

**FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 272: 1918  
(THE TERM “EXITS”)**

By Richard Schulte

The twenty-second Annual Meeting of the National Fire Protection Association was held in Chicago in May 1918. Among the reports presented at this meeting was the Report of Committee on Fire-Resistive Construction. This Report went far beyond simply specifying minimum requirements for classification of a building as fire resistive construction. The Report also included provisions for the design of building egress systems. The following is an excerpt of the Committee Report address the meaning of the term “exits”:

*“Exits.—Wherever the word "Exit" is used, it shall be one of the two following forms:—*

*(1) Stair Exit: The direct connection of any floor area to an approved stairway built in conformity with the specifications hereafter detailed, either as (a) an enclosed interior stairway, or (b) a smokeproof tower.*

*(2) Horizontal Exit: The connection of any floor area through a fire exit partition, fire wall, or an open-air balcony or vestibule, to another floor area in the same or an adjoining building having its own independent stair exits; such other area shall be of sufficient size to contain temporarily the joint occupancy of the two areas thus joined.”*

The excerpt above clearly indicates that a “horizontal exit” is to be considered to be the equivalent of either an enclosed interior stair or a smokeproof tower.

Further, it should be noted that the Committee on Fire-Resistive Construction clearly considered egress from buildings of fire resistive construction was within its scope.

\* \* \* \* \*

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

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