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Chapter Ind 55

THEATERS AND ASSEMBLY HALLS

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Ind 55.001 Theaters. In the theater classification, are included 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.

Ind 55.01 Assembly halls. (1) In the assembly hall classification, are included all buildings, or parts of buildings, other than theaters, which will accommodate more than 100 persons for entertainment, recreation, instruction, worship or dining purposes.

(a) Every assembly hall which will accommodate not more than 100 persons shall conform to the requirements of Wis. Adm. Code chapter Ind 54, covering factories, office and mercantile buildings.

Ind 55.02 Class of construction. (1) 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

Type of Construction	With Stage	Without Stage
Fire Resistive -----	No limit	No limit
Mill -----	750	1,500
Ordinary -----	500	1,000
Frame -----	300	750

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(a) *Exception.* The fire protection for structural steel supporting the roof may be omitted in one-story buildings in this classification provided the roof and its supports are of incombustible or mill construction throughout.

(2) Frame construction. Where a building of this classification is erected of frame construction, the following restrictions shall apply:

(a) Not more than one story in height without a balcony, and with no basement except a heating and fuel room enclosed with fire-resistive construction as specified in section Ind 55.29, with all interior openings protected with self-closing fire-resistive doors as specified in section Ind 51.047.

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

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

(d) Is provided with foundation walls and piers of masonry construction.

(e) Where motion picture booths are required, they shall be enclosed with 2-hour fire-resistive construction.

Exception: In places of worship, a full basement and a balcony seating not more than 30 persons may be provided.

(3) Balconies accommodating more than 100. In any theater or assembly hall, balconies which accommodate more than 100 persons shall be of fire-resistive construction as specified in section Ind 51.001.

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.

Ind 55.03 Height above grade. (1) **THEATERS.** The height of the sills of the principal entrance doors to any theater, as defined in section Ind 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
Fire-resistive	No limit	No limit*
Mill, or Ordinary	400	2nd story or 22 feet
Mill, or Ordinary	200	3rd story or 35 feet

*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.

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(5) No seat bench, or other platform or floor area on which seats are placed, or the top seat of any bleachers shall be nearer to the ceiling than 8 feet, nor nearer to the bottom of any truss or girder than 6 feet 4 inches.

(6) The requirements of this section do not apply to restaurants, dining or dance halls.

History: 1-2-56; am. Register, January, 1961, No. 61, eff. 2-1-61.

Ind 55.14 Width of aisles. (1) Aisles having seats on both sides shall not be less than 2 feet 10 inches wide at the beginning and shall increase in width toward the exits at the rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch per foot of run; or the aisle may have a uniform width not less than the average width of the foregoing calculation. No wall aisle shall be less than 3 feet wide and no other straight aisle shall be less than 3 feet 6 inches wide.

(2) There shall be a cross aisle leading to each required side exit. Cross aisles shall not be less than 6 feet 8 inches back to back of adjacent rows of seats.

Ind 55.15 Lobbies and foyers. The width of lobbies and foyers shall be determined on the same basis as required for exits in section Ind 55.12, but shall in no case be less than 5 feet wide, and shall be so designed and apportioned as to prevent congestion and confusion. Lobbies and foyers which serve as means of egress shall be at least equal in combined width to the required width of the stairways, passageways, aisles or exit doorways leading to them.

Ind 55.16 Inclines and aisle steps. (1) To overcome any difference in level between courts, corridors, lobbies, passageways or aisles required, or used, in egress from a theater or an assembly hall, approved ramps as specified in section Ind 55.08 shall be employed where the difference in elevation does not exceed 3 feet, except that this requirement need not apply to balconies.

(2) Steps in balcony aisles shall extend the full width of the aisle and shall have a uniform rise and run as specified in section Ind 55.09. No handrails will be required.

Ind 55.17 Obstruction. (1) All lobbies, aisles, passageways and doorways shall be kept free from furniture, drapes, display equipment, merchandise, vending machines and other obstructions, and no person except an employe shall be allowed to stand in, or occupy, any of the aisles, passageways, corridors or lobbies during any performance or public gathering. Except that patrons may be allowed to wait in a lobby or similar space if such use does not encroach upon the required clear width of the exits. Such waiting shall be restricted to areas separated from the required exit ways by fixed railings not less than 42 inches high. In entrance lobbies only, the exit space may be divided by railings not less than 36 inches high set up in the direction of travel in an approved manner for the regulation of ingress and egress.

