

Photo #7--H-type apartment building (O-shaped, H-type). There are numerous fire escapes, with three visible from the street. Others will be on sides, rear and throat areas.

will be at least two interior stairs, with one stair generally found in each wing. There will be numerous fire escapes (perhaps 10 or more, depending on dimensions) found on these buildings, including front, rear and throat areas.

Some apartments within H-types may have a second apartment door serving as a secondary means of egress. This arrangement often is found in the throat area with the two doors exiting on opposite sides of smoke doors in the public hall.

Note 1: Due to dimensions of H-types, an automatic sprinkler system as an alternative to secondary egress generally will not be found.

Note 2: Elevators are not considered an acceptable secondary egress.

Once we ascertain that fire escapes are present, we should try to inspect windows leading to them for proper accessibility. It is permissible to place bars, grates or grilles over windows, but they must be an approved type. They must be openable without the use of a key, tool or force greater than that which is required to open the window. (NYC Fire Code, Sec. 1025.4) In other words, they must be opened easily by occupants. They also must be maintained in good working order. (NYC Fire Code, Sec. 1027.6)

This article covered the most commonly found secondary egress arrangements in the most frequently encountered NFP MD buildings in New York City. As always, there are exceptions to the rules and some of them will not pose a problem for FDNY members. Any time there is doubt concerning what is required of a given building, a Battalion Chief should be requested at the location. The Battalion Chief may request a response from the DOB or a Deputy Chief for possible issuance of a Vacate Order. This is a serious enforcement action requiring approval of a Staff Chief and is used only in situations where there is an imminent hazard to life in the event of fire.

About the Author...

Battalion Chief John Murphy has served the FDNY since 1987. He is assigned to Battalion 37. Previous assignments include Engine 23 as a Firefighter; Engine 21 as a Lieutenant; and Captain of Ladder 130. He was an Instructor at Probationary Firefighter School and First Line Supervisor's Training Program (FLSTP). He is a graduate of the West Point Counterterrorism Program. This is his first article for WNYF.



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