on the situation, action may have to be taken to correct
	the deficiency.
Slide 20	Exits must be located so as to be clearly visible or their locations must be
	clearly indicated.
	Exits & exit routes should be clearly marked so that anyone in the building can
	easily tell the direction of escape, from any point in the building.
	Every exit door must have an exit sign placed over or adjacent to it if the exit serves:
	A building more than 2 stories in building height
	A building having an occupant load of more than 150
	A room or floor area that has a fire escape as part of a required means
	of egress.
	Exit signs should be red or green & located where they are highly visible.
	Exit signs have the word EXIT in easy-to-read letters that are at least 6 inches
	high or use the new running man symbol.
	Exit signs must be maintained in operational condition at all times.
Slide 21	Most fire & building codes require emergency lighting in exits, principal routes
	providing access to exit in an open floor areas, & corridors used by the public
	to exit a building.
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	Emergency lighting is required to give enough lighting to enable occupants of a building to evacuate the building safely in the event of an emergency or power failure. Emergency lights are designed to come on when the power goes out. Every model, therefore, requires some sort of a battery or generator system that will provide electricity to them during a power failure. Most individual light sources can be rotated & aimed where light is needed most in an emergency, such as toward fire exits.
Slide 22	The level of illumination required will vary depending on location & use. A general rule however is that there should be enough lighting so you can see to tie your shoes.
	Many fixtures have a test button which overrides the unit & causes it to switch on the lights & operate from battery power even if the main power is still on. Emergency lights should be tested monthly but also require annual inspection, testing & maintenance by a qualified technician. Individual units should be tagged signed & dated by technician & a report should be available to the AHJ upon request.
	An emergency lighting installation may be either a central standby source such as a bank of batteries or self-contained units which incorporate the lamp, battery, charger & control equipment.
Slide 23	Self-contained emergency lighting units must be inspected monthly to ensure that the lights are functioning & not obviously damaged or obstructed. The terminal connections are clean, free of corrosion & lubricated when necessary & that the battery clamps are clean & tight, & the battery surface is kept clean & dry.
	Emergency lighting must also be tested every 12 months by a qualified technician to ensure that the unit will provide emergency lighting for a duration equal to the design criterion under simulated power failure conditions. Written records must be kept of all inspection, testing & maintenance & be available to the Authority Having Jurisdiction upon request. Tags should be displayed on the units so you can confirm the required inspections have taken place.
Slide 24	Emergency lighting usually consists of dedicated emergency fixtures including combination exit/emergency units mounted on walls or ceilings. Some new lighting designs, however, incorporate battery backup ballasts that are installed in or adjacent to existing lighting fixtures. Upon sensing power loss, the ballasts switch to emergency mode turning the existing fluorescent fixtures into emergency lighting. Make sure to check the codes that apply in your

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	jurisdiction before accepting an emergency lighting design or retrofit that you are unsure of.
Slide 25	Emergency lights & exit signs must be on a dedicated electrical circuit wired directly into the panel without switches that can turn the lights on & off. In this case the exit sign could be turned on or off using the switch on the right-hand side of the exit door.
Slide 26	Fire separations are designed to divide buildings into compartments so that a fire starting in one area will not spread to other compartments in the building. A major part of your inspection should be to confirm that all required fire doors close & positively latch after each use & that every door used as a closure with a required fire-protection rating has a permanent sign, clearly displaying the words "FIRE DOOR KEEP CLOSED" posted on the visible side of the door when it is in the open position.
	 Exceptions to the sign requirement are doors: located between: A corridor & an adjacent sleeping room in a hospital or a nursing home, A corridor & an adjacent classroom, A public corridor & a suite of Group C or D occupancy Doors fitted with an acceptable hold-open device designed to be released by a signal from a fire detector, fire alarm system or sprinkler system
Slide 27	Usually, fire doors are rated for a time duration such as 20 minutes, ¾ of an hour, 1 hour, 2 hours etc. The building designer determines what rating is required based on the applicable Building Code. Door ratings are usually one rating less than the rating of the wall. For example, a 1-hour fire separation requires a ¾ hour rated door. The doors come with a label affixed to the edge of the door or may be found on the top or bottom of the door leaf. The labels on doors should not be removed or painted over. These photographs are typical labels that are found on fire rated doors. Some doors are designed with windows & skylights as can be seen in this picture, but existing doors should not be altered by adding windows or sky lights as this can affect the rating or listing of the door.
Slide 28	Some fire separation doors are equipped with magnetic hold open devices for the convenience of the building occupants. They are connected to the fire alarm system & will release upon activation of the alarm. When the alarm sounds, the magnets release the door so it can close & positively latch. It is important the door positively latch because fire creates sufficient pressure to partially open the door. Even small openings & cracks allow smoke, hot gases & flames to enter other parts of the building.

