

**FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 254: 1918
(NUMBER OF EXITS REQUIRED-GRADE A DEPARTMENT STORE)**

By Richard Schulte

The twenty-second Annual Meeting of the National Fire Protection Association was held in Chicago in May 1918. Part of the Committee Report on Fire Resistive Construction included the topic of egress for department stores. The following excerpt addresses the number of exits required to be provided for Grade A department stores:

*“Every floor area shall have at least two separate exits, and **whenever any floor area exceeds 5,000 square feet at least one additional exit shall be provided for each 5,000 square feet additional or fraction thereof.**”*

The egress provisions for Grade A department stores indicate a design occupant load factor of 32 feet per person should be utilized to determine the occupant load of the upper floors of a department store. Hence, the application of the number of exit provisions outlined above would require an additional exit for each additional 132 occupants (5,000 SF divided by 32 SF/person).

This provisions is far more restrictive than the number of exit provisions contained in the International Building Code, NFPA 5000 and the Life Safety Code.

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Source: *“Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual [NFPA] Meeting”*, Chicago, Illinois, 1918.

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Richard C. Schulte