
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL
No. 1408 Session of
1977

INTRODUCED BY BERLIN, MANDERINO, GALLAGHER, McCALL, PETRARCA,
RENWICK, MORRIS, COWELL, SCHWEDER, MILLIRON AND
A. K. HUTCHINSON, JUNE 24, 1977

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS AND COMMERCE, JUNE 24, 1977

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of April 27, 1927 (P.L.465, No.299), entitled,
2 as amended, "An act to provide for the safety of persons
3 employed, housed, or assembled in certain buildings and
4 structures not in cities of the first class, second class,
5 and second class A, by requiring certain construction and
6 ways of egress, equipment, and maintenance; providing for the
7 licensing of projectionists, except in cities of the first
8 class and second class; requiring the submission of plans for
9 examination and approval; providing for the promulgation of
10 rules and regulations for the enforcement of this act;
11 providing for the enforcement of this act by the Department
12 of Labor and Industry and, in certain cases, by the chiefs of
13 fire departments in cities of the third class; providing
14 penalties for violations of the provisions of this act; and
15 repealing certain acts," further providing for ways of egress
16 and authorizing certain exemptions.

17 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
18 hereby enacts as follows:

19 Section 1. Section 4, act of April 27, 1927 (P.L.465,
20 No.299), referred to as the Fire and Panic Act, amended January
21 14, 1952 (P.L.1889, No.518), is amended to read:

22 Section 4. Ways of Egress.--From every floor of buildings,
23 enumerated in section two of this act, there shall be proper and
24 sufficient ways of egress and means of escape from fire and

1 panic: Provided, That in all buildings hereafter erected, or
2 adapted for any of the purposes enumerated in section two of
3 this act, there shall be not less than two (2) ways of egress,
4 as remote from each other as possible, except that the
5 requirement for two means of egress shall not be applicable to
6 buildings two stories or less in height with an occupancy of not
7 more than three persons above the ground floor, when it is
8 determined by the department that adequate means of egress are
9 available to all occupants, and except that there may be one
10 means of egress of fire-resistive construction in the case of
11 tenement houses, apartment houses and apartment hotels not over
12 three stories in height, with not more than a gross area of
13 three thousand (3000) square feet on each floor between exterior
14 and fire walls, comprising a maximum of six (6) apartments,
15 under regulations which may be promulgated by the Department of
16 Labor and Industry: And further provided, That in every building
17 the department may require additional means of egress where, in
18 its judgment, the means of egress are not sufficient: And
19 further provided, however, That the department may exempt
20 buildings of one story either by rules and regulations or on an
21 individual basis.

22 [In buildings of more than one story, except in special
23 purpose buildings as defined by the department, all means of
24 egress shall be located inside the building, at] At least one of
25 the two required interior stairs shall be an enclosed stair
26 tower of fire-resistive construction [and in addition thereto,
27 there may be used as a fire escape, a mechanically operated
28 device suitable for use as a means of escaping from windows, and
29 which shall consist of a steel cable lifebelt and mechanical
30 brake, which is automatically put into action by the presence of

1 weight at the end of the cable]. Where the department finds,
2 after proper investigation, that, in buildings erected prior to
3 the passage of this act, the internal ways of egress herein
4 provided for cannot be installed, it may direct that such means
5 of egress be provided as will, in its judgment, to better
6 advantage carry out the intent and purpose of this section. The
7 Department of Labor and Industry may order fire walls, smoke
8 barriers, additional fireproofing, or the enclosure of vertical
9 openings, to be built in buildings already erected, or which may
10 hereafter be erected, where in its judgment the erection of such
11 fire walls, smoke barriers, additional fireproofing, or the
12 enclosure of vertical openings is necessary to the reasonable
13 safe protection of the occupants. The ways of egress shall be
14 free from obstruction, lighted, and ready for instant use at all
15 times. Fire escapes, now in use or hereafter erected, shall be
16 painted at least once a year, and be kept in safe condition, and
17 up to such standard requirements as may be specified by the
18 Department of Labor and Industry. The means of egress for
19 special purpose buildings shall be approved by the Department of
20 Labor and Industry.

21 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.