

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 12-0121

INTERPRETATION

Page 1 of 2

Interpretation Date:	October 16, 2018
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2012
Subject:	Exterior exit passageway, minimum distance between exit stairs
Keywords:	Exterior exit passageway, minimum distance between exit stairs
Building Code Reference(s):	3.4.2.3.(1)(b) & (3), 3.4.4.3.(1)(b)

Question:

A C-shape building layout with an exterior exit passageway along the inside perimeter has its 2 exit stairs located at each end of the exterior exit passageway such that the exits are spaced only 1.2m apart. Is this permitted? See reference floor plan diagram next page.

Interpretation:

No.

The building as described does meet the requirement of Clause 3.4.4.3.(1)(b) in concept, as exit stairs are provided at each end of the perimeter passageway. However Clause 3.4.2.3.(1)(b) requires that the 2 exits be spaced apart at least one half the maximum diagonal dimension of the floor area but not less than 9m, for a floor area without a protected public corridor. Based on Sentence 3.4.2.3.(3) this separation distance would be measured along the shortest distance that smoke travels between the 2 exits.

Sentence 3.4.4.3.(1) titled "Exterior Passageway Exceptions" references some exemptions, but does not indicate exemption from Article 3.4.2.3 for remoteness of exits requirements.

It is also notable that the National Building Code of Canada 2015 has an additional Sentence 3.4.2.3.(4) which provides that the distance between 2 exterior discharges of exit stairs serving the same floor area shall be minimum 9m apart, or 6m if the building is sprinklered and the 2 exterior discharges are within 15m of a street. This remoteness of exit discharge requirement is expected to be included in the next edition of the BC Building Code.

Providing a minimum 9m separation of the exit stairs for an exterior exit passageway is also consistent with the intent of Clause 3.4.4.3.(1)(b) to locate the exit stairs spaced remotely at each end of the passageway. However since the exterior exit passageway is already considered protected as an exit facility, it is not deemed necessary to exceed 9m. This would be similar to and consistent with the protected public corridor concept in Clause 3.4.2.3.(1)(a).



Patrick Shek, P.Eng., CP., FEC, Committee Chair

The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee with members representing AIBC, EGBC and BOABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. The Building and Safety Standards Branch, Province of BC and the City of Vancouver participate in the committee's proceedings with respect to interpretations of the BC Building Code. 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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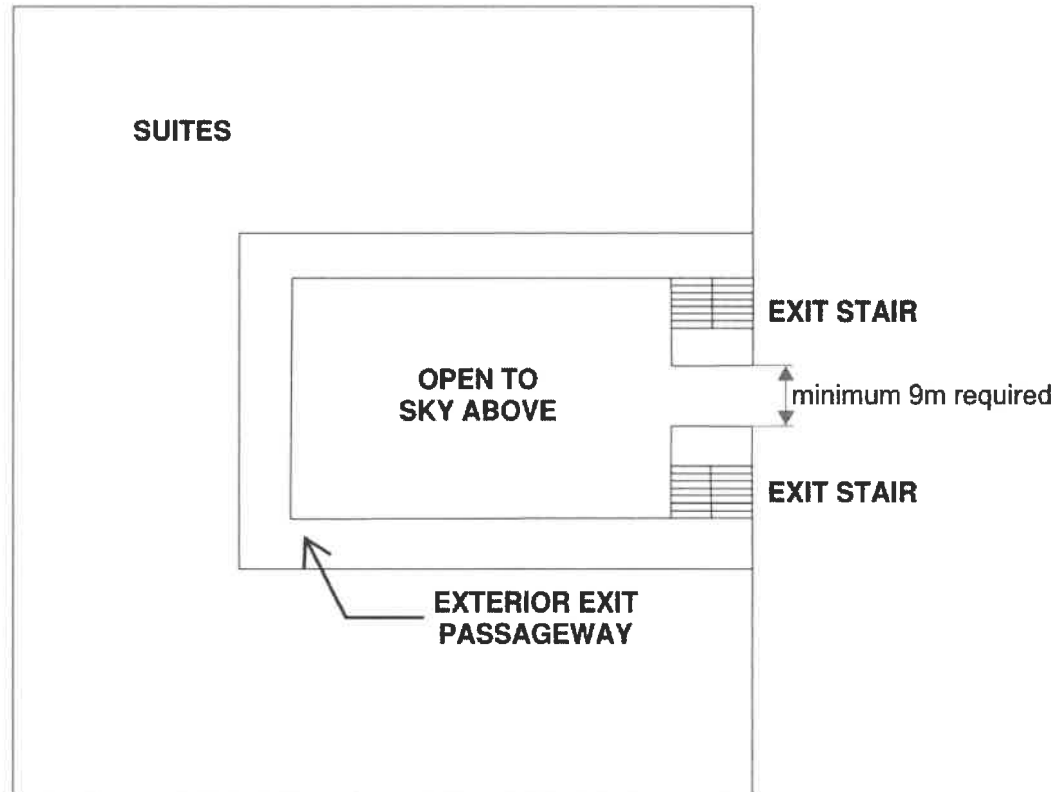
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Page 2 of 2

Refer also to past interpretation 12-0009.



DIAGRAMMATIC FLOOR PLAN (NOT TO SCALE)

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