

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0289

INTERPRETATION

Page 1 of 2

Interpretation Date:	October 17, 2023
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2018
Subject:	Normal & Emergency Lighting for Exterior Exits
Keywords:	Lighting, exterior exit walkways
Building Code Reference(s):	1.4.1.2. of Div A, 3.2.7.1.(1), 3.2.7.3.(1)(a), 3.2.3.13.(1)

Question:

Do exterior exit stairs, ramps and walkways located on the ground level require minimum lighting levels under both normal and emergency power?

Interpretation:

Yes (for certain portions).

Sentence 3.2.7.1.(1) requires “*exits*” to have illumination under normal power to an average level of not less than 50 lx at the floor or tread level and at angles and intersections at changes of level where there are stairs or ramps.

Clause 3.2.7.3.(1)(a) requires “*exits*” to have illumination under emergency power to an average level of not less than 10 lx at the floor or tread level.

Article 1.4.1.2. of Division A of the BCBC defines “exit” as follows:

“Exit means that part of a means of egress, including doorways, that leads from the floor area it serves to a separate building, an open public thoroughfare, or an exterior open space protected from fire exposure from the building and having access to an open public thoroughfare.”

So, the minimum extent of both normal and emergency lighting is from the location where an occupant exits the building to “*an exterior open space protected from fire exposure from the building and having access to an open public thoroughfare.*”



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.

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0289

INTERPRETATION

Page 2 of 2

3.2.3.13.(1) requires exit exposure protection for a horizontal distance of 3m from an unprotected opening. This implies that if a person is in an exterior open space that is 3m away from the building, they would be considered to be in a relatively safe location.

It should be noted that the building code provides a “minimum” level of safety for the design of buildings. Designers should use their discretion to determine if both normal and emergency lighting should extend further than 3m from the building based on the project specific criteria.



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.