2006 SBC Code Solution

Sec. 1014.3
Application of Common Path of Egress Travel to Existing Buildings
Release Date: **January 23, 2009**

The following interpretation, policy or code alternate is intended to provide guidance to staff for consistency of review and is subject to change without notice. Application of this interpretation, policy or code alternate to specific projects may vary.

Code Issue:

The common path of egress travel is difficult to apply to buildings designed to previous codes, where the only distance limitations were measured to the nearest exit. There may be spaces that cannot comply with the current code, and as floors are remodeled, unleaseable spaces may be created.

Code Alternate:

Applicants are encouraged to design for full compliance with the current code. However, where it is impractical to comply with the requirements for common path of egress travel, Group B office tenants on multi-tenant floors in buildings constructed under the 1997 or earlier Seattle Building Codes are permitted to comply with the following:

1. The required access to exits from the area under consideration shall be directly to an exit or to a corridor that provides direct access to an exit. Exit access shall not be interrupted by intervening rooms. For the purposes of this code alternate, hallways shall be considered as intervening rooms.
   Exceptions:
   a. Access to exits is permitted to occur through foyers, lobbies, and reception rooms.
   b. One exit access is permitted to occur through an adjoining or intervening room, which in turn provides direct access to an exit or to a corridor that provides direct access to an exit.
   c. Rooms with a cumulative occupant load of less than 10 are permitted to access exits through more than one intervening room.
2. The travel distance from any point within occupied portions of the exit access to the door of the nearest exit does not exceed 200 feet in non-sprinklered buildings, or 250 feet in sprinklered buildings.
3. Corridor walls and ceilings shall be one-hour fire-resistance rated. The corridor walls shall comply with SBC 708 for fire partitions.

Exceptions:

a. Corridor walls and ceilings need not be of fire-resistance-rated construction where serving office spaces having an occupant load of 100 or less, where the entire story in which the space is located is equipped with an automatic sprinkler system complying with SBC 903.3.1.1, and an automatic smoke-detection system is installed within the corridor. The actuation of any detector shall activate alarms audible in all areas served by the corridor.
b. Corridor walls and ceilings need not be of fire- resistance-rated construction where serving office spaces having an occupant load of 100 or less where the building in which the space is located is equipped with an automatic sprinkler system complying with SBC 903.3.1.1.
c. In buildings of Types IA or IB construction, corridor walls and ceilings need not be of fire-resistant construction where the corridor side of the corridor walls is finished with materials having a maximum Class B rating as defined in SBC Chapter 8. This exception does not apply to medical offices.

If you have questions about whether this code solution applies to your project:

- *If you have submitted a permit application, contact the Building Code plan reviewer assigned to your application*
- *If you have not submitted an application, contact DPD Building Code Technical Support at 206-684-4630 or in person at the Applicant Services Center. Visit the Applicant Services Center website for more information about hours and location* http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Permits/Process_Overview/Location_Hours/default.asp