



Commercial Buildings Frequently Asked Questions

SPS 362.1101(1)(a) and IBC 1107.7.2 Do the operable control requirements found in SPS 362.1101(1)(a) overrule the general exception spelled out in IBC 1107.7.2 and require the controls on the upper levels of multistory units to be located at the heights required of Type B units?

Answer: No. The two provisions actually work together. The Wisconsin provision in SPS 362.1101(1)(a) that requires the circuit controls to follow Sections 309.2 and 309.3 of the ICC/ANSI A117.1 standard is not in conflict with the general exception for "multistory units" found in IBC 1107.7.2. That exception effectively excuses the multistory units, typically townhouses, from all the "Type B" requirements.

In summary, because the multistory exception in SPS 362.1107 waives all "Type B" requirements, the operable control requirements of SPS 362.1101(1)(a) are not applicable. (June 30, 2008)

IBC 1101.2, ICC/ANSI A117.1 section 608.2.1 When providing a shower that is not inside of a Type B dwelling unit, can the shower be larger than 36" wide by 36" deep inside finished dimension and still be considered a Transfer-Type shower compartment?

Answer: A shower that is not located within a Type B dwelling unit is subject to more stringent criteria than a shower within a Type B dwelling unit because of the intended flexibility of the fair housing laws. Accordingly, to be recognized as a Transfer-Type shower compartment, the shower must meet all of the provisions specified in section 608.2.1 of the ICC/ANSI standard. The compact size specified provides a configuration that when coupled with all the other requirements associated with such things as grab bars, seat and shower controls, is routinely recognized and accepted as being usable. A larger compartment can be recognized as a Transfer-type provided the controls, grab bars and seat are situated and configured such that it provides the same characteristics as would exist in the specified shower compartment. Important characteristics are the seat back and seat location that must be situated to provide support for the person that has transferred to the seat while also meeting the reach provisions associated with the grab bars and shower controls. Due to the complexity associated with such designs, when a larger shower compartment is being proposed as a Transfer-Type shower compartment, the design must be approved by the code official and documented as such. If not approved as a Transfer-Type shower compartment, the larger compartment is considered a Roll-In-Type shower compartment and subject to the requirements of ICC/ANSI A117.1 section 608.2.2 or section 608.2.3. (July 30, 2008)

IBC 1103.2.3 and 1109.3: Do the employee sinks that are typically provided in medical clinic examination rooms have to be accessible?

Answer: No. Even though all of the exam rooms must be accessible, the sinks in those rooms are considered employee workstations covered by the general exception found under IBC 1103.2.3. (June 30, 2008)

IBC 1104, IEBC 1005, and IEBC 605 Are there any situations where a platform lift complying with Chapter SPS 318 may be used as a portion of the accessible route for an addition to an

existing building, so as to comply with the requirement that an accessible route be provided to areas that affect accessibility to or include an area of primary function?

Answer: Vertical transportation can be provided by means of a platform lift, when the main reason for the addition and the platform lift is to provide an accessible route to existing portions of the building that would otherwise remain inaccessible to people with disabilities. The platform lift may be included in the new construction provided the cost of including the installation of a minimally compliant elevator as a part of the accessible route exceeds 20 percent of the cost of the remodeling, including both the alteration work and the addition. A platform lift is also permitted as a part of the accessible route in all of the limited conditions outlined in IBC 1109.7. (July 30,2008)

IBC 1104.1, 1104.2 and 1104.4: Regarding accessibility to people with disabilities, am I allowed to use the aggregate floor area of exception 1 specified in IBC 1104.4 for a strip-type shopping center that has more than 5 mercantile spaces, but has no more than five spaces which are interconnected via a common pedestrian way?

Answer: The basic premise of accessibility is that facilities in and of themselves are not to provide a point of discrimination. In essence, what is available to the able-bodied is to be available to people with disabilities. Based on that premise, it is acceptable to allow the use of the exception in limited instances. There is an expectation that there is a geographical feature that does not lend itself to an interconnected common pedestrian way.

The best example would be a rectangular two-story building that has five tenant spaces within each story. The building is situated such that the long side of the building is constructed perpendicular to the slope on a steeply sloped site. There is no circulation path between stories. A vehicular way (public road or parking lot) fronts each story, but the 5 tenant spaces on each story are served by a separate pedestrian way. In a condition such as that, the building itself creates no barrier to people with disabilities that does not also exist for the able-bodied, hence satisfying the intent of the exception. In that example, it would also be appropriate for mezzanines on the lower story to be aggregated separately from those on the upper story in satisfaction of the exception. (June 30, 2008)

IBC 1104.2, 1104.4 and 1104.1 Regarding accessibility to people with disabilities, am I allowed to use the aggregate floor area of exception 1 specified in IBC 1104.4 for a strip-type shopping center that has more than five mercantile spaces, but has no more than five spaces which are interconnected via a common pedestrian way?

(See answer just above, IBC 1104.1.) (June 30, 2008)

IBC 1104.4, 1104.1 and 1104.42 Regarding accessibility to people with disabilities, am I allowed to use the aggregate floor area of exception 1 specified in IBC 1104.4 for a strip-type shopping center that has more than five mercantile spaces, but has no more than five spaces which are interconnected via a common pedestrian way?

(See answer just above, IBC 1104.1.) (June 30, 2008)

IBC 1104.4 In multilevel buildings, which floor levels must be accessible to persons with disabilities?

Answer: An accessible route is required to floor levels within all stories and mezzanines unless meeting an exception in IBC 1104.4 or elsewhere in IBC 1100 to IBC 1110. Raised or depressed areas of a story must be provided with an accessible route. (June 30, 2008)

IBC 1104, IEBC 1005, and IEBC 605 Are there any situations where a platform lift complying with Chapter Comm 18 may be used as a portion of the accessible route for an addition to an existing building, so as to comply with the requirement that an accessible route be provided to areas that affect accessibility to or include an area of primary function?

Answer: Vertical transportation can be provided by means of a platform lift, when the main reason for the addition and the platform lift is to provide an accessible route to existing portions of the building that would otherwise remain inaccessible to people with disabilities. The platform lift may be included in the new construction provided the cost of including the installation of a minimally compliant elevator as a part of the accessible route exceeds 20 percent of the cost of the remodeling, including both the alteration work and the addition. A platform lift is also permitted as a part of the accessible route in all of the limited conditions outlined in IBC 1109.7. (July 30, 2008)