

# BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

**File No: 24-0148**

**INTERPRETATION**

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Interpretation Date: May 19, 2026

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 2024

Subject: Egress from Elevator Lobbies

Keywords: Egress, Exit, Elevator Lobbies, Dwelling Unit

Building Code Reference(s): 3.3.1.5, 3.4.2.1., 3.3.4.4.(6)

## Question:

Where a floor area requires 2 exits, does an elevator lobby within the floor area always require access to 2 exits?

## Interpretation:

Yes, with an exception as described on page 2.

Where a floor level has multiple suites, the elevator lobby is typically part of the public corridor serving the suites and it is subject to the requirements for a public corridor to have access to at least 2 exits. On a single-suite floor, the corridor/lobby serves only one suite and therefore by definition there is no public corridor, and no requirement for the corridor/lobby to be served by 2 exits. However, there are also other requirements regulating egress.

Article 3.3.1.5 requires 2 means of egress for rooms exceeding specific area and travel distance limitations. It is advisable for the lobby to be considered as the same type of occupancy as the adjoining suite, e.g. a lobby serving an office suite would be a Group D occupancy. If the lobby exceeds the area or travel distance limits of Article 3.3.1.5, or it has an occupant load greater than 60 persons, it requires two means of egress.



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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Subsection 3.4 contains requirements for exits from a floor area. As defined in the BCBC:

*Floor area means the space on any storey of a building between exterior walls and required firewalls, including the space occupied by interior walls and partitions, but not including exits, vertical service spaces, and their enclosing assemblies.*

An interior elevator lobby is part of the floor area and Article 3.4.2.1 requires at least two exits from a floor area, with some exceptions for small floor areas in buildings not exceeding two storeys in building height. Where a floor area requires at least two exits, it is interpreted that rooms or areas within the floor area also require access to at least two exits.

Access to a second exit may be difficult from elevator lobbies on some single suite floors, because travel through the occupied suite may be necessary to reach the exit. This can create security issues for the occupants of the suite. It is advisable to review this condition with the local authority having jurisdiction to determine whether any alternatives can be acceptable.

Exception – Sentence 3.3.4.4.(6) states that, where a dwelling unit has a second and separate means of egress, one egress from the unit is permitted to pass through

- a) an interior corridor served by a single exit, or
- b) an exterior balcony served by a single exit stairway, or
- c) an exterior passageway served by a single exit stairway.

For the specific condition of a dwelling unit with at least 2 separate means of egress, one of the means of egress can lead to a corridor that has only a single exit. This corridor could include an elevator lobby.



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