

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

File No: 06-0091

INTERPRETATION

Page 1 of 4

Interpretation Date:	February 21, 2012
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2006
Subject:	Guards at exterior exits
Keywords:	Guards, exterior exits, openings in guard, climbability, fall hazard, less than 600mm elevation difference
Building Code Reference(s):	3.3.1.18.(1)(c), 3.4.6.5.

Question:

1. Sentences 3.4.6.5.(5) and (7) contain similar wording: "Unless it can be shown that the..... do / does not present a hazard,.....". What is an acceptable approach for demonstrating that no hazard is present for a given potential fall hazard situation?
2. For an exterior exit stair or ramp, and associated landings; where the walking surfaces have an elevation difference not more than 600mm above ground, are guards in conformance with Article 3.4.6.5 still required?
3. For an exterior exit walkway, where the walking surfaces have an elevation difference not more than 600mm above ground, can the criteria of Clause 3.3.1.18.(1)(c) be used to address potential fall hazards?

Interpretation:

1. The related objectives attributed to these Code references indicate the need of the Code to address the hazards caused by the risks of tripping, slipping, falling or collision.

The intent statements are: to limit the probability that persons (e.g. children) will push their head or body through a guard and fall or become trapped or asphyxiated, which could lead to harm to persons; and to limit the probability that persons will climb a guard and fall, which could lead to harm to persons.

Since Sentence 3.4.6.5.(5) relates to the presence of children; if it can be demonstrated in certain occupancies that no children will likely be present, it would also show that no hazard is present relating to possible entrapment or asphyxiation of children at the guard. An example would be certain adults-only facilities, building services or industrial occupancies not likely to be occupied by children. Strict adult supervision would be expected at such premises.


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.

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

File No: 06-0091

INTERPRETATION

Page 2 of 4

With respect to Sentence 3.4.6.5.(7), if it can be adequately demonstrated that in certain use and occupancies, there is no possibility that the occupants would climb guards, then this would show that no hazard is present in relation to guard climbability. An example would be certain building services or industrial occupancies. Strict adult supervision would be expected at such premises.

2. Yes.

Article 3.4.6.5 addresses fall protection at exit stairs and ramps.

Sentence 3.4.6.5.(1) indicates every exit is required to have a wall or guard on each side. In the absence of a wall, a guard is required. These are to prevent possible tripping, slipping or falling from a higher level to a lower level by occupants in the process of evacuation using stairs or ramps. This in turn could cause injury or delays in evacuation.

There may be certain situations where the less than 600mm fall elevation difference is such, and if it can be shown that in an evacuation scenario the absence of a guard does not present a hazard, that it could be acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction. For example there may not be any need for crowd control and the risks of fall found to be acceptable. This would be consistent with the compliance option provided in Sentences 3.4.6.5.(5) and (7), where the proponent is required to demonstrate there is no hazard.

3. Yes.

Article 3.4.6.5 addresses fall protection at exit stairs and ramps; however exits using exterior level walkways where there is no fall hazard or has acceptable fall risks, are not addressed in that Article.

Since Section 3.3 applies to a component of the means of egress, it is considered appropriate that Clause 3.3.1.18.(1)(c) in certain situations can also be applied to an exterior exit walkway.

Therefore where the elevation difference is less than 600mm, and it can be shown that in an evacuation scenario the absence of a guard does not present a hazard or is an acceptable risk, the guard can be omitted at an exterior exit walkway. This would be consistent with the compliance option provided in Sentences 3.4.6.5.(5) and (7), where the proponent is required to demonstrate there is no hazard. However, it may still be prudent to provide barriers in certain cases where crowd control or direction of evacuation flow, is necessary to prevent injury from tripping or falling hazards that could still be present at elevation differences of less than 600mm.

Refer to the attached illustrations showing selected conditions.


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.

