

**BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE**  
**AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, POABC**

**File No: 98-0088**

**INTERPRETATION**

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Interpretation Date: December 17, 2003

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 1998

Subject: combination curved/straight stairs

Keywords: stairs, uniform, runs, treads shape, curved/straight, combination

Building Code Reference(s): 3.3.1.13., 3.4.6.7.(2), 9.8.2.1.(1)

**Question:**

Sentences 3.4.6.7.(2) and 9.8.2.1.(1) prescribe that treads and risers in stairs be uniform in rise and run. Is it the intent, in applying the word 'uniform' that curved and straight treads in combination are permitted?

**Interpretation:**

No.

In order to achieve the uniformity of run prescribed in Sentences 3.4.6.7.(2) and 9.8.2.1.(1), it is not permissible to have curved and straight treads in combination or in direct sequence.

The term 'uniform' must be applied at every point along the width of a stair tread, and therefore curved and straight treads directly sequential to each other would not be uniform.

For stairs designed under Part 3 this requirement applies to 'successive flights in a stair system'.

For stairs designed under Part 9 this requirement applies only within a stair flight.

(Refer to attached illustrative examples)

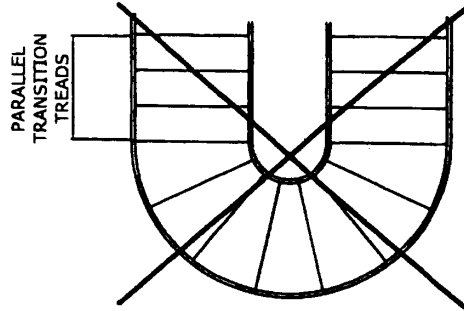
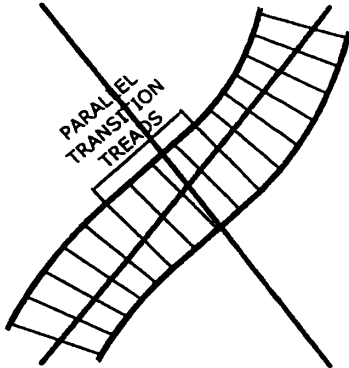
The previous edition of the BC Building Code specifically addressed using tapered treads to change direction in a regular flight of stairs. Combination curved / straight stairs were also illustrated in the Appendix section of the Code. Several past BC Code appeals also ruled on the acceptability of combination stairs. However the 1998 edition of BC building Code has removed such types of stair configurations from the Code.

BC Appeal ruling # 1490 clarified that a combination of standard (straight) and tapered treads are not permitted in the same flight of a stair designed under Part 9. These can only be combined for a Part 9 stair if there is an intervening landing between the different types of treads.

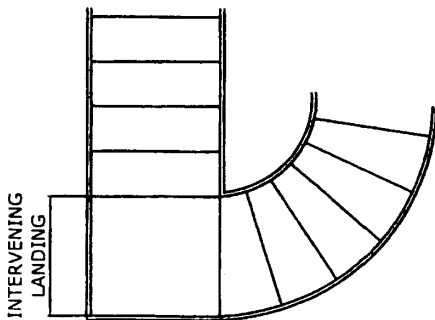
The exception to the above requirements is that winders designed to Article 9.8.5.3. are permitted for stairs within dwelling units.

  
R. J. Light, Committee Chair

The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee of AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, and POABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. 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.

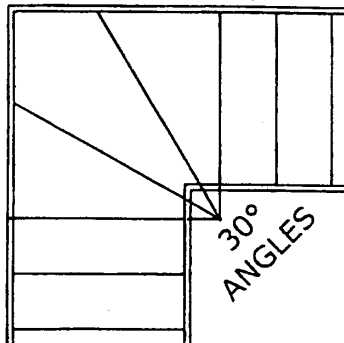


ABOVE: Examples of 'COMBINATION' stairs not permitted under Parts 3 & 9



✓ PART 9

ABOVE: Example of stair design permitted under Part 9 but not under Part 3



✓ WITHIN DWELLING UNITS

ABOVE: Example of winders permitted by Article 9.8.5.3.

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