

CODE APPLICATION NOTICE

Subject: Stairways Not a Part of Egress Element
Convenience Stairs or Stairway

CAN NO. 2-1020.1
EFFECTIVE: 8/19/09

CODE SECTIONS

Sections 1020.1, 707.2, 1002 and 702
2007 California Building Code (CBC)

2007 California Building Code

1020.1 Enclosures required. Interior exit stairways and interior exit ramps shall be enclosed with fire barriers constructed in accordance with Section 706 or horizontal assemblies constructed in accordance with Section 711, or both. Exit enclosures shall have a fire-resistance rating of not less than 2 hours where connecting four stories or more and not less than 1 hour where connecting less than four stories. The number of stories connected by the exit enclosure shall include any basements but not any mezzanines. An exit enclosure shall not be used for any purpose other than means of egress.

Exceptions:

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4. Stairways that are not a required means of egress element are not required to be enclosed where such stairways comply with Section 707.2.

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707.2 Shaft enclosure required. Openings through a floor/ceiling assembly shall be protected by a shaft enclosure complying with this Section.

Exceptions:

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2. *In other than Groups I-2, I-2.1 and I-3, a shaft enclosure is not required in a building equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 for an escalator opening or stairway that is not a portion of the means of egress protected according to Item 2.1 or 2.2:*

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1002.1 Definitions.

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EXIT. That portion of a means of egress system which is separated from other interior spaces of a building or structure by fire-resistance-rated construction and opening protectives as required to provide a protected path of egress travel between the exit access and the exit discharge. Exits include exterior exit doors at ground level, exit enclosures, exit passageways, exterior exit stairs, exterior exit ramps and horizontal exits.

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EXIT ENCLOSURE. An exit component that is separated from other interior spaces of a building or structure by fire-resistance-rated construction and opening protectives, and provides for a protected path of egress travel in a vertical or horizontal direction to the exit discharge or the public way.

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STAIRWAY. One or more flights of stairs, either exterior or interior, with the necessary landings and platforms connecting them, to form a continuous and uninterrupted passage from one level to another.

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702.1 Definitions.

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SMOKE BARRIER. A continuous membrane, either vertical or horizontal, such as a wall, floor, or ceiling assembly, that is designed and constructed to restrict the movement of smoke.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Code Application Notice is to clarify the appropriate code requirements that apply to stairways that are not a required means of the egress element, also known as “convenience stairs” or a “convenience stairway.”

BACKGROUND

Multi-story buildings must contain a sufficient numbers of stairways to safely exit the occupants from the building. Based on the occupant load for each floor, the code specifies the minimum number of stairways that are required to accommodate the occupants, the minimum width of stairways and the minimum spacing between stairways. Other factors that affect the number and location of stairs are the common path of travel, accessible means of egress and the maximum travel distance to an exit. When a building complies with the minimum code requirements for exits, additional stairways provided for the building occupants that provide a convenient way to travel between floors are typically referred to as “convenience stairs” or a “convenience stairway.”

INTERPRETATION

All required enclosed stairways are considered to be vertical exit enclosures and as such, shall be a protected part of the exit system between the exit access and the exit discharge or the public way, and shall comply with all exit requirements as stated in CBC, Chapter 10.

In Occupancy Group I-2, an additional stairway that does not provide an exit for building occupants, often referred to as a “convenience stairway”, shall be enclosed as required by CBC Section 707 *Shaft Enclosures*, and shall have a fire-resistance rating of not less than the floor assembly penetrated and need not exceed 2 hours, as stated in CBC Section 707.4.

Section 707.7 of the CBC states that openings in a shaft enclosure for convenience stairs shall be protected in accordance with CBC Section 715 as required for fire barriers. CBC Section 707.7.1 prohibits openings other than those necessary for the purpose of convenience stairs. Since floors in hospitals and skilled nursing facilities are also considered smoke barriers, doors leading to convenience stairs shall meet the requirements for a smoke and draft control door assembly tested in accordance with UL 1784, be labeled in accordance with CBC Section 715.4.5.1, show the letter “S” on the fire rating label of the door, and shall be automatic closing by smoke detection in accordance with CBC Section 715.4.7.3. As stated in CBC Section 707.8, penetrations shall be protected in accordance with Section 712 as required for fire barriers, and penetrations other than those necessary for the purpose of the convenience stair shall not be permitted, in accordance with Section 707.8.1.

Interior floor finish and floor covering shall comply with CBC Section 804.

Convenience stairs must be an additional stair not otherwise required for egress and shall not be identified with exit signs. All doors leading to convenience stairs shall be identified by a sign that reads as follows:

**NO
EXIT**

Such sign shall have the word “NO” in letters 2 inches high with a stroke width of 3/8 inch and the word “EXIT” in letters 1 inch high, with the word “EXIT” below the word “NO”, as referenced in NFPA 101, Section 7.10.8.1.

A convenience stair or stairway that is not required for egress and that complies with all of the provisions of the CAN is not required to discharge to the exterior of the building in accordance with CBC Section 1019.3.

<u>Original Signed</u>	8/19/09
Paul Coleman	Date