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## NC ACCESSIBILITY CODE

2012 NC Bldg Code Ch. 11  
2009 ICC/ANSI A117.1

**Mandatory:** 1 Jun 2012

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### 2010 ADA STANDARDS:

- Mandatory 3/15/12
- Copy available: [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)

### Individual Highlights

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- [PEV Chrg Stns](#) 2
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## Which is Correct: 36" or 48"?

So many designers are quick to pick up ANSI A117.1 to design a building nowadays – and that is a wonderful thing – but even though Easter is past, there is always the issue of which comes first: the chicken or the egg.

In this particular case, the issue concerns an exterior path of travel. **ANSI 403.5** states:

*The clear width of an accessible route shall be 36 inches minimum.*

But what does the building code say? Many designers look in **NCBC Ch. 10** immediately for minimum egress width along stairs (*not less than 44 inches – NCBC 1009.1*); means of egress stairs (*a clear width of 48 inches – NCBC 1007.3*); or ramps (*clear width between handrails...shall be 36 inches minimum – NCBC 1010.5.1*).

So, what are remembered are the **ANSI how-to-do-it** and the **NCBC egress** requirements. What is

forgotten is the access requirement in **NCBC Ch. 11** that has been around for a decades in NC! **NCBC 1104.1 and 1104.2** both require an exterior path of travel that is 48" between handrails.

This requirement is more restrictive and will allow for sufficient width for a person walking with a guide dog, a person walking assisting another person, or a non-typical-sized mobility device.

## Are Churches required to be Accessible?

**Q:** We have an accessibility inspection question in our county. Do new churches have any exemptions to the accessibility code? Will they have to meet all accessibility codes requirements, such as handicap ramps, etc? We were told by a contractor that churches are exempt in some areas in the accessibility codes. We are unaware if there are any exemptions. We do know that **NCBC 1108.2.8** does apply to the platform area or pulpit area where the choir or pastor may be.

**A:** Under the **2010 ADA Standards**, religious entities are exempt from accessibility requirements. However, religious entities are not exempt from the **NC Building Code**. This means that whenever a building permit is required, churches and religious entities are required to comply with all portions of the **NC Building Code**, including the accessibility requirements. In **NCBC Chapter 11** for new work or alterations. **NCBC 1108.2.8** is applicable for access to the platform area. **NCBC 1007.2** also applies for egress from the platform

However, access is not required to a Baptistry or to a pulpit area that accommodates only a single person. It does still have to comply with **NC Building Code** requirements.



SKETCHES are typically submitted by the individual asking the question and may or may not be code-complying. Please refer to them for what the Q + A references.

## NCBC 1104 - 48" Exterior Path of Travel

### PLEASE NOTE:

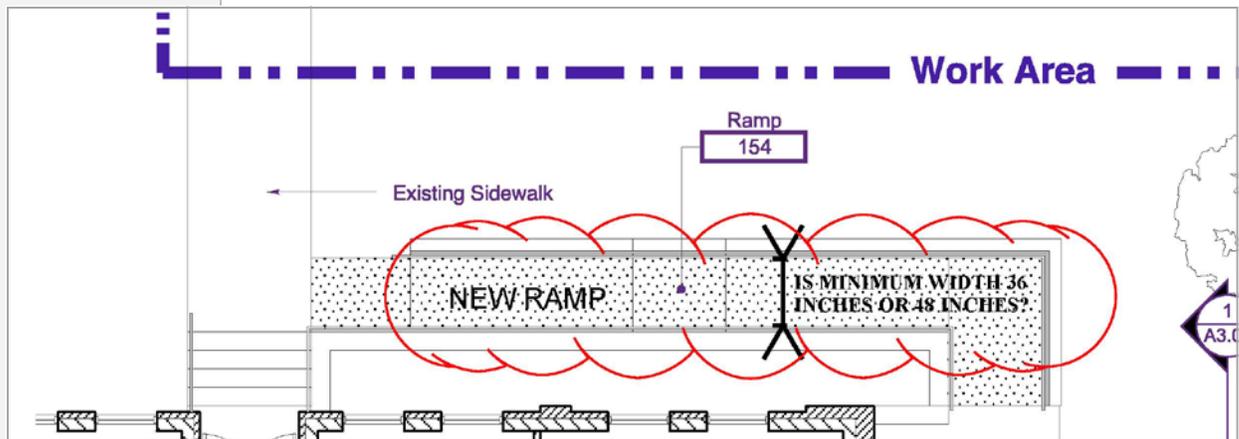
Landing requirements for ramps in **ANSI A117.1**:

- 405.7.3 – 60" length of landing
- 405.7.4 – ramps with changes in direction shall be sized to provide a 304.3 turning space

**Q:** When an exterior accessible route requires a ramp to overcome a grade change, does the ramp have to comply with the minimum 48 inch width indicated in **NCBC Section 1104** for accessible routes? Or does either **NCBC Section 1010.5.1** or **ANSI Section 405.5** govern the width of the ramp?

