

COMMUNIQUÉ

du commissaire des incendies

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ESCAPE ROOM FACILITIES

In recent years, escape room games have become increasingly popular across Ontario. These games typically involve teams of 2 to 10 players who work together to discover clues, solve puzzles, and accomplish tasks that may involve escaping from locked rooms, or passing through a series of rooms within a certain timeframe. Facility staff members are often present to monitor the games and sometimes assist players with achieving their goal.

Escape room facilities are located in various types of buildings, including converted homes, mercantile buildings or warehouses. Smaller facilities often host only one game at a time. Larger ones can simultaneously host multiple games in different rooms or can change the configuration of existing rooms to host different games at various points throughout the day.

Although the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management (OFMEM) is not aware of any past fires in Ontario involving escape room facilities, the nature of escape room activities raises concerns regarding egress and the potential for evacuation challenges in the event of an emergency. When assessing escape room facilities, fire departments are advised to consider specific requirements under Subsection 2.7.4. and Section 2.8 of the Fire Code, and the following fire safety features applicable to individual facilities:

- egress requirements;
- placement of exit signs;
- proper use and operation of electromagnetic locks;
- early detection;
- fire safety plans identifying the following:
 - employee training
 - instructions to occupants in case of fire;
- emergency lighting; and
- fire extinguishers.

Consultation with the local building department is also suggested when questions arise pertaining to Building Code compliance or building change of use.

Questions regarding fire safety requirements for escape room facilities should be directed to Technical Services, OFMEM; staff members can be reached by telephone at (647) 329-1100 or by e-mail at FireSafetyStandards@ontario.ca.