	When doing a fire inspection pull the door free of the magnet & let it fully close without your assistance. It should positively latch. If it does not, the
	door or self-closing device requires adjustment.
Slide 29	One of the most common problems you will encounter is door wedges, elephant feet & other objects being used to hold fire separation doors in the open position. They can defeat the purpose of the door as far as containing the fire. If the door needs to be held in the open position an approved hold open device connected to the fire alarm system should be installed. Section 2.2. of the fire code states in part that "Closures in fire separations shall not be obstructed, blocked, wedged open, or altered in any way that would prevent the intended operation of the closure."
	Reference 2.2. BCFC
Slide 29	Objects like this fire extinguisher should never be used to keep the door in the open position because they prevent the door from closing & allow the fire to spread unchecked.
	A fire starting in this laundry room would quickly spread to other portions of the building because the door is wedged in the open position.
	Doors in fire separations should be checked at intervals not greater than 24 hours to ensure that they remain closed unless the door is equipped with an approved hold-open device.
	Fire separation doors should be operated at intervals not greater than one (1) month to ensure that they are properly maintained. They should not be obstructed, "propped open" or altered in any way that would prevent the normal operation of the door.
Slide 30	Fire doors are a weak point in any fire separation because their primary function is to allow traffic to pass from one room into another. It is therefore important for fire doors to be kept closed when not in use. Fire doors are required to be self-closing & therefore have door closing devices which can pose significant obstacles to the young, elderly, infirm or disabled. Experience shows that convenience often takes precedence over safety & building users often seek to disable or otherwise undermine devices that inconvenience them in carrying out their work. Doors are often held open by wedges or other devices which is not only unsafe but also illegal.
Slide 31	The only acceptable method to hold fire doors in the open position is to install an approved hold open device. These are generally electro-magnetic devices that are connected to the building's fire alarm system. When the power is switched off or the fire alarm system is activated the magnet releases so the

	door can close & positively latch. There are a variety of different types as can
	be seen in these photographs.
Slide 32	All fire separation doors should be equipped with a self-closing device. Self-closing devices are designed to return the door to the closed position after each use. Due to expansion, contraction & building settling fire separation doors may require adjustment to close & positively latch. Adjustments can be made to the self-closing device mechanism & other door hardware to ensure they work as designed. Sometimes the doors themselves require adjustment so they work as designed.
Slide 33	Doors include the door leaf itself (the part that swings) & all the hardware required to hang the door, the frame & the closing device. Most fire doors are designed to be kept closed at all times. Some doors are designed to stay open under normal circumstances, & close automatically in the event of a fire. Whichever method is used, the door's movement should never be impaired by a doorstop or other obstacle. Doors should be routinely checked, as should the action of the door closer & latch.
Slide 34	When assessing the operation of a door carefully examine all parts including the door leaf, frame, hinges, latching device, handles & the threshold. Over time things like loose or missing screws in the hinges can impede the proper operation of the door. Check to ensure the door, frame, hinges, hardware, & threshold are secured, aligned & in working order with no visible signs of damage. Check that the self-closing device is operational & that the door completely closes when operated from the fully open position. Make sure no parts are missing or broken.
Slide 35	Check the clearances around the door top, bottom & sides to ensure there are no large gaps that would allow the spread of smoke & hot gasses in the event of a fire. If you can see light between the door & the door frame clearance, issues are likely & the door may need adjustment. The same is true for double door configurations. Only a minimal clearance should be present. NFPA 80, the Standard for Fire Doors & Other Opening Protectives says that the clearance at the bottom of the door should not be more than ¾ of an inch while the clearance on the sides & top of doors should be not more than 1/8 inch plus or minus 1/16 of an inch.
Slide 36	Some fire doors have double leaves. It is essential that the individual leaves close in the correct sequence, to maintain the fire integrity of the complete door set assembly. In these circumstances there is a need for a door

