


# BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing  
**AIBC, EGBC, BOABC**

**File No: 18-0083**

**INTERPRETATION**

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| Interpretation Date:   | January 19, 2021   |
| Building Code Edition:   | BC Building Code 2018  |
| Subject:   | Door Release Hardware at Exit Lobbies and at Exterior Doors from Exit Stair Shafts   |
| Keywords:  | Door release hardware, panic hardware, push paddles, exterior exit doors, exit stair shafts, occupant load, lobbies used as exits, entrance vestibules   |
| Building Code Reference(s):  | 3.4.6.16.(2)(b), 3.4.4.2.  |
| <b>Question:</b>   | <p>Clause 3.4.6.16.(2)(b) requires special door release hardware at every door leading to an exit lobby from an exit stair shaft; and at every exterior door leading from an exit stair shaft in a building having an occupant load more than 100.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. For an entrance lobby designed for use as an exit in accordance with Article 3.4.4.2., is the special door release hardware also required at all the doors along the path of travel through to the exterior, such as the lobby main entrance door and intervening vestibule doors?</li><li>2. For a building having a total occupant load over 100 persons, but having an adjoining portion of the building cut off from the remainder of the building such that that cut off portion only serves its own occupant load 100 or less; would such a cut off portion still require door release hardware at the exterior doors leading from its own separate exit stair shafts?</li><li>3. For exit stair shafts serving floor areas having a combined total occupant load 100 persons or less, but adjoining another portion of the building cut off from the remainder of the building such that that portion's occupant load increases the combined total building occupant load to more than 100 persons; would door release hardware still be required for the exit stair shafts in accordance with Clause 3.4.6.16.(2)(b) if the exit stair shafts do not serve such adjoining cut off portion?</li></ol> |
| <b>Interpretation:</b>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Yes, if the building occupant load is over 100 persons.<br/><br/>It is interpreted that "every exterior door leading from an exit stair shaft in a building having an occupant load more than 100" is intended to include all doors in the path of travel through to</li></ol><br><br>_____<br>Patrick Shek, P.Eng., CP, FEC, Committee Chair  |
| <p>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 <i>Authority Having Jurisdiction</i>. The views of the joint committee should not be construed as legal advice.</p> |  |

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exterior open space, including such doors as the lobby main entrance door and intervening vestibule doors.

Similarly, and to be consistent with this principle, if below grade and above grade exit stair shafts converge for a building having a combined occupant load over 100 persons, the jointly used interior doors in the path of travel to the exterior door must also have the required door release hardware. This is notwithstanding the below grade exit stairs could be serving below grade levels having a combined occupant load of 100 or less persons. Refer to the Diagram further on.

It should be noted that for the purposes of Clause 3.4.6.16.(2)(b) the building occupant load includes basement parkade levels as well.

The intent statement provided for Sentence 3.4.6.16.(2) indicates:

"To limit the probability of delays in opening exit doors in an emergency situation, which could lead to delays in the evacuation or movement of persons to a safe place, which could lead to harm to persons."

If a building has an occupant load of over 100, such that there is a potential for over 100 persons having to evacuate simultaneously through an exit stair shaft through to the exterior, the door release hardware provided at doors in the path of exit travel will reduce the risk of delay due to the occupant load considered as high or necessitating queuing to evacuate.

If the building occupant load is 100 persons or less, there is no requirement for door release hardware at the lobby main entrance door and intervening vestibule doors.

**2. Yes.**

Clause 3.4.6.16.(2)(b) requires the exterior doors leading from an exit stair shaft to have door release hardware if the building total occupant load exceeds 100 persons. The Building Code does not address more complex situations where not all floor areas of the building are served by the typical minimum 2 sets of exit stair shafts.

**3. Yes.**

Clause 3.4.6.16.(2)(b) requires the exterior doors leading from an exit stair shaft to have door release hardware if the building total occupant load exceeds 100 persons. The Building Code does not address more complex situations where not all floor areas of the building are served by the typical minimum 2 sets of exit stair shafts.

