



CHARLESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



Fire Marshal Division

Information Bulletin

Stairway Identification Signs

The following information is intended to assist with understanding and creating the required stairway signage for interior stairs that connect more than three stories. Interior stair signage is very important for occupants, employees, and emergency responders. These signs can provide additional guidance to the public, as well as emergency responders, during route operations and emergency events.

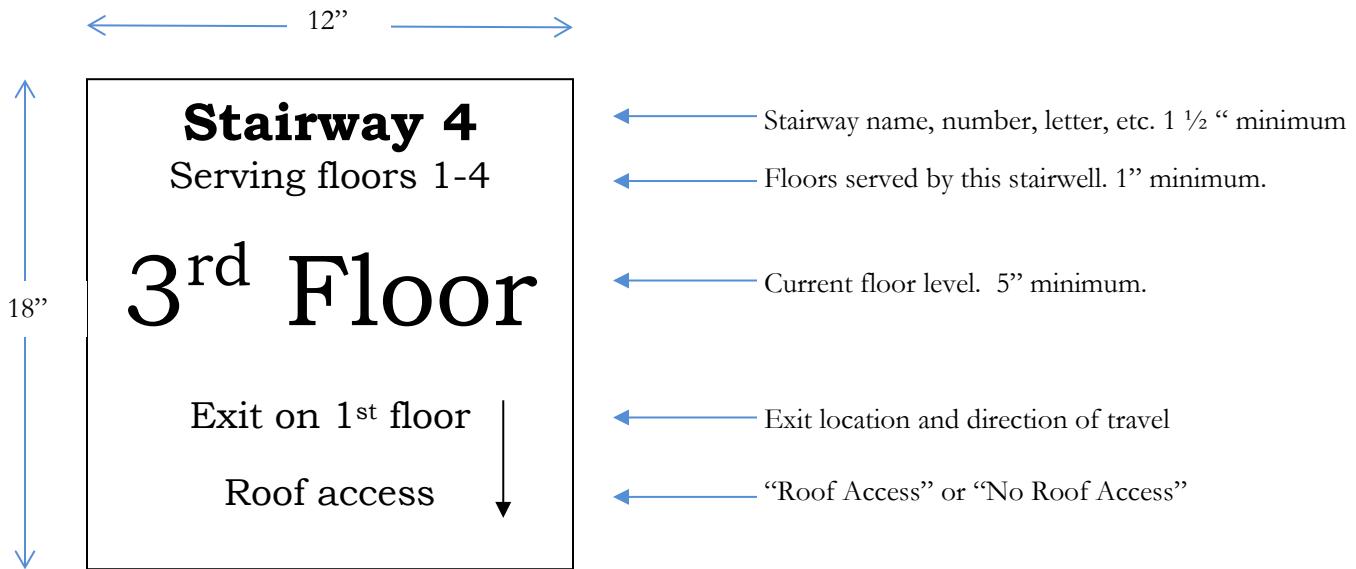
The code sections cited below are from the International Fire Code, 2021 edition, and are also found in the International Building Code. These requirements apply to stairways and ramps that connect more than three stories. Building owners and designers should consider implementing the sign system in all stairways, regardless of height.

Section 1023.9 Stairway identification signs. A sign shall be provided at each floor landing in interior exit stairway and ramp connecting more than three stories designating the floor level, the terminus of the top and bottom of the interior exit stairway and ramp and the identification of the stair or ramp. The signage shall also state the story of, and the direction to, the exit discharge and the availability of roof access from the interior exit stairway and ramp for the fire department. The sign shall be located 5 feet (1524 mm) above the floor landing in a position that is readily visible when the doors are in the open and closed positions. In addition to the stairway identification sign, a floor-level sign in raised characters and Braille complying with ICC A117.1 shall be located at each floor-level landing adjacent to the door leading from the interior exit stairway and ramp into the corridor to identify the floor level.

Section 1023.9.1 Signage requirements. Stairway identification signs shall comply with all of the following requirements:

1. The signs shall be a minimum size of 18 inches by 12 inches.
2. The letters designating the identification of the interior exit stairway and ramp shall be a minimum of 1 ½ inches in height.
3. The number designating the floor level shall be a minimum of 5 inches in height and located in the center of the sign.
4. All other lettering and numbers shall be a minimum of 1 inch in height.
5. Characters and their background shall have a non-glare finish. Characters shall contrast with their background, with either light characters on a dark background or dark characters on a light background.
6. When signs required by Section 1023.9 are installed in the interior exit stairways and ramps of buildings subject to Section 1025 (Luminous Egress Path Markings), the signs shall be made of the same materials as required by Section 1025.4 (Self-luminous and photoluminescent).

The following is provided as a recommendation for the sign layout. This is an example only and shall not be considered as the required format. Signs that meet the required elements of the previous code sections will be accepted.



All signage shall comply with applicable requirements of IBC Chapter 11 and include the International Symbol of Accessibility, where applicable. Please coordinate with the responsible licensed registered architect for the project prior to ordering any signage.

Please contact the Charleston Fire Department – Fire Marshal Division at (843)724-3429 with any questions or concerns.