

Chapter ILHR 55

THEATERS AND ASSEMBLY HALLS

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Note: Chapter Ind 55 was renumbered to be chapter ILHR 55 effective January 1, 1984.

ILHR 55.001 Scope. The requirements of this chapter shall apply to all theatres and assembly halls.

Note: For assembly areas in connection with schools and other places of instruction, refer to ch. ILHR 56.

History: 1-2-56; r. and rec. Register, August, 1985, No. 356, eff. 1-1-86.

ILHR 55.01 Definitions. In this chapter:

(1) "Assembly halls" or "places of assembly" mean all buildings, or parts of buildings, other than theaters, which will accommodate more than 100 persons for entertainment, recreation, worship or dining purposes.

Note: Assembly halls or places of assembly which will accommodate not more than 100 persons are included within the scope of ch. ILHR 54.

(2) "Theaters" means all buildings or parts of buildings, containing an assembly hall, having a stage which may be equipped with curtains or permanent or movable scenery, or which is otherwise adaptable to the showing of plays, operas, motion pictures or similar forms of entertainment.

History: 1-2-56; am. (1) (intro. par.), Register, March, 1972, No. 195, eff. 4-1-72; am. (1)(a), Register, January, 1980, No. 283, eff. 2-1-80; r. and rec. Register, August, 1985, No. 356, eff. 1-1-86.

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ILHR 55.02 Class of construction. (1) GENERAL. The capacities of buildings or parts of buildings in this classification for the various types of construction shall not exceed, and shall comply with, the following requirements:

MAXIMUM CAPACITIES

Class of Construction	Without Complete Automatic Fire Sprinkler System Protection		With Complete Automatic Fire Sprinkler System Protection	
	With Stage	Without Stage	With Stage	Without Stage
Type 1 and 2	No limit	No limit	No limit	No limit
Type 3 and 4	750	1,500	1,000	2,000
Type 5 and 6	500	1,000	750	1,500
Type 7 and 8	300	750	500	1,000

(2) UNLIMITED CAPACITY BUILDINGS. (a) Except as provided in par. (b), one story buildings of Types No. 5 or 6 non-combustible construction may have unlimited capacity provided the building has no ground floors or basement floors. Heavy timber columns, roof framing and roof decking may be substituted for required non-combustible columns, roof framing and roof decking. Mezzanine floors and supports shall be not less than one-hour non-combustible construction.

(b) A basement, or ground floor mechanical equipment room may be provided if separated from the upper level by not less than 4-hour non-combustible construction.

(2m) TYPE 7 AND 8 CONSTRUCTION. (See s. ILHR 51.03.) Where buildings of these classifications are erected of type 7 or 8 construction, the following restrictions shall apply:

(a) Located at least 20 feet from any other building or adjoining property line.

(b) Is not built in connection with a building used for any other purpose.

(c) Except as provided in subds. 1. to 5., not more than one story in height and limited to one floor level.

1. *Exception.* A basement or ground floor heating and fuel room enclosed with fire-resistive construction as specified in s. ILHR 55.29, with all interior openings protected with self-closing fire-resistive door assemblies as specified in s. ILHR 51.047 will be permitted.

2. *Exception.* Places of worship are permitted to have a full basement or ground floor and a balcony having an occupant load of not more than 30 persons.

3. *Exception.* One-story and ground-floor assembly halls of type 7 or 8 construction will be permitted providing the following conditions are satisfied:

a. Both levels shall exit directly to grade. One exit stair from the lower level up to the exit discharge grade is permitted providing the stair is enclosed to the outside by 2-hour fire-resistive rated construction;

b. The ground story exterior walls shall be of masonry or concrete;

c. The lower level shall be separated from the upper level by 2-hour noncombustible fire-resistive rated construction or better. The first floor supports shall also be of 2-hour noncombustible fire-resistive rated construction;

d. All stairways shall be enclosed by at least 2-hour fire-resistive rated enclosures;

e. The maximum capacity of the building is limited as specified in sub. (1); and

f. All other requirements of ch. ILHR 55 are satisfied.

4. *Exception.* Additions to existing buildings of type 7 or 8 construction having a basement or second floor, or both, will be permitted under the scope of ch. ILHR 54 providing the following conditions are satisfied:

a. The building contains no other occupancy except the owner's private residence;

b. Public occupancy is prohibited in the basement and second floor;

c. The addition does not contain a basement, second floor or ground floor;

d. The public occupancy areas are divided by partitions, dividers and similar objects into definable areas having a maximum capacity of 100 occupants each. Each definable area shall have 2 independent, remote exits to the outside;

e. The maximum capacity of the building is limited as specified in sub. (1);

f. All other requirements of ch. ILHR 54 are satisfied; and

g. This exception does not apply to buildings originally constructed within 5 years of submissions of plans for the addition.

5. *Exception.* Buildings completely protected by automatic fire sprinkler system protection may not exceed 2 stories in height and shall be limited to 2 floor levels.

(3) **BALCONIES ACCOMMODATING MORE THAN 100.** In any theater or assembly hall, balconies which accommodate more than 100 persons shall be type 1 or 2 construction as specified in s. ILHR 51.03.

