



# THE CODE ADVISOR

Approved Code  
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*Professional Assistance in the Building Codes for  
Architects, Engineers & Code Officials*

## Question of the Month

From the “**Quick Code Answers**”  
Telephone Support records.

**Quick Code Answers** is an annual subscription service that provides Phone & On-site technical support for your Building Code questions.

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**Q:** Is the pull force for doors always 5 pounds? What about exterior doors? The ventilation system can often cause a pressure difference that easily exceeds the 5 lb limit. Are the inside vestibule doors considered interior or exterior for this requirement? They often have the air pressure problem but could be considered interior doors.



**A:** The code describes push or pull force applied to the latch side of a door as the Opening Force. There are two places where opening force is defined. The accessibility standard limits the opening force of interior doors, along an accessible route, to 5 pounds (A117.1-2003, 404.2.8 Door-Opening Force). This 5 lb force does not include the latch force. For fire doors, it defers the opening force value to the local authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). There is nothing in the accessibility standard that applies to exterior doors.

## Client Highlight

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The IBC sets opening force criteria (2006IBC 1008.1.2 Door Swing) for interior side hinged doors, without closers, at 5 pounds. For “other side-swinging doors”, the door must be set in motion with a maximum force of 30 pounds (maximum 15 lb unlatch force). Also, once opened, the door motion must be sustained by a 15 lb force.

These 15 and 30 pound limits would apply to interior doors with closers and to exterior doors. The inside vestibule door will have an automatic closer which always extends the limit beyond 5 pounds in the IBC 1008 section. The accessibility standard does not have this closer provision, except for the fire door exception which assumes a closer. The commentary for this section says the increased limits are to account for the closer action and air pressure differentials at exterior doors. If air pressure differentials occur at inside vestibule doors, it seems to fit the exterior door condition. In that case, they would be exempt from the 5 pound limit even in the accessibility standard.

## Code Tip

The mounting position of many controls, switches and outlets in public and common areas of buildings is dictated by the accessibility provisions of the IBC. Even the position of appliance controls and window hardware are included in this code requirement! Improper treatment of these features accounted for the largest number of accessibility related inspection failures last year. (Reference: **2006 IBC 1109.13** Controls, operating mechanisms and hardware & E105 Other features and facilities)

Taken from our *De-Coding the Accessibility Code Seminar*.



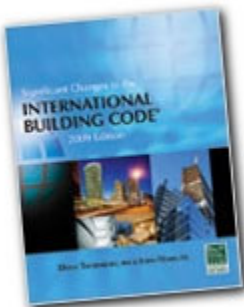
## Current Events

It took only four meetings in April for the UCC Review and Advisory Council to finish its initial task of considering public recommendations for the exclusion of changes to the 2009 I-codes. Not every code section is eligible for review by the council. Only changes that will occur from the current 2006 to the 2009 I-codes can be considered. The 2009 version of the ICC building code is scheduled for adoption in Pennsylvania on December 31st of this year and there are some significant changes from the 2006 edition. The third meeting was moved from its normal room in the L&I building to the State Museum auditorium. Presumably, this was because of the intense interest surrounding the addition of mandatory sprinklers to the (IRC) Residential Code.

By the end of the April 30<sup>th</sup> meeting, no recommended exclusions were accepted. Barring a legislative initiative, the 2009 International Code family will be the law of the land in a few months.

The Councils next meeting is scheduled for June 18<sup>th</sup> in Harrisburg. More details about their meeting location and membership roster can be found at the bottom of the L&I building code page. [www.dli.state.pa.us/codes](http://www.dli.state.pa.us/codes)

## Recommended Resources



### Significant Changes to the International Building Code, 2009 Edition

This is a "must-have" guide to the many important changes in the 2009 *International Building Code*® (IBC). It offers a comprehensive yet practical analysis of the critical changes made between the 2006 and 2009 editions of the Code. Coverage reflects both structural and nonstructural provisions.

- "Change Significance" describes why each change is important and how it can be applied in the field, providing readers with a thorough understanding of the code revisions as they pertain to the real world
- ideal tool for transitioning to the 2009 Code or for a historical reference in years to come to examine evolution of the Code
- direct comparisons between previous and new code language help readers to identify the root of code changes and exactly what they mean

## Approved Code Product Highlight

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## Got Code Questions?



### **Do you have a code question that is baffling you?**

Submit your code question to [code\\_question@ApprovedCode.com](mailto:code_question@ApprovedCode.com)

Be sure to include a daytime telephone number in case we need more information.

We will respond to your question by e-mail or phone as soon as possible.

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