

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

File No: 06-0029

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date: May 20, 2008

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 2006

Subject: Exterior Exit Passageway

Keywords: Exit, Passageway

Building Code Reference(s): 3.4.4.3.(1) (a) 3.1.13.10 9.9.4.2.(5)

Question:

An exterior exit passageway has exit stair located at each end of the passageway. There is a solid guard along the passageway with a section of solid full height exterior wall covering one end of the passageway. The solid exterior wall is approximately 22 % of the entire length of the passageway. There are 51 % openings in this exterior exit passageway. Does this exterior exit passageway meet code? (See attached Plan View)

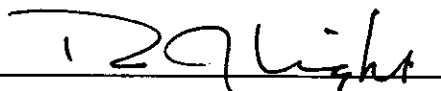
Interpretation:

No.

The intent of this provision in the code to require 50 % opening in the exterior exit passageway is to prevent smoke being trapped in the passageway or smoke build up in the exit which could lead to delays in the evacuation or movement of persons to a safe place during a fire emergency. Also, occupants will not have a choice of an alternative egress route in case of one route being blocked or obstructed in a fire situation if the end portion of the exterior passageway is being covered with solid wall.

Please note that columns evenly distributed along the length of the exterior side of the passageway may be allowed provided minimum 50 % opening measured vertically along the exterior side shall be maintained. With this arrangement, smoke can escape through the exterior openings to the outdoor and it will reduce the potential of smoke build up in the passageway. Width of columns must be carefully selected to prevent trapping of smoke in the passageway.

If the exterior exit passageway can not meet the 50% opening requirement, fire separation between the exit passageway and the remainder of the building shall be provided as per Article 3.4.4.1.



R. J. Light, Committee Chair

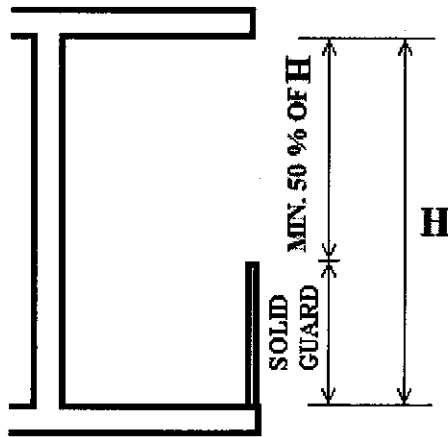
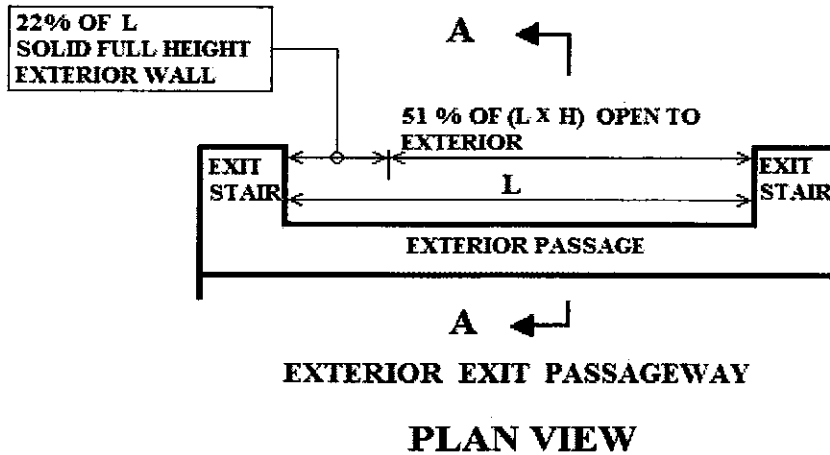
The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee of AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, and POABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. The purpose of the committee is to encourage uniform province wide interpretation of the BC Building Code. These views should not be considered as 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.

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