	coordinator device (also known as a door selector) to ensure that, after opening, the first opening leaf of a pair of doors is held back from closing fully, until the second opening leaf has closed fully into the frame. If the door coordinator is not working properly an experienced repair person may be required. If a coordinator is installed, the inactive leaf closes before the active leaf. Latching hardware operates & secures the door when it is in the closed position.
Slide 37	There are a number of other common problems with fire separations. If holes in walls & ceilings that are part of the fire separation are not repaired, they allow fire to travel into enclosed spaces making it very difficult for firefighters to locate & extinguish the fire. Often holes are the result of construction, alteration or repairs. In this case the leak is fixed but another problem is created. When fire separations are damaged, they need to be repaired to protect their integrity. This applies to all fire separations including walls, ceilings, floors & closures.
	Part 2 of the fire code states: "Damage to Fire Separations - Where fire separations are damaged so as to affect their integrity, they shall be repaired so that the integrity of the fire separation is maintained." Reference: BCFC 2.2.1.2
Slide 38	In this case water lines are re-routed by a contractor but the holes in the fire separation were never repaired. A fire in this room would quickly spread into the enclosed space creating a significant suppression problem for firefighters. The people performing the renovations or repairs should be required to repair fire separation as part of the contract.
Slide 39	Penetrations in fire separations should be protected with fire stopping materials. Firestop materials restore the fire-resistance ratings of floors, walls & ceilings by impeding the spread of fire by filling the openings in fire separations. Openings in fire separations cancel out the fire-resistance ratings of the fire separations, allowing the spread of fire. It is critical therefore that the compartmentalization of a structure be maintained in order to reduce the severity of a fire & the passage of developing smoke & gases to ensure safety to both life & property. Fire stopping materials must be approved by a recognized listing agency for the application.

Slide 40	Wherever the fire separation is penetrated it should be fire stopped. When having repairs or alterations done to the building the owner should specify that fire stopping is required as part of the job. Qualified trades people know that fire stopping must be provided in fire separations & around pipes & wires that penetrate a fire separation but often they exclude that from the contract. The building owner or manager should insist fire stopping be completed properly. In this case the fire stopping material on the left has fallen out of the space it is designed to protect & was never installed in the space on the right.
Slide 41	Fire investigation reports often identify electricity as the form of heat that caused the fire. By providing proper fire stopping like that shown in this picture fire spread can be limited. It may look somewhat unsightly, but it is usually in service rooms or electrical rooms that are not viewed by the public.
Slide 42	Fire stopping is a significant issue during the construction of a building. Architects, engineers, contractors, trades people and building inspectors will all play a role to ensure that proper fire stopping is provided. Most fire stopping materials are intumescent substances which means they swell as a result of heat exposure. The key is to make sure the fire stops materials used are approved for the intended application. Fire and building codes require fire stop systems to meet ULC or other applicable Standards.
Slide 43	A fire damper is a closure installed in an air distribution system or wall or floor assembly that is normally held in the open position to allow for the flow of air but is designed to close automatically in the event of a fire in order to maintain the integrity of the fire separation. Fire dampers in fire separations must be protected with a fusible link or other device that automatically closes the vent during a fire. "In this case a vent was installed because there was a problem with combustion air in the furnace room. The vent voids the fire separation so it
	should be replaced with an approved fire damper with a fusible link that will melt at a given temperature causing the damper to close."
Slide 44	For heating purposes, the fire separation between the corridor & the storage room has been penetrated. A fire starting in the storage room will quickly spread to the exit corridor on the other side of the wall. In this case a sprinkler head is located in the storage room which will help contain the fire in the room, but the fire separation has been breached & should be brought to the building owners' attention.

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some real louvered have to be alternative ensure the the door the close should all Slide 47 Slide 47 That's the discussed • Color of the close of the close should all the clos	ose the fire separation has been penetrated and the wiring does not to be properly installed. An electrical inspector or a qualified electrical or should be retained to certify &/or repair the installation, remove, the extension cords & the fire separation should be repaired.
discussed Co N ol W re or Th bri Fi	fire separation door between a storage room & an exit corridor. For ason, the fire separation was voided by the installation of this digrill. It may be possible to install a damper in the door, but it would be fire rated & close automatically in the event of a fire. These types of ions should be brought to the attention of the building owner to hey are properly installed. Because this is a required fire separation reshould be equipped with a self-closing device so the door returns to be & latched position after each use & the elephant's foot on the door lso be removed.
cl • TI	the end of Part Two of Performing an Inspection. In this Part we do: Conducting the interior inspection Means of Egress including access to exit, exit doors, horizontal exits, obstructed exits, & the number of required exits When panic hardware is required, distance between exits, sliding & evolving doors & that exits should not be obscured by drapes, mirrors or other objects that could confuse the direction of exit travel We talked about where & when exit signs & emergency lighting are equired The importance of compartmentation & fire separation features of equildings Fire Doors, hold open & self-closing devices Common fire separation problems like holes in fire separations & learances around doors The need for fire dampers & fire stopping Those on to Part Three.

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