



THE CODE ADVISOR

Approved Code
Services, Inc.
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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.

Call us to subscribe!

Q: Is an Area of Refuge always required in the stair tower of a non-sprinklered building? We are reviewing a two story addition with an elevator and one stair tower. This floor is a B-occupancy class with occupancy load of 24 and does not have a sprinkler requirement. The designer does not provide Area of Refuge in the stair enclosure because there is an accessible exit through the rated wall into the existing building. Why would that exempt the stair from having an Area of Refuge?

A: This design is compliant.

An Area of Refuge has the effect of converting a non-accessible stair enclosure into an accessible egress component (IBC 1007.2.8). The 2009 IBC exempts Areas of Refuge in fully sprinklered buildings but it could be required in this situation (IBC 1007.3).

The confusion may be coming from an incorrect reading of the accessible means of egress requirements (IBC 1007.1). The number of accessible means of egress is determined by the number of "required" (not "provided") means of egress. At least one accessible-exit must be provided from every area. If more than one exit is required, than two accessible-exits must be supplied. This occupancy load would require only one exit (IBC 1021.2). So, even though two exits are provided, only one must be accessible (IBC 1007.1).



Client Highlight

Astrum Solar Inc.

705 General Washington Avenue, Suite 650
Norristown, Pennsylvania 19403

WWW.ASTRUMSOLAR.COM

Fastest-growing installer of residential and small commercial solar panel systems in the Mid-Atlantic.

In this case, the Horizontal Exit, created by the rated separation of the existing building, qualifies as the accessible means of egress (IBC 1007.2.6) and the stair tower does not need to be accessible. However, it does need to have proper signage directing users to the accessible means of egress. That same signage requirement also applies to the elevator landing area (IBC 1007.10).

Code Tip

The location and marking of public toilet facilities has seen some changes in the 2009 IPC. Exterior access is now recognized as a viable option, as long as the route complies with IBC accessibility requirements (IPC 403.3.1).



Directional signs indicating the route to public facilities are now required at the public entrance (IBC 403.4.1).

Taken from our Important Changes to the 2009 I-codes Seminar.

Accessibility Corner

Garages that serve apartment or townhouse units where Accessible, Type A or B dwelling units are present must have a minimum number of accessible bays (*IBC 1106.2*). These accessible bays must meet the *A117.1 (Section 502)* specifications for height (98") & width (192") even if they are located within or beneath the unit. The 2009 IBC allows the height dimension in private garages, accessed directly from the dwelling unit, to be reduced to 84" (*IBC 1106.5*). This allows a reasonable ceiling height to accommodate the overhead door.



Taken from our updated De-Coding the ADA Code Seminar.

Next public session is scheduled for May 19th in our new training room!

Details available at www.ApprovedCode.com

Current Events

In February, PA L&I issued an Advisory for Residential Sprinklers to clarify the credentials needed for design, installation and approval. These life safety systems are currently mandatory in all new townhouses and will be required in new One & Two Family homes and additions in 2011 (*2009 IRC 313*).

The advisory confirms there are NO state imposed qualifications for design or installation of the systems! Concerning the matter of design approval, the advisory suggests that Residential Plumbing Inspectors be tasked with the approval and inspection responsibilities - primarily because section P2904 of the 2009 IRC contains the criteria for design of these systems. It also recognizes that commercial building inspectors and reviewers may be a better choice because they currently approve commercial sprinkler systems.



Bottom line: Design, installation and approval of these life safety systems will likely fall to plumbing contractors and Residential Plumbing Inspectors. This is a considerable step-up in responsibility from the normal realm of water closets and water heaters. In the end, the local BCO is left to sort out the technical and legal issues. Read the full advisory on the L&I website at: www.dli.state.pa.us Choose Uniform Construction Code, Local Enforcement, Advisories.

Approved Code Product Highlight

State Certified Plan-Review Services

We offer the full range of plan review and inspection services to commercial and municipal clients. This includes Building and Accessibility reviews, Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing and Energy Compliance. We supply a pre-design code checklist tailored to the unique project requirements. This ensures that critical information is included in the plan documents and greatly reduces the plan review turnaround time.

We're available to answer your questions - FAST!

Please ask your building code official if they accept our third-party review for your next project.



Recommended Resources



Commercial: Code Check Electrical 5th edition (2008 NEC®)

A convenient, quick-reference guide to current electrical code designed for on-site use and packaged in a user-friendly flip chart with durable spiral binding and laminated pages.

Residential: The Pennsylvania Housing Research Center has produced a dozen high quality webinars in the past year. The topics span Residential Sprinklers to Wall Bracing to Duct Leakage Testing. All are available free and "on-demand" at the PHRC website www.engr.psu.edu/phrc/. They are also the source for the 2009 PA Alternative Energy code.

* **Just a reminder:** If you have not ordered your 2009 codes, Approved Code Services is an authorized reseller for all the ICC codes and products found at www.iccsafe.org/store/.

Free shipping is available to our current clients!

Got Code Questions?



Do you have a code question that is baffling you?

Submit your code question to 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 in a timely manner.

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