(2) A booth or counter for the sale of package merchandise may be placed in the lobby or foyer of a theater where there is sufficient excess space so that the front of the booth or counter can be located not less than 5 feet back of the line marking the width of the lobby or foyer required for exit purposes.

Ind 55.18 Mirrors and false openings. (1) No mirror shall be placed in any part of a theater or assembly hall used by the public for exit purposes, including lobbies, corridors, stairways, ramps or any other exit facility. Where a mirror is used in an auditorium, it shall be placed flush with the wall and with the bottom at least 7 feet above any floor, balcony, gallery or platform.

(2) No false opening or decorative device giving the appearance of a door or window, where none exists, shall be placed in any part of a theater or assembly hall used by the public.

Ind 55.19 Decorations. Fabric decorations used in theaters and assembly halls shall be flame proof.

Ind 55.20 Elevator and vent shafts. Enclosures for elevator and vent shafts shall be of 2-hour fire-resistive construction as specified in section Ind 51.04 and all openings therein protected by fire-resistive doors or windows as specified in section Ind 51.047.

History: 1-2-56; am. Register, February, 1971, No. 182, eff. 7-1-71.

Ind 55.21 Stage separation. (1) In every theater and assembly hall the stage shall be completely separated from the auditorium by a proscenium wall of 4-hour fire-resistive construction as specified in section Ind 51.04, except as follows:

(a) In theaters and assembly halls having a capacity not exceeding 500 persons, the proscenium wall shall be of 2-hour fire-resistive construction as specified in section Ind 51.04, or better.

(b) In theaters and assembly halls an open stage or platform will be permitted without the proscenium wall separation from the auditorium, provided the stage or platform is not more than 6 feet higher or wider than the proscenium opening.

History: 1-2-56; am. (1) intro par., and (1) (a), Register, February, 1971, No. 182, eff. 7-1-71.

Ind 55.22 Proscenium wall. (1) The proscenium wall shall extend from an incombustible foundation, or from the lowest fireproof floor below the stage floor, to the highest adjoining roof, except that where a 4-hour fire-resistive wall is required it shall extend at least 2 feet above the highest adjoining roof.

(2) There shall be not more than 2 openings in the proscenium wall below the level of the auditorium floor, and not more than 2 openings other than the proscenium opening, in the proscenium wall above the level of the auditorium floor, except that in addition to the above openings there may be one opening to provide access through the proscenium wall to the orchestra pit.

(3) Each such opening shall not exceed 21 square feet in area and shall be protected by a fire-resistive door as specified in section Ind 51.09, or equal.

Ind 55.23 Proscenium curtain. (1) Where a proscenium wall is required for the separation of a stage from an auditorium, the proscenium opening if more than 60 feet in width shall be provided with a rigid metal curtain conforming to the regulations contained in Appendix P of the Building Code recommended by the National Board of Underwriters, Fifth Edition, Revised Reprint, 1934. For a proscenium opening 60 feet or less in width, a rigid metal curtain or

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a curtain of asbestos conforming to the following specifications, or of equivalent approved construction, shall be used.

(2) Asbestos curtains shall be substantially woven of asbestos fiber not less than 95% pure, and shall weigh not less than 2½ pounds per square yard. There shall be incorporated into the yarn before weaving, either monel metal, nickle, brass or other metal or alloy, having not less strength than these metals at temperatures up to 1700 degrees Fahrenheit and no less resistance to corrosion at ordinary temperatures. All seams shall be vertical, shall be lapped not less than one inch and shall be sewed in 2 rows with not less than ¼ inch pure asbestos twine. At the top and bottom of the curtain a 2½ inch (or larger) steel pipe shall be placed and shall be securely fastened in, and covered by, the curtain. The curtain shall overlap the proscenium wall not less than 12 inches at each side and at the top, and shall be guided at each side by metallic loops or rings sliding on a ⅜ inch steel cable or No. 6 U.S. standard gauge wire.

(3) In addition to any decoration, the curtain shall be painted on both sides with a mineral paint having a silicate of soda binder, which will completely fill the cloth. Filler paint shall have not less than 4 parts of casein in each 10 parts of silicate of soda. The paint shall be well brushed into the cloth so that no light or smoke can come through.

