I. PURPOSE

The safety of all members of the campus community is a primary concern of the University of Houston. The University of Houston demonstrates this concern through compliance and enforcement of federal, state, local, and University of Houston System rules and regulations to which the University is subject. These laws include the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Life Safety Code published by the National Fire Protection Association.

It is the intent of the University of Houston to provide obstacle-free access and egress for all facilities on the University of Houston campus. The Facilities Access and Egress Procedure will ensure obstacle-free access and egress for all facilities by establishing responsibilities, requirements, and a uniform standard operating procedure for the removal of all items deemed obstacles to the normal flow of pedestrian traffic in and around facilities on the University of Houston campus.

II. SCOPE

The scope of this procedure is to establish uniform methods for assuring obstacle-free access and egress to University of Houston facilities and in doing so to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Life Safety Code. The procedure shall apply to any item which may obstruct the normal flow of traffic in and around all facilities. This includes, but is not limited too, items such as bicycles, motorcycles, desks, books, laboratory equipment, machinery, cabinets, gas cylinders, furniture, etc.

This scope shall apply to all faculty, students, staff, and to all facilities. The policy shall also apply to all visitors, vendors, and contractors/subcontractors while on University of Houston property.

II. RESPONSIBILITY

A. The Department of Public Safety, Fire Marshal’s Office, shall be responsible for: Identifying items as obstacles and documenting the obstruction; Providing notification to departments, contractors/subcontractors, and/or individuals to remove the item in question; Immediate removal of obstructions where imminent danger exists and/or notifications have been ignored.
B. Departments shall be ultimately responsible for obstacle-free access and egress within the confines of their jurisdiction and are therefore responsible for all expenses which may be incurred for the removal and storage of any items which are departmental property and are found to be obstacles.

C. Individuals shall be responsible for all personal property which is found to be obstructing normal traffic and are ultimately responsible for expenses incurred during the removal and storage of said property.

D. All visitors, vendors, contractors and sub-contractors shall adhere to the facility access and egress procedures and shall be responsible for expenses incurred during the removal and storage of any items which may obstruct the normal flow of traffic in and around all facilities.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. **Access**: Access shall be defined in accordance with the NFPA current meaning. This is presently "any path of travel, either exterior or interior, which provides access either into or throughout a facility. This would include, but shall not be limited to, interior and exterior walkways, stairs, stairwells, ramps and corridors."

B. **Accessible**: Describes a site, building, facility, or portion thereof that complies with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

C. **Accessible Means of Egress**: Accessible Means of Egress shall be defined in accordance with the NFPA current meaning. This is presently "a path of travel usable by a person with a severe mobility impairment that leads to a public way or an area of refuge."

D. **Accessible Route**: The ADA defines an accessible route as a continuous unobstructed path connecting all accessible elements and spaces of a building or facility. Interior accessible routes may include corridors, floors, ramps, elevators, lifts, and clear floor space at fixtures. Exterior accessible routes may include parking access spaces, curb ramps, crosswalks at vehicular ways, walks, ramps, and lifts.

E. **ADA**: Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990.

F. **Clear Floor Space**: The ADA defines clear floor space as the minimum unobstructed floor or ground space required to accommodate a single, stationary wheelchair and occupant.

G. **DPS**: Department of Public Safety
H. **Egress**: Any path of travel used to exit a building. This would include, but shall not be limited to, interior and exterior walkways, stairs, stairwells, ramps and corridors.

I. **Egress, Means of**: The ADA and NFPA both define means of egress as a continuous and unobstructed way of exit travel from any point in a building or facility to a public way. A means of egress comprises vertical and horizontal travel and may include intervening room spaces, doorways, hallways, corridors, passageways, balconies, ramps, stairs, enclosures, lobbies, horizontal exits, courts and yards.

J: **FMO**: Fire Marshall’s Office

K. **NFPA**: The National Fire Protection Association

L. **Obstruction**: Any item which interferes with the normal flow of pedestrian traffic in a facility access or egress path. This would include, but shall not be limited to, items such as bicycles chained to handrails, motorcycles parked in facility entrance areas, office furnishings, laboratory equipment, boxes of books, and any other items which might hinder access or egress.

M. **Repeat Violations**: When an item has been issued an obstruction warning and is removed in less than 48 hours but is repeatedly returned to the same location or a similar location so as to cause an obstruction.

N. **UHPD**: The University of Houston Police Department

### IV. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Access and egress paths shall be free from obstacles which may hinder normal traffic flow.

B. Handrails shall be kept free and clear and shall not be used to secure bicycles or any other object which might interfere or hinder normal pedestrian traffic flow.

C. Bicycles, motor bikes, or motorcycles shall be secured in the racks or parking places provided for that purpose.

D. Office furnishings, laboratory equipment, boxes of books, and any other items which might hinder the normal flow of pedestrian traffic shall not be stored in an access or egress pathway.

E. Delivery items, items which are being discarded, or items being transferred to another location shall not be stored in an egress or access path for more than 48 hours and only with advance approval of the Department of Public...
Safety Fire Marshal’s Office. Arrangements should be made in advance with the appropriate party (i.e. vendor, Physical Plant Labor Shop, etc.) so that items placed in access or egress paths are removed as quickly as possible. Under no circumstances shall the access/egress path be reduced to less than 36 inches.

F. The University will not be responsible for any locks which may be removed, nor for any damage or loss which may result from the removal and storage of the property. Departments, contractors/subcontractors, vendors and/or individuals shall be responsible for all costs of removal and storage of property which is removed.

V. ENFORCEMENT

A. The Department of Public Safety Fire Marshal’s Office shall:

1. Identify items as obstacles and document the obstruction
   a. DPS-FMO will investigate all reports of obstacles to access and/or egress paths upon receipt of a complaint call, hazard report or personal observation by a DSP-FMO staff member.
   b. The investigative report shall determine if the allegations are factual and shall document pertinent information for determining ownership of the item (i.e., description of property, property tag number, department name, color, make, serial number, company name, etc.).

2. Provide notification to departments, contractors/subcontractors, and/or individuals to remove the item in question
   a. A warning will be issued to departments, contractors, subcontractors, vendors and/or individuals for items which are initially identified as obstructions advising that the item is an obstruction and should be removed within 48 hours. This warning will be in writing.
   b. If the item has not been removed a second warning in writing will be issued with a statement that the if the item has not been removed within 24 hours, it will removed and placed in storage at the University of Houston Police Department's (UHPD) Lost and Found.
c. When an item is found to have repeated violations within less than a 48 hour period, (e.g. a bicycle that is chained to a handrail, removed but then returned on a daily basis) it shall be subject to parts 2.a. and 2b. above.

3. Remove any obstruction which constitutes an immediate threat to life and limb and/or imminent danger to the facility.
   a. DPS-FMO shall have the authority to remove any item which, in the investigator's opinion, poses an immediate threat to life and limb and/or imminent danger to the facility.
   b. If the item has not been removed after the second warning DPS-FMO will either remove the item(s) or have them placed in storage at the UHPD Lost and Found.

B. Colleges, divisions, departments, auxiliaries, etc., may initiate any additional requirements deemed necessary to control access and/or egress obstacles within the confines of their jurisdiction.

VI. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Party: Manager, Fire and Physical Safety

Review: Every two years, on or before June 1

VII. APPROVAL

________________________________________________________________________
Chief of Police, Department of Public Safety Date

VIII. REFERENCES

Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990
University of Houston Parking Rules and Regulations