

## Building Code Questions

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### 2009 SUPPLEMENT TO THE CALIFORNIA BUILDING CODES (CBC)

#### Amy says (w/ edits by Steve & Kerwin):

The State has issued a mammoth January 1, 2009 Supplement to the CBC. The changes include a reorganization and refinement to many sections of the CBC. Projects involving L/laboratories will be the most affected and the requirements for this occupancy have been revised throughout. These changes include corridor ratings, travel distances, means of egress, and allowable building height and area just to name a few. Aside from the lab requirements, this article will touch on some of the more notable changes that are included in this Supplement.

The text for these changes can be found online at the California Building Standards Commission website under the Commission Review tab of the 2007 rulemaking process at [http://www.bsc.ca.gov/prpsd\\_chngs/ComReview07.htm](http://www.bsc.ca.gov/prpsd_chngs/ComReview07.htm) or from the ICC website for California codes at <http://www.iccsafe.org/cs/codes/errata/state/CA/2007/index.html>. Most of these changes were approved at the Commission hearing of September 11, 2008. Some of the changes are effective immediately and other on August 1, 2009.

**L Occupancies** - The newly created Section 313 addresses Group L occupancies, previously known as H-8 uses. This has been adopted by the State Fire Marshal (SFM) and refers to provisions in Section 443. This section has been rewritten and reorganized for Group L occupancy requirements in a more logical format. The sections are simplified and reorganized and progresses in the following order: Construction (includes ventilation and exhaust), Fire Protection Systems, Means of Egress, and Hazardous Materials. Separation requirements, including 2-hour rated fire barriers, addressed in the Construction section will affect the layout of a floor relative to the total floor area. Attention should be paid to the additional mechanical requirements that have been provided addressing ventilation and exhaust.

**High-rise Buildings** - I-2/Hospitals are no longer exempt from high-rise requirements.

**Table 503** - Changes have been made for Group I-1 and Group L occupancies. The maximum allowable number of stories for Group I-1/Long term care occupancies has been reduced overall and the buildings now must be of rated construction. Types IIB, IIIB, IV, and VB are no longer permitted for Group I-1 occupancies. The requirements for Group L occupancies have become less restrictive and the allowable number of stories and building areas has increased overall.

**Elevator Lobbies** - Exception 4 of Section 70714.1 has been changed. Lobbies are now required in all high-rise and Groups A, E, H, I, L, R-1, and R-2 occupancies regardless of whether the building has an automatic sprinkler system.

**Sprinklers** - Provisions for automatic fire sprinkler system with regard to fire walls are no longer discussed in general terms in Section 705, but are included in Section 903 for Groups A-2, A-3, E, and M occupancies and woodworking operations. The new requirements do not exempt buildings of the above mentioned occupancies from incorporating sprinkler systems regardless of the fire area conditions.

**Disabled Access** - The changes to Chapters 11A and 11B, are more or less fine tuning the requirement is presented. Even with this refinement, conflicting information between the two chapters remain, such as the provisions for swimming pools and parking signage.

Some notable changes in Chapter 11A include: further clarification for dwelling units where there are two or more bathrooms (Option 2), at least one bathtub and one shower are required to be accessible. Size requirements for shower stalls in dwelling units now offer more flexibility for the designer. The Code requires compliance with one of three size requirements: 42" x 48" with a 36" opening, 30" x 60" with a 60" opening, and 36" x 60" with a 36" opening.

In Chapter 11B, the definitions of "may," "shall," and "should" have been included to provide clarification, but is questionable if it has done so. Overall, the changes made to this Chapter are a refinement of existing requirements. One interesting change of note is the required depth of a nosing on a tread. It used to be 1 1/2" but now it is required to be 1 1/4."

Provisions for service spaces were incorporated in Section 1224 for Hospitals. These include requirements for nursing service space, surgical services space, the NICU, exam/treatment rooms, bloodborne infection isolation rooms, and procedural requirements for radiation protection. ☺