(4) For curtains of any type, the connections between curtain and wall shall be made as nearly smoke-proof as possible. Smoke grooves or pockets shall be of structural steel shapes and plates not less than ¼ inch thick. These grooves or pockets shall be not less than 14 inches deep and 6 inches wide and shall be set back from the face of the arch at least 6 inches. They shall extend from the stage floor to a point 3 feet above the top of the raised curtain, and shall be securely bolted to the proscenium wall.

(5) Provision shall be made to prevent the curtain from leaving or binding on the guides under any conditions. Appropriate limit chains shall be provided to stop the downward travel of the top of the curtain at a line not less than 12 inches above the top of the proscenium opening. No part of a curtain, nor any of the curtain guides, or equipment, shall be supported by, or fastened to, any combustible material.

(6) The hoisting apparatus for the curtain shall be designed with a factor of safety of 8 or more.

(7) Besides the regular operating mechanism, there shall be an emergency device which will allow the curtain to drop by gravity. The device shall be so arranged that it can be easily operated by hand from each side of the stage and from the fly galleries, and also that its operation will be controlled by 135 degree fusible links, or other approved heat release devices, placed on each side of the stage, and when thus operated the curtain shall descend at its normal rate of speed.

(8) The curtain and its operating mechanism shall be so designed and constructed at all points, whether specifically mentioned or not, as to form an efficient and reliable barrier against fire and smoke, according to the best practice.

(9) Detailed plans and specifications for all curtains and their operating mechanism shall be submitted to the department of industry, labor and human relations for approval before installation.

Ind 55.24 Automatic smoke outlet. Where a fireproof proscenium curtain is required, or provided, the stage shall be provided with one or more automatic smoke outlets, constructed of metal or other incombustible material, placed near the center and above the highest part of the stage, and having a combined area equal to not less than 8% of the area of the stage floor. Vertical louver openings shall be placed not less than 3 feet above the roof and shall be not less than twice the area of the shaft. The smoke outlet shall be designed and constructed so as to open by gravity, and so as to effectively overcome the effects of neglect, rust, dirt, frost, snow, heat, twisting, or warping of the frame work. The louvers, or dampers in the openings shall be held closed by cotton or hemp cords running to the stage floor close to each stage door. Fusible links, or other approved heat release devices, shall be inserted in each cord near the outlets.

Ind 55.25 Stage vestibules. All entrances to the stage shall be vestibuled in such manner as to protect the curtain, scenery, and auditorium from drafts of air.

Ind 55.26 Footlight trough. The footlight trough shall be made of, or lined with, incombustible material.

Ind 55.27 Fireproof paint. All stage scenery, properties, curtains, and decorations made of combustible material, and all woodwork in or about the stage, shall be effectively flame-proofed.

Ind 55.28 Stage accessory rooms. (1) All dressing rooms, property rooms, and other storage or workrooms shall be built of incombustible material throughout, and shall be separated from the stage by a special occupancy separation as specified in Wis. Adm. Code section Ind 51.08.

(2) No dressing room or employes' room shall be placed more than one story below the grade line, and no dressing room shall be placed above or below the auditorium unless separated therefrom by a special occupancy separation as specified in section Ind 51.08.

Ind 55.29 Boiler and furnace rooms. (1) Every boiler or furnace room, including the breeching and fuel room, shall be enclosed with a 3-hour fire-resistive enclosure as specified in section Ind 51.04, except that in case of an assembly hall accommodating not more than 300 persons, a 2-hour fire-resistive enclosure as specified in section Ind 51.04 may be used. All openings shall be protected with self-closing fire-resistive doors as specified in section Ind 51.047.

(2) All appliances used for heating water which are fired with solid fuel, liquid fuel or gas shall be located in a boiler or furnace room except that gas fired booster water heaters used exclusively for sanitizing dishes and cooking utensils need not be installed in a fire-resistive enclosure.

History: 1-2-56; r. and recr. (2), Register, August, 1957, No. 20, eff. 9-1-57; am. (1), Register, September, 1959, No. 45, eff. 10-1-59; am. (1), Register, February, 1971, No. 182, eff. 7-1-71.

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