

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

**INTERPRETATION**

Interpretation Date:	February 21, 2001 (Revised March 21, 2001)	File No.:
Building Code Edition:	B.C. Building Code 1998	98 - 0004
Subject:	Fire-resistance rating of stairs	
Keywords:	Stairs, Fire-resistance rating	
Building Code Reference(s):	3.2.2.3.(1)(e) & (f), 3.4.4.3, 3.2.3.8.(1), 3.2.3.12.(2)	Page 1 of 1

**Question:**

Do interior and exterior stairs, either *combustible* or *noncombustible*, require a *fire-resistance rating*?

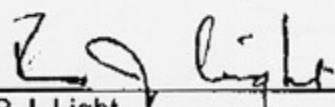
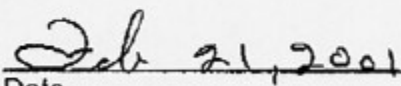
**Interpretation:** No, provided the stairs or landings do not require a *fire-resistance rating* for other reasons (e.g., scissor stairs or exit stairs over storage rooms).

Fire-resistance rating of floor, roof, wall and load bearing assemblies is regulated, however, the building code does not explicitly require stairs & landing assemblies (exit, circulation or means of egress) to have a *fire-resistance rating*. This is because if the stairs are substantially exposed to fire, they are unusable by people and their *fire-resistance* does not matter in terms of their function.

It is acknowledged that Article 3.2.2.3. exempts "fire protection" for all steel stairs that do not form part of the structural frame of the building. However, it is also interpreted that combustible stairs (that do not form part of the structural frame of the building) are not explicitly required to have a *fire-resistance rating*.

Interior stairs, either *combustible* or *noncombustible*, that are separated from adjacent occupancies with a fire-rated enclosure are considered to be "fire protected" by means of the surrounding fire separation walls. Such stairs do not require any *fire-resistance rating* for the stairs or landings. Careful detailing at the landing/wall interface is required to maintain the integrity of the wall fire separation.

Exterior stairs (*combustible* or *noncombustible*) conforming to Article 3.2.3.8. (i.e., structural members outside an exterior building face and greater than 3 m from a property line do not require protection from exterior fires) are specifically exempt from providing a *fire-resistance rating*.

 _____ R.J. Light, Committee Chair	 _____ Date
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