§ 278. Limitation of number of occupants. The number of persons who may be employed in a factory building or portion thereof shall be limited to such number as can safely escape from the building by the exits provided in the building and shall not exceed the following:

1. In a building erected after October first, nineteen hundred and thirteen, fourteen persons for every full twenty-two inches in width of stairway provided for such floor and conforming to the requirements for required exits, except as to extension to the roof. No allowance shall be made for any excess in width of less than twenty-two inches.

2. In a building erected before October first, nineteen hundred thirteen, fourteen persons for every eighteen inches in width of stairway provided for such floor and conforming to the requirements for required exits except as to extension to the roof. For any excess in width of less than eighteen inches, a proportionate increase in the number of occupants shall be allowed. If a stairway has winders a deduction of ten per centum shall be made in computing the capacity of such stairway.

3. On any floor which is more than ten feet from the one immediately beneath, the number "fourteen" allowed in subdivisions one and two may be increased respectively by one person for every sixteen inches over ten feet between the two floors provided such stairways conform to the requirements for required exits except as to extension to the roof.

4. In addition to the number of persons allowed in subdivisions one, two and three, so many persons may be employed on any floor as can occupy the stair halls, allowing five square feet of unobstructed floor space per person where the stairways and stair halls are enclosed by partitions as required by sections two hundred and seventy and two hundred and seventy-one.

5. The number of persons permitted to be employed on any floor under subdivisions one, two, three and four may be increased one hundred per centum where there is maintained throughout the building an automatic sprinkler system conforming to the requirements of section two hundred

eighty and to the rules of the board and where, if required by subdivisions one and two of section two hundred seventy-nine, a fire alarm signal system is maintained and fire drills are conducted.

6. On any floor at which a horizontal exit is provided so many persons may be employed as can occupy the smaller of the spaces on either side of the fireproof partitions or fire walls, or as can occupy the floor of an adjacent building which is connected with such floor by openings in the wall or walls between the buildings or by exterior balconies or bridges in addition to the occupants of such connected floor in such adjacent building, allowing five square feet of unobstructed floor space per person. Openings constituting required exit doorways, or if such exits are balconies or bridges, the openings leading thereto shall be of sufficient aggregate width to allow eighteen inches in width of openings for each fifty persons or fraction thereof employed on such floor in the case of factory buildings erected before October first, nineteen hundred and thirteen, and twenty-two inches in the case of factory buildings erected after that date.

7. Where a floor is occupied by more than one tenant, the commission may prescribe how many of the persons allowed to occupy such floor under the provisions of this section may occupy the space of each tenant.

8. In every factory building the commissioner shall cause to be posted in a conspicuous place in every stairhall and workroom, notices specifying the number of persons that may occupy each floor thereof in accordance with the provisions of this section. If any floor is occupied by more than one tenant, such notices shall be posted in the space occupied by each tenant, and shall state the number of persons that may occupy such space. Every such notice shall bear the date when posted.