History: 1-2-56;(1); (1) (a); (2); (2) (a); (2) (b); (2) (c); (2) (d); (2) (e); (2) (f); (3); am. Register, June, 1956; No. 6, eff. 7-1-56; am. (1) (a), Register, August, 1957, No. 20, eff. 9-1-57; am. Register, January, 1961, No. 61, eff. 2-1-61; am. (2) (a), Register, February, 1971, No. 182, eff. 7-1-71; r. and recr. (2) (a) eff. 8-1-71 and exp. 1-1-72; cr. (2) (a) eff. 1-1-72, Register, July, 1971, No. 187; r. and recr. (1), am. (2) intro. par., and (3), Register, June, 1972, No. 198, eff. 1-1-73; cr. (1) (a), Register, September, 1973, No. 213, eff. 10-1-73; am. (2) (a), Register, May, 1974, No. 221, eff. 6-1-74; am. (1) (a), Register, July, 1974, No. 223, eff. 8-1-74; r. (2)(d) and (e), Register, December, 1977, No. 264, eff. 1-1-78; am. (1) (a), cr. (2) (a) 1. to 3., Register, December, 1978, No. 276, eff. 1-1-79; am. (2) (a) 2.c., Register, January, 1980, No. 289, eff. 2-1-80; am. (2) (a) 3. e., Register, December, 1981, No. 312, eff. 1-1-82; reprinted to correct error in (2) (a) 1., Register, February, 1982, No. 314; renum. (2) (a) 1. to 3., (b) and (c) to be (2) (c) 2. to 4., (a) and (b), r. (2) (a) (intro.) and cr. (2) (c) (intro.) and 1., Register, August, 1985, No. 356, eff. 1-1-86; emerg. r. and recr. (1) and (2) (a) and (b), am. (2) (c) (intro.), 3. e. and 4. e., cr. (2) (c) 5., eff. 9-6-86; r. and recr. (1) renum. (2) to be (2m) and am. (c) (intro.), 3. e. and 4. e., cr. (c) 5., Register, November, 1986, No. 371, eff. 12-1-86; reprinted to restore dropped copy, Register, December, 1986, No. 372.

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ILHR 55.03 Height above grade. (1) **THEATERS.** The height of the sills of the principal entrance doors to any theater, as defined in s. ILHR 55.001, shall be not more than 18 inches above the outside grade at that point. The floor level at the highest row of seats on the main floor shall not be more than 6 feet above the outside grade at the main entrance; the floor level at the lowest row of seats on the main floor shall be not more than 6 feet below, or above, the grade at the nearest exit.

(2) **ASSEMBLY HALLS AND ROOF GARDENS ABOVE FIRST STORY.** Where assembly halls are provided above the first story, the following limitation of occupancy, type of construction and exit facilities shall apply:

Type of Construction	Maximum No. of Occupants	Height Above Grade
Type 1 and 2	No limit	See s. ILHR 51.03†
Type 3 thru 6	400	2nd story
Type 3 thru 6	200	3rd and 4th story

† One smokeproof stair tower from the level of the assembly hall leading directly to the exterior at street grade shall be provided for every 750 persons capacity, or fraction thereof. These stairways shall be at least 44 inches wide and shall be in addition to other required stairways in the building.

(3) **BASEMENT ASSEMBLY HALL.** An assembly hall may be placed in the basement of a type 1 or 2 building if the capacity does not exceed 2,500 persons, or in the basement of a building of type 3 through 6 construction if the capacity does not exceed 400 persons.

History: 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, September, 1959, No. 45, eff. 10-1-59; am. (2) and (3), Register, June, 1972, No. 198, eff. 1-1-73; am. (2), Register, September, 1973, No. 213, eff. 10-1-73.

ILHR 55.04 Exposure and courts. (1) Every theater or assembly hall which accommodates more than 600 persons shall have at least 3 walls abutting on streets, alleys, or open courts.

(2) The wall containing the main entrance to any theater or assembly hall shall abut on a street. The lobby or passageway leading from the main entrance doors to the foyer or auditorium shall be direct and unobstructed and of a minimum width equal to the sum of the widths of the main entrance doors. There shall be no openings from other occupancies to such a corridor or passageway.

(3) The width of every exit court shall be at least 6 feet for an occupancy not exceeding 500 persons, and shall be increased at the rate of one foot per each 500 persons additional. Every such court shall lead to a public thoroughfare, either directly, or through a passageway of equal width, not less than 8 feet high enclosed with unpierced 4-hour fire-resistant walls, ceiling and floor as specified in s. ILHR 51.04. The floor and ceiling shall be designed for a live load of not less than 150 pounds per square foot. No such court, or passageway shall be used for storage or any other purpose whatsoever.

History: 1-2-56; am. (3), Register, February, 1971, No. 182, eff. 7-1-71; r. and recr. (3) eff. 8-1-71 and exp. 1-1-72; cr. (3) eff. 1-1-72, Register, July, 1971, No. 187.

ILHR 55.05 Separation from other occupancies. (1) Every theater and assembly hall shall be separated from any other occupancy by an absolute occupancy separation as specified in s. ILHR 51.08, except that a special occupancy separation as specified in s. ILHR 51.08 may be used

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between an assembly hall accommodating not more than 750 persons and any other non-hazardous occupancy.

(2) For assembly halls of unlimited capacity located on upper floors of type 1 and 2 buildings which are served by elevators, the elevator openings may be permitted under the requirements for special occupancy separation specified in s. ILHR 51.08, but otherwise absolute occupancy separation is required.

(3) A chemical laboratory or other occupancy where flammable or explosive liquids or gases are used or stored built in connection with a building used for a theater or assembly hall shall be separated from the theater or assembly hall by 4-hour fire-resistive walls and unpierced 4-hour fire-resistive floors above and below as specified in s. ILHR 51.04. All openings in the wall to adjoining parts of the building shall be protected by means of self-closing fire-resistive door assemblies as specified in s. ILHR 51.047.