CLASSROOM OCCUPANT LOADS

The following guidelines were compiled by the Environmental Health and Instructional Safety Office using the NFPA Life Safety Code, California Building Code and State Fire Marshal regulations. They outline the legal maximum number of occupants for those campus classrooms holding more than 50 persons at any one time.

- All occupant loads over 50 must have two exit doors. (LSC 9-2.4.2)
- Exit doors serving occupant loads over 50 must swing out and must be at least 28 inches wide. (LSC 9-2.8.2)
- All rooms with an occupant load over 100 persons must have panic hardware or no latch on the door. (LSC 9-2.8.3)
- All rooms holding over 50 persons are required to have signs listing the maximum occupant load of the room. (UBC3302C)
- When two exits are required, they must be separated ½ of the room’s longest diagonal distance. (UBC 3303C)
- Exits from a room may pass through one accessory room to the corridor. (UBC3303e)
- The design criterion for state university classrooms is 15 feet per occupant. It is permissible, with proper aisles, to increase the load to 10 feet per occupant.
- There may be no more that 6 intervening seats or desks to the aisle (14 seats maximum per row).
- Aisle ways between desks should be 22 inches wide. Twelve inches is the absolute minimum width allowable on a short-term basis.
- Exit aisles must be 3 feet wide with seats on only one side and 3 ½ feet wide with seats on both sides. The aisle can be 30” wide if there are 60 seats or less.

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