Door release hardware includes any door hardware that will release the door latch and allow the door to swing wide open when using up to the maximum specified force applied to the device in the direction of exit travel; such as panic hardware, or push paddles.



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

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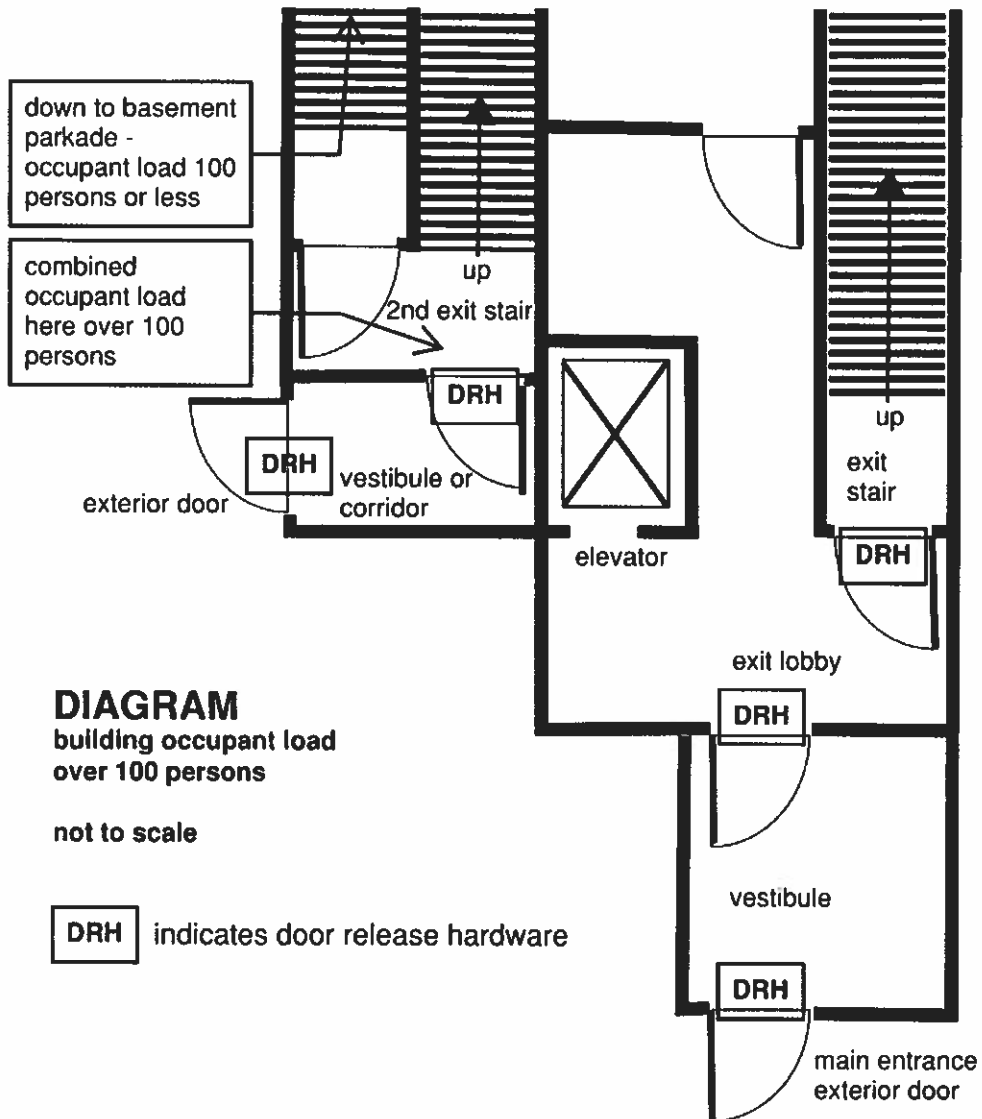
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