My client has been working on alterations to a church. We have been having discussions with the local building official about the width of a new accessible ramp that connects a raised patio area down to a sidewalk. An existing exit stair discharges onto the patio area, so the ramp is part of an exterior accessible route connecting the patio to the accessible sidewalk that leads ultimately to a parking lot behind the church. The local AHJ is of the opinion that since **NCBC Section 1104** requires exterior accessible routes to be 48 inches wide, that the ramp has to be 48 inches wide between handrails.

I'm of the opinion that **NCBC Section 1010.5.1** and **ANSI Section 405.5** both allow the width of a ramp in an accessible means of egress or in an accessible route to be as narrow as 36 inches wide. This appears to be an ambiguity in the code. Which is it?



**A:** The **NCBC 1104.1** and **NCBC 1104.2** provision for 48" will prevail over the **ANSI 403.5** provision.

1. The **NCBC** is the scoping document and will always override the **ANSI** how-to-do-it standard.
2. **NCBC 1010.5.1** is a minimum egress requirement. **NCBC 1104.1** and **NCBC 1104.2** are minimum access requirements.
3. **ANSI 405.5** is a -how-to-build a standard ramp guide.
4. The basic requirement for exterior paths of travel [walks, stairs, and ramps] is 48". It may be reduced to 32" minimum for a length of 24" maximum per the **Exception to ANSI 403.5** where columns or a similar element reduces the width. This may occur at no more than 48" intervals.

## Installing PEV Charging Stations?

The ADA guidance published via the NC Plug-In Electric Vehicle Taskforce is an excellent resource for any entity planning to install public charging stations. Advanced Energy was invaluable in the development of this article; it is based on the direct experience of two of North Carolina's leading PEV-ready municipalities and reflects the official interpretation of accessibility requirements for our state.

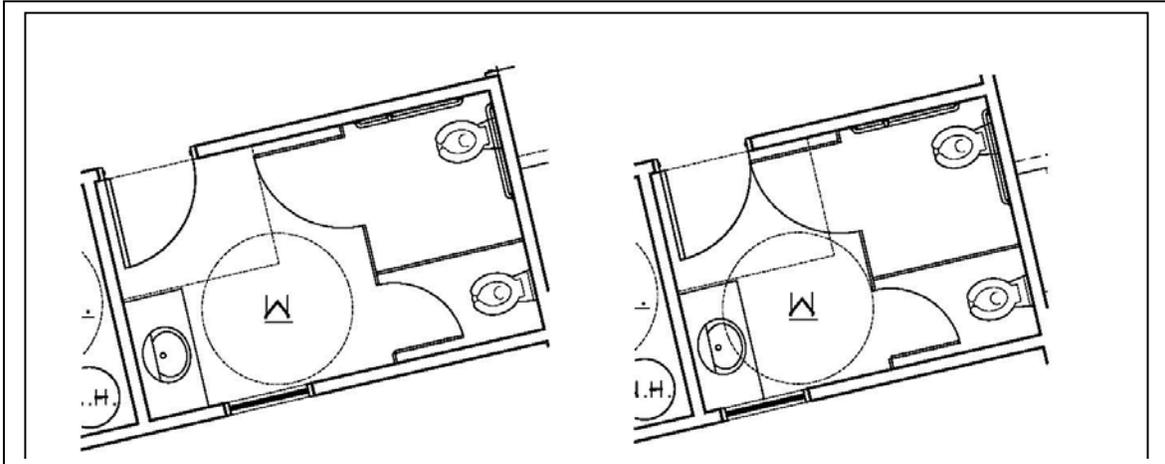
The Accessibility Resource handout worked on by the NC PEV Taskforce is now available at the website [www.ncpevtaskforce.org](http://www.ncpevtaskforce.org), under the "Resources" link. DOI worked over a year to help fine-tune the layouts so that the examples will be helpful to you. The PEV Planning Toolbox and other articles on the website will also be helpful.



## ANSI 603.2.2 Door Swings into Clear Floor Areas

**Q:** Can a bathroom stall door swing into the clear floor space around a door?

**A:** **ANSI 603.2.2** states that the *Doors shall not swing into the clear floor area or clearance for any fixture.* The exceptions beneath clarify where it is acceptable to do so when there is an individual toilet room for a private office that is not common use.



The attached plan indicates two designs for a proposed Women's Room. The one on the left complies with **ANSI 603.2.2**; the one on the right has an issue with the door swing of the accessible toilet stall swing into the clear floor area at the door exiting the restroom.

To restate the **2009 A117.1-2009 STANDARD AND COMMENTARY** for this section: *In a multiuser bathroom, the locations where a person in a wheelchair may be sitting to use a fixture must be out of the swing of the bathroom entry door. This is to prevent the wheelchair from being struck when others leave or enter the room. Although not the best design alternative, the entry door may swing over the turning space within the room. The turning space is part of the accessible route, not a clear floor space or ground space for a fixture.* While this section does not mention the door from a stall, the principle is the same.

## New FHA Requirements

Hasn't it been quite a while since we have seen new guidance from the USDOJ and HUD on the Federal Fair Housing Act? Well, if you are looking for summer time reading or something to do to augment your free time, then this is it! Lots of links to follow once you click on the one below from USDOJ. There are video training modules that may also be helpful.

