

ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY
CORRIDOR SAFETY AND EMERGENCY EGRESS

I. Overview

Storage in the public egress corridors of all St. Thomas University buildings is restricted to ensure clear and safe passage in the event of a fire or other emergency. A safe and clear means of egress facilitates the evacuation of building occupants, as well as providing safe passage for emergency response personnel to affected areas. As there is limited storage space available, every effort should be made to identify ways to reduce storage space requirements including: reducing inventory, increasing delivery frequencies, creating electronic files and purging outdated files and supplies.

II. Applicability

This procedure applies to all St. Thomas University owned and leased space. The storage restrictions and clearance requirements identified in this policy go into effect immediately and apply to all items currently stored in the corridors and pathways.

III. Definitions

- A. **Combustible materials** are materials made of or surfaced with wood, paper, plant fibers, plastics, or other material that has the ability to catch on fire.
- B. **Egress or means of egress** is a continuous and unobstructed way of exit travel from any point in a building or structure to a public way.
- C. **Equipment** includes but is not limited to all carts, furniture, filing cabinets, printers, photocopiers, refrigerators, freezers, incubators, shaker boxes, scintillation counters, other lab support materials and devices, construction-related materials and devices, etc.
- D. **In-room egress pathway** is the central means of egress from points inside of a room to the exit door(s) which lead to a public egress corridor or stairwell. The interior room egress pathway allows for safe passage out of the room in the event of an emergency.
- E. **Normal trash** is the standard refuse and garbage which does not contain any chemical, biological, or radiological waste materials.
- F. **Public egress corridors** serve as the primary horizontal means of egress for personnel evacuating the area and emergency responders arriving to the area. Public egress corridors connect to the stairwells to evacuate a building.
- G. **Red bag waste** is the solid biological wastes which are collected into red biohazard bags that have the official name and address of the location generating the wastes.
- H. **Stairwells** serve as the primary vertical means of egress for personnel evacuating the area and emergency responders arriving to the area.

IV. Responsibilities

A. All Personnel

- 1. Ensure the storage restrictions and clearance requirements specified in this policy are maintained.
- 2. Contact Environmental Compliance & Risk Management if restricted or unauthorized materials are observed in a corridor or egress pathway.

B. Departments ensure their areas are maintained in accordance with this policy.

C. Environmental Compliance & Risk Management (ECRM)

1. Inspects STU egress corridors and pathways and notifies the responsible person and/or Department when items are not in compliance with this policy.
2. Provides assistance and training as needed.

D. Physical Plant

1. Ensures the installation of electrical outlets and other utilities in egress corridors and pathways are compliant with this policy.
2. Assists ECRM in the removal and disposal of abandoned materials improperly stored in egress corridors and pathways.
3. Ensures their contractors maintain their equipment and supplies in accordance with this policy.

E. STU Housekeeping Services

1. Collects all trash and other refuse materials from within the offices, laboratories, and other locations.
2. Stores and transports collected waste materials in a manner consistent with this policy while in the public corridors.

F. Project Managers

1. Incorporate effective design specifications for adequate storage within all newly renovated or constructed spaces to avoid the use of corridors for storage.
2. Ensure proper egress clearance is maintained for projects which impact active egress paths.
3. Ensure their contractors maintain their equipment and supplies in accordance with this policy.

G. Contractors must adhere to the storage restrictions and clearance requirements identified in this policy.

V. Procedure

A. Stairwell Storage Restrictions

In the event of an emergency, stairwells serve as the primary vertical egress path for personnel evacuating the area. It is critical that stairwells remain clear and unobstructed at all times. No equipment, furniture, or materials may be stored or located in stairwells regardless of combustibility or location within the stairwell.

B. Public Egress Corridor Use and Restrictions

1. Public egress corridors provide access to the fire exits on each floor. All building occupants must comply with the following corridor restrictions:
2. **Clear and Unobstructed Path** – A clear and unobstructed egress path must be maintained at all times. Safety showers, eye wash stations, fire extinguishers, exit doors, fire alarm pull stations, electrical panels, or any other building safety feature must never be obstructed.
3. **Minimum Clearance Width** – A minimum clearance width of 44 inches must be maintained except for corridors that exclusively serve classrooms and service elevators. A minimum clearance width of 66 inches must be maintained for service elevator corridors and classroom corridors.
4. **Renovated Areas** – Renovated spaces are designed to maximize interior storage capacity and provide public egress corridors free from storage. Corridor storage in these renovated areas is prohibited.
5. **Prohibited Items** – Hazardous materials, combustible materials (including but not limited to paper products, magazines, cardboard, wood crates, and pallets), and laboratory operations are prohibited in public egress corridors.
6. **Freezers and Refrigerators** are restricted from storage in public egress corridors. Existing units are re-located when the spaces are renovated.

C. Normal Trash and Red Bag Waste

1. Placing normal trash (e.g., trash bags, boxes) or red bag waste in public corridors is prohibited.
2. Red bags ready for collection must be properly closed and sealed.

3. Normal trash and red bags must be placed near the entry doorway inside the room / lab and not clutter the door or restrict egress.
 4. Housekeeping Services will collect normal trash from within the room / lab.
- D. **Computers and Surplus Electronics** for recycling may not be stored in the public egress corridor. **Refer to the Surplus Electronics Recycling procedure for proper storage and recycling information.**
- E. **Temporary storage of equipment deliveries** – Corridors may not be used for temporary storage. If new equipment needs to be stored prior to installation, storage allowances within a room allocated to the department must be made prior to delivery.

VI. In-Room Egress Pathway and Clearance Requirements

Laboratories, offices, maintenance shops, and other rooms must have an egress pathway to the exit door(s). In-room egress pathways allow for safe passage out of the room in the event of an emergency.

- A. **Obstructions** – Storage must not obstruct safety showers, eye wash stations, fire extinguishers, exit doors, fire alarm pull stations, electrical panels, or any other building safety feature.
- B. **Clear Path** – All storage must be confined to one side of the egress pathway to allow a clear and unobstructed path through the room to the exit door(s).
- C. **Clear Exit** – Equipment and combustible material storage immediately adjacent to exit doors must be minimized to promote safe passage out of the room in the event of an emergency.
- D. **Minimum Clearance Width** – A minimum clearance width of 36 inches must be maintained for the central egress pathway and other interior walking aisles.

VII. Monitoring Procedures

EHS personnel will periodically inspect egress corridors and pathways. Items stored which violate these storage restrictions and clearance requirements will be addressed as follows:

- A. **Contact Owner** – ECRM personnel will attempt to contact the owner or responsible Department. If the owner cannot be identified, a removal notice will be tagged on the equipment / items
- B. **Relocate** – Hazardous materials and items that significantly decrease corridor widths below the required minimum clearance must be relocated immediately. All other equipment or items must be relocated / moved within one week.
- C. **Remove / Discard** – If the items are not re-located within the specified timeframes, the items will be removed and discarded by ECRM and/or Physical Plant.

VIII. References

OSHA 1910.37 – Maintenance, safeguards, and operational features for exit routes

NFPA 101 – Life Safety Code