

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

File No: 06-0079

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date:	March 15, 2011
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2006
Subject:	Stairs in landscaped area
Keywords:	Stairs, landscaped area, means of egress, exit
Building Code Reference(s):	1.4.1.2. Definition of exit and means of egress, 9.8.1.1.(1), 9.8.1.2.(1), 9.9.1.1.(1), 3.3.1.14.(1),

Question:

In a townhouse project there are stairs in landscaped area that are not connected to any part of the building. Do these stairs have to comply with the code requirements?

Interpretation:

Yes in certain circumstances.

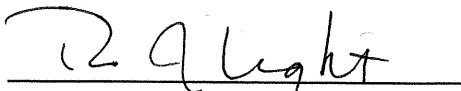
Means of egress means a continuous path of travelfrom any point in a building.....to...an open public thoroughfare, or an exterior open space..... Means of egress includes exits and access to exits.

If the stairs in the landscaped area form part of the means of egress to the public thoroughfare or open space the stairs shall comply with the code requirements.

If the stairs are also used by the firefighters for accessing the building or the stairs are used by people for their daily commute the stairs shall comply with the code requirements.

The code has requirements for stairs within the required means of egress and has fewer requirements for convenience stairs.

It should be noted that the BC Building Code provides a minimum level of safety. In this day of an aging population, all stairs represent a hazard to elderly persons and stairs constructed to meet code requirements including handrails is considered good practice, although not mandatory in all cases.



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.