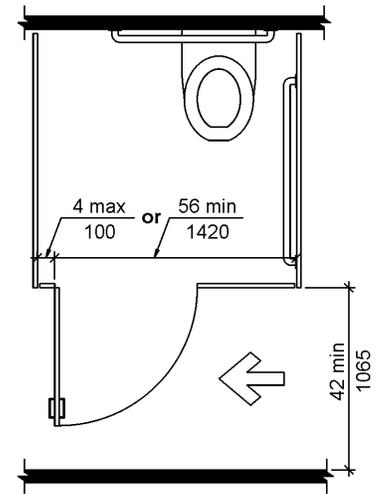
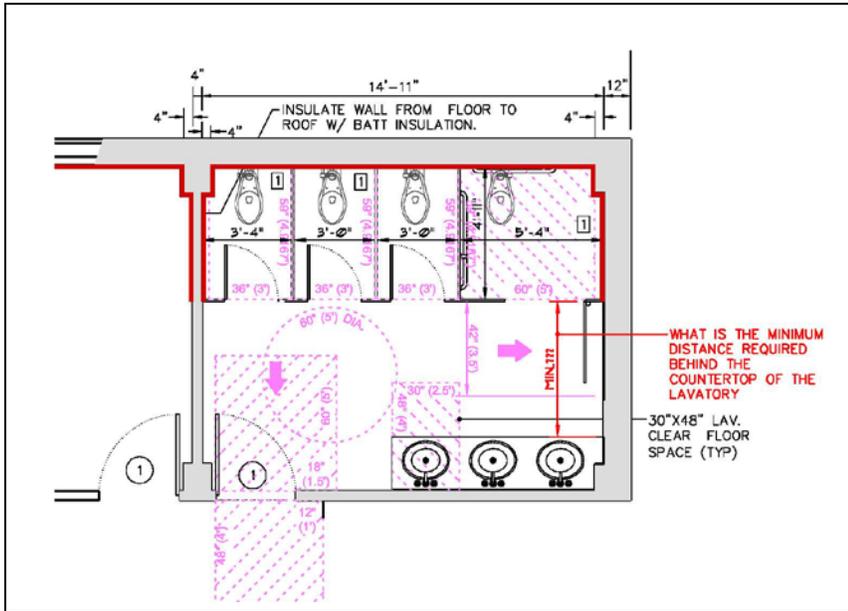
[Departments of Justice and Housing and Urban Development Release New Guidance on "Design and Construction" Requirements Under the Fair Housing Act](#)

04/30/2013 03:09 PM EDT

New guidance released today by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Justice reinforces the Fair Housing Act requirement that multifamily housing be designed and constructed so as to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Keep in mind that neither the state (NCDOI) nor the local AHJ enforces the FHA, but wherever there are overlapping provisions, the more restrictive of the requirements is always applicable. So if you run into someone else who is not familiar with the new requirements, please let him or her know that these are out there, too. Thanks!





(a) Front partition

## 2100 ADA STD vs. ANSI 604.9.3.1 Stall Access

- Q:** Shown to the left above is the floor space required (in pink) based on the **2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design** which is the design our client requested us to do. However we cannot find the requirement for the clearance behind a lavatory, i.e., the dimension shown in red on the attached plan? Can you help, please?
- A:** **ANSI Fig. 604.9.3.1(a)** (above right) illustrates the situation that you have in your plan. A minimum 42" clearance is required for the path of travel between the door side of the stall and any obstruction when the approach is to the latch side of the toilet compartment door. When the approach is in a different direction, comply with the applicable section of **ANSI 404**. Don't forget that the door to the accessible stall is required by **ANSI 604.9.3** to be self-closing as well.
- Q:** What if there are no stalls, but a wall behind the lavatories. Is the clearance between the lavatory countertop and a wall for a side approach the same 42"?
- A:** If there are no stalls opposite the lavatories, the issue would be to provide sufficient space for the person in the wheelchair using the accessible lavatory to be able to back up in order to make a turn to exit the restroom. A reasonable template to be able to do so would be to overlay a T-shaped turning space over the wheelchair space beneath the lavatory. This would allow someone to be able to pull in to use the lavatory and then back out and turn to leave. **ANSI 304.3.2** will require 60" minimum from the front of the wheel chair space where it extends below the lavatory to the closest perpendicular obstruction at the back.

## ANSI 505.7 Handrail Cross-Sections

**Q:** Does the handrail method in this photo meet the intent of **ANSI 117.1-505.7**?

**A:** No, it does not. If you look at **the ANSI 505.7.2** illustration, there are non-circular cross-sections permitted for handrails. The ANSI Commentary for this section clarifies that the handrail must be graspable with a power grip but not with a pinching motion.

Keep in mind that if someone experiences loss of several fingers or a thumb, it is extremely hard, if not impossible, to grasp something without the ability to grip around its entire surface with your remaining fingers in order to arrest a fall or prevent stumbling.

