

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, POABC

File No: 12-0009

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date:	March 18, 2014
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2012
Subject:	Exterior Egress and Exit Passageways
Keywords:	Access to exit, Exit, Means of Egress, Exterior Passageway, Exterior Exit Passageway
Building Code Reference(s):	3.2.3.13.; 3.3.1.15.; 3.4.1.5.(1); 3.4.4.1.(1); 3.4.4.3.;

Question:

1. What is the difference between an exterior passageway leading to an exit per Article 3.3.1.15. and an exterior exit passageway per Article 3.4.4.3.?
2. In either case, if the criteria described in Article 3.4.4.3 to waive the requirements of Sentences 3.4.4.1.(1), 3.2.3.13.(1) and (3) are not met, is the passageway simply provided with a fire-resistance rating and exposure protection at windows between it and adjacent suites?

Interpretation #1:

Exterior Passageway

The exterior passageway per Article 3.3.1.15. is an *access to exit* leading to a required *exit*. An example would be the elevated exterior corridor providing access for all the rooms of a motel to the exit stair at each end.

Sentences 3.3.1.3.(8) and (9) requires each of those rooms of the motel shall have a doorway into that exterior passageway and at the point where the doorway enters the exterior passageway it shall be possible to go in opposite directions to each of the two separate exits.

3.4.2.4.(2)(b)(i) permits the travel distance from the motel room to be measured from the egress door of that room if it opens to an exterior passageway to the nearest exit.



R. J. Light, Committee Chair

The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee with members representing AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, and POABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. The purpose of the committee is to encourage uniform province wide interpretation of the BC Building Code. These views should not be considered as the official interpretation of legislated requirements based on the BC Building Code, as final responsibility for an interpretation rests with the local *Authority Having Jurisdiction*. The views of the joint committee should not be construed as legal advice.

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Sentence 3.2.2.12.(1) requires an elevated exterior passageway such as those in a motel shall be constructed as a mezzanine with a fire-resistance rating as per 3.2.2.

Although exterior passageway is an access to exit Sentence 3.3.1.15.(1) requires an exterior passageway to conform to the requirements of Section 3.4. for exterior exit passageways and that includes exit fire separations and exit exposure protection.

However, Sentence 3.4.4.3.(1) exempts the exterior passageway from having to be fire separated from the remainder of the building (including the motel rooms) as per Sentence 3.4.4.1.(1) and having to comply with exit exposure protection as per Sentences 3.2.3.13.(1) and (3) if not less than 50% of the exterior sides of the passageway is open to the outdoors and an exit stair is provided at each end of the passageway.


The exit stair at each end is not exempted from the fire separations as per 3.4.4.1.(1) and exit exposure protection per 3.2.3.13. If the exit stair is an interior stair exit fire separations shall applied between the exterior passageway and the exit stair as well as between the exit stair and the remainder of the floor area. If the exit stair is an exterior stair it is not required to enclose the stair but to provide exit exposure protection from the inside between the open stair and the exterior walls of the building as per BCAB#1687; however, the exterior stair would not be required to be separated from the open exterior passageway since the passageway is not considered as the exterior walls of the buildings.

It is also permitted to have a 6 m dead end public corridor beyond the exit stair at end of the exterior passageway provided the public corridor fire separations are maintained between the dead end corridor and the suites served by that corridor. There is no separation required between the public corridor and the exterior passageway as per BCAB#1725.

Exterior Exit Passageway

The exterior exit passageway per Article 3.4.4.3. is within or part of an *exit* leading from an exit to an acceptable open space or a thoroughfare. An example would be the exterior walkway leading from an exit stair to the street along the side of a building.

Sentence 3.4.1.5.(1) specifies that access to an exterior exit passageway from a floor area shall be through exit doors at the floor levels.



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There is no limit on travel distance within the exterior exit passageway or a requirement to travel in two directions to reach the street or open space.

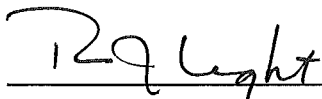
Exit fire separations and exit exposure protection shall apply to exterior exit passageway except as exempted by 3.4.4.3.(1).

Interpretation #2

In the case of exterior passageway, such as the elevated exterior corridor serving motel rooms, if the criteria described in Article 3.4.4.3. are not met then the exterior passageway can be treated as

1. a public corridor and shall comply with all the requirements of a public corridor including fire separations between the exterior passageway and the rooms as per Article 3.3.1.4. and between the exterior passageway and the exit stairs at each end as per Sentence 3.4.4.1.(1), or
2. an exit corridor and shall comply with Section 3.4 including exit fire separations between the passageway and the rooms as per Sentence 3.4.4.1.(1) and subject to exit exposure requirements as per Sentences 3.2.3.13.(1) and (3).

In the case of exterior exit passageway, such as exterior walkway leading from an exit to an open space or a public thoroughfare, if the criteria described in Article 3.4.4.3. are not met then the exterior exit passageway shall comply with Section 3.4 including exit fire separations between the passageway and the adjoining building exterior walls as per Sentence 3.4.4.1.(1) and subject to exit exposure requirements as per Sentences 3.2.3.13.(1) and (3).



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