

Cinemas in Composite Buildings
Places of Public Entertainment Regulations

Under Places of Public Entertainment Regulation 6A a cinema or cinemas accommodating not more than 2,000 people in the aggregate may be situated in any storey or storeys of a non-domestic building or the non-domestic part of a composite building. A pair or group of cinemas may also be allowed to share the facilities of exits, foyers, waiting spaces, vestibules and projection rooms subject to the following guidelines:

(a) Widths & Sizes of Shared Facilities

The common facilities shall be designed to have adequate widths and sizes based on the total capacity of the cinemas to be served.

(b) Separation

All parts of a cinema or cinemas must be separated from other occupancies by walls, floors or other elements of construction having adequate "fire resistance period" as defined in and required by the Building (Construction) Regulations (in normal circumstances, a 2 hours FRP separation may be accepted).

(c) Entrances

The main entrance to the cinema or cinemas and to the foyer(s) shall not be through other accommodation in the building since the doors of the required protected lobby would be vulnerable to being wedged open on a permanent basis. A secondary access communicating with other non-domestic parts of the building, such as a shopping arcade, may be permitted when the opening is adequately protected and in circumstances that suggest that there would not be such a regular movement of persons as would be likely to prejudice the effectiveness of the protected lobby.

(d) Exits

Exits from a cinema should be relatively remote from each other and the majority of exit routes must discharge to streets, if necessary through but separated from other occupancies. Service lanes, especially private lanes, can become obstructed and clearance may be a lengthy process; this would impede the exit arrangements.

Streets in this context shall be not less than 4.5 m wide and be accessible to fire fighting vehicles to the satisfaction of the Director of Fire Services.

(e) Ventilation to Projection Rooms

A projection room suite not provided with natural ventilation must be mechanically ventilated to the open air by an independent system.

(f) Foyers

Where regulation 36 is invoked and it is required to provide suitable accommodation for persons awaiting admission, such space shall be based on 0.5 m² per person at a ratio of one in six persons for whom seating accommodation is provided.

Cinemas in Basements

2. Cinemas will be permitted to be situated at the first basement only. Location at lower basements will not be permitted.

3. If a cinema/cinemas is/are situated in a basement, the following additional requirements will apply:

(a) Foyers

The foyers shall be located on the ground floor. The minimum size of the foyer shall be based on 0.5 m² per person at a ratio of one in three persons for whom seating accommodation is provided.

(b) Exits

All exit routes from the auditorium to the staircases and from the staircases to the streets should be short and direct. All staircases/exits from the cinema/cinemas shall discharge independently onto a street. All staircases serving other basement floors shall be sealed off at the cinema floor.

The widths of the staircases shall be in accordance with the following table.

No. of persons in each cinema	No. of exit routes required	Widths of exit routes required
Less than 300	2	1.5 m each
301 - 500	2	2 m each
501 - 750	3	2 m each
over 750	To be decided by the Building Authority	

At least one of the exit routes shall be a Fire-fighting and Rescue Stairway (FRS) which means a stairway accommodating an access staircase, a fireman's lift and a ventilated lobby.

The guidelines to the design are attached at Appendix A.

(c) Toilets

All toilets serving the cinemas shall be located on the ground floor.

(d) Lifts

All lifts serving other floors shall not open into the cinema.

(e) Separation

All parts of a cinema or cinemas must be separated from other parts of the buildings by walls, floors or other elements of construction having an FRP of not less than 4 hours.

Consents, Special Approvals and Modifications

4. Any application for consent, special approval and modification under the Places of Public Entertainment Regulations 9, 18 and 168 for a cinema or cinemas designed in accordance with the Places of Public Entertainment Regulation 6A shall be made by letter addressed to the Building Authority stating the special circumstances of the case.



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Firefighting & Rescue Stairway (FRS)
in Basement Cinemas

1. A FRS means a stairway accommodating:
 - (a) an access staircase;
 - (b) a fireman's lift, and
 - (c) a ventilated lobby.

Arrangement of FRS

2. Every FRS shall be enclosed by walls and these walls, the landings, flight, balustrades and partition walls therein shall be constructed wholly of non-combustible materials and no combustible finishing (including wall and ceiling linings and floor finishings) shall be included in such staircase.
3. Every FRS shall be situated as close as possible to the perimeter wall of the building, which wall adjoins or is closest to a street accessible by Fire Services appliances.
4. Every FRS in the ground storey shall be:
 - (a) directly accessible from a street or an open area having unobstructed access to a street;
 - (b) available to Fire Services appliances; and
 - (c) separated from the remainder of the ground storey by imperforate construction.

Requirements of FRS

5. In the basement floor the FRS shall be approached through a lobby which shall have a floor area of not less than 5 m² and not more than 10 m² with no side less than 1.5 m and lead to an "open staircase" which means a staircase open on 3 sides to a void having a minimum area of 10 m² and a minimum dimension of 1 m. A clear opening of not less than 900 mm in height should be provided between the top of the railing and the underside of the staircase.
6. The perimeter enclosing walls separating the FRS from the remaining floor area shall have an FRP of 4 hours. Within the perimeter enclosing walls, walls or partitions that serve only to separate the access staircase and lobby from each other shall have an FRP of not less than 1 hour.
7. All doors shall have an FRP of 1 hour.

Requirements of Fireman's Lifts

8. The fireman's lift shall open into the ventilated lobby in the stairway and such lobby shall give access to the auditorium.
9. Each point of discharge from the fireman's lift shall be through a lift lobby protected by separation with a minimum of 1 hour FRP, except the designated fire service access to the building.
10. The lift car shall be of a minimum size of 1.35 m² net internal floor area with a minimum rated load of 680 kg.
11. The opening of the lift shall not be less than 800 mm wide and 2 m high. The doors shall be fitted with power operated automatic self-closing device.

(Note : Reference should be made to FSD Circular Letter No. 7/88 or subsequent amendments thereto for operational, electrical and mechanical specifications of fireman's lifts.)
