

February 23, 1951.
Passed on File.

House File 566
By PUBLIC HEALTH AND PHARMACY.

Passed House, Date
Vote: Ayes..... Nays.....
Passed Senate, Date
Vote: Ayes..... Nays.....
Approved.....

A BILL FOR

An Act to amend section one hundred three point five (103.5),
Code 1950, relating to fire escapes.

Be It Resolved by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

1 Section 1. Section one hundred three point five (103.5),
2 Code 1950, is hereby amended by striking the period (.) following
3 the word "ground" in line eighteen (18) and inserting in lieu
4 thereof a semicolon (;) and the words "provided, however, that
5 fire escapes of this class when erected on or attached to a
6 hospital shall consist of a suitable outside stairway of not less
7 than forty-four inches clear width of steel or wrought iron
8 construction with platform and with stationary stairway carried
9 down to the ground, or with a drop or counterbalanced stairway
10 from the second story platform or balcony to the ground; and
11 provided, further, that class "B" fire escape installations
12 heretofore erected and in place on a hospital of not more than
13 two stories in height and complying with the then existing
14 provisions of law may be utilized and maintained on such hospital
15 until January first, nineteen hundred fifty-four."

EXPLANATION OF H. F. 566

Section 103.7, Code 1950, provides among other things that hospitals shall be equipped with either Class "A" or Class "B" fire escapes. Section 103.5 in defining a Class "B" fire escape states that such fire escape "shall consist of a suitable outside stairway of not less than twenty-two inches clear width . . .". Sections 103.10 to 103.12 grant to the state fire marshal the authority to adopt standard uniform specifications for various classes of fire escapes and to make all necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of the Fire Escape Law. Under these latter sections the State Fire Marshal has adopted and issued certain specifications, rules and regulations relating to fire escapes, among which he has declared that "Class B fire escapes for hospitals shall be double width and reach ground direct." The validity of this order for the installation of fire escapes of forty-four inches clear width has been challenged as being inconsistent with and in conflict with the express provisions of section 103.5.

Experience has shown that in the case of hospitals a fire escape wider than twenty-two inches is not only desirable but from the safety standpoint is almost mandatory, as many patients need aid in using such fire escapes or must be carried down such fire escapes on a mattress or cot in cases of emergency. A majority of the hospitals in this state have recognized this need and have conformed to the Fire Marshal's orders. This bill seeks to remove any objection which may be made to an order by the State Fire Marshal requiring a hospital to install an adequate fire escape for the protection of its patients.

Smaller hospitals are exempted from complying with the new specifications until January 1, 1954.