



Means of Egress: Ceiling Height

No. FP-2009-40 October 6, 2009

Learning Objective: The student shall be able to identify the minimum ceiling height requirements in a means of egress

With few exceptions, the model building codes prescribe a minimum ceiling height of 90 inches (2286 mm) throughout habitable spaces including the means of egress system.

The general exceptions include

- sloped ceilings under very specific conditions;
- spaces that are not regularly occupied such as bathrooms, toilet rooms, storage and laundry rooms;
- stairway headroom that may be 80 inches (2032 mm); and,
- doorways that may be 80 inches (2032 mm).

Door closers and stops are permitted to reduce the ceiling headroom to 78 inches (1981 mm).



These luminaires might create a bumping hazard for a tall occupant.

Protruding objects, such as these luminaires, are permitted to extend below the minimum ceiling height as long as there is a minimum headroom of 80 inches (2032 mm) for any walking surface including aisles, corridors, walks, and passageways. Not more than 50 percent of the ceiling area of the means of egress may be reduced by these protruding objects.

A 27-inch (686 mm) barrier should be provided above the floor in the area of objects that interfere with the walking path. In this example, a barrier likely also would interfere with the egress path.

While it is impossible from this picture to determine the actual clearance of these objects, one may be able to surmise that if the doors are 80 inches (2032 mm) tall; these luminaires must be protruding into the walking area more than the building or fire code would allow.

For additional information, refer to NFPA[®] 5000, *Building Construction and Safety Code*, Chapter 11, *International Fire Code*[®], Chapter 10, NFPA[®] 1, *Uniform Fire Code*[®], Chapter 14, *International Building Code*[®], Chapter 10 or NFPA[®] 101 *Life Safety Code*.

