

**BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE  
AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, POABC**

**File No: 06-0032**

**INTERPRETATION**

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Interpretation Date:

September 16, 2008

Building Code Edition:

BC Building Code 2006

Subject:

Handrail continuity at stairways and ramps

Keywords:

Handrail, Stairways, Ramps

Building Code Reference(s):

3.4.6.4

**Question:**

In a Part 3 building, where the width of the stairway is 1100 mm or more, are the handrails on both sides of the stairway required to be continuous through the length of the stairway including landing(s)?

**Interpretation:**

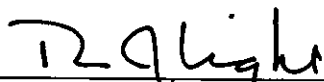
No.

The requirement for the handrail to be continuous on stairways and ramps is described in Sentences 3.4.6.4.(3) and 3.4.6.4.(5).

Sentence 3.4.6.4.(3) describes the continuously graspable handrail profile.

Sentence 3.4.6.4.(5) states that "at least" one handrail must be continuous throughout the length of the stairway or ramp. This Sentence allows the handrail to be "interrupted by doorways or newels at changes in direction". This exemption is provided in the same sentence that requires continuation of "at least" one handrail and therefore this qualification applies only to the continuous handrail.

Building Access Handbook 2007 provides additional explanation how this continuity is important for the visually-impaired and advises that the newel posts should be avoided and that the continuous handrail should be on the inside of the stairway as it provides the shortest path of travel.



R. J. Light, Committee Chair

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