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

File No: 06-0091

INTERPRETATION

Page 3 of 4

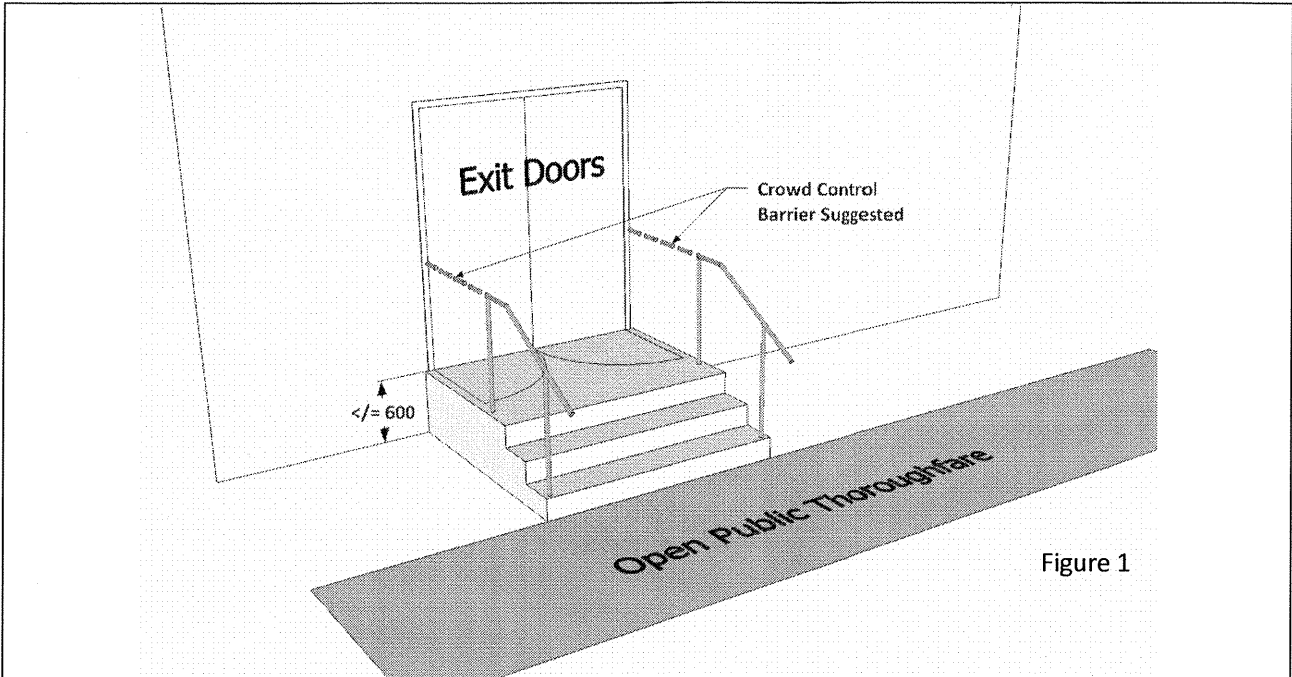


Figure 1

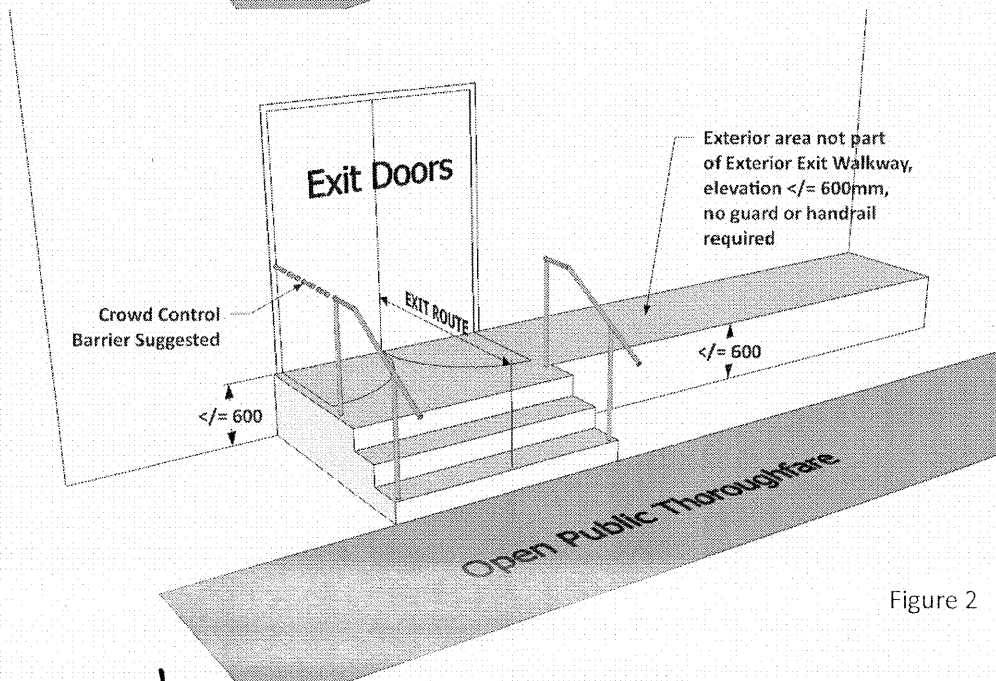


Figure 2


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.

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

File No: 06-0091

INTERPRETATION

Page 4 of 4

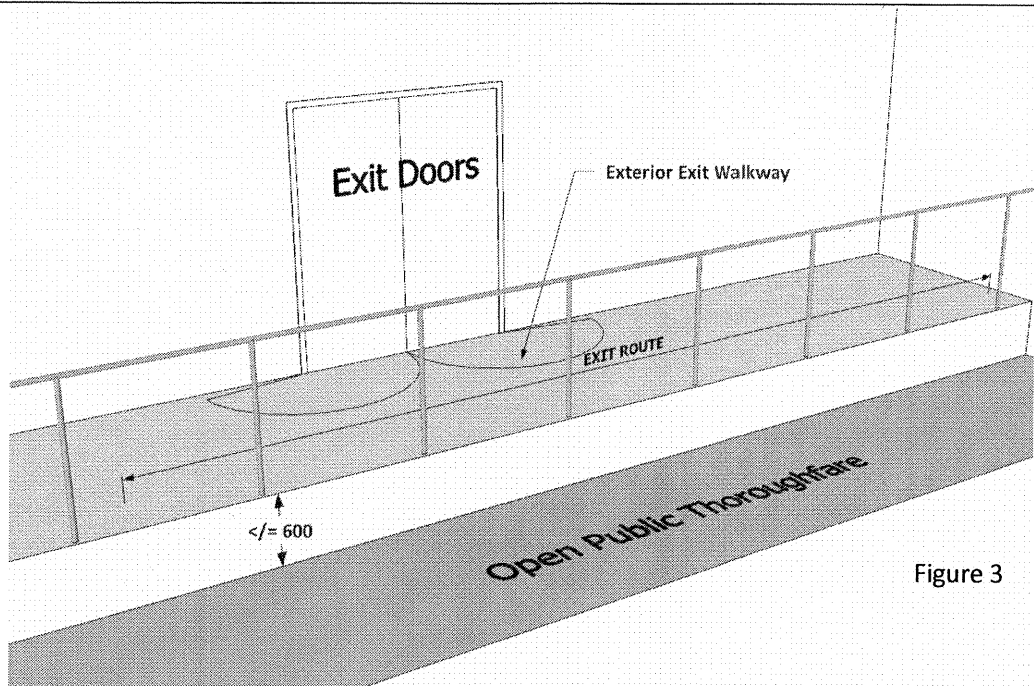


Figure 3

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.