

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



Braille Mounting Height for Signs

One of the topic requests received recently regarded the mounting height for tactile text or Braille on signage.

- Q:** Braille height requirement on signage is different from 48" max reach? How can that be? Is the same code applied to a standing person as a sitting person in a wheel chair? What is the correct height, as it is giving two different requirements?
- A:** Yes, the Braille mounting height requirement for signage in **ANSI 703.4.5** is different from the **ANSI 308** provisions requiring a 48" max reach range height. **ANSI 703.4.5** requires that the Braille mounting height be between 48" and 60" when measured to the baseline of the Braille cells.

To understand, you have to consider that the intended Braille user is a visually-impaired or blind person. It is rare that such an individual may also be mobility-impaired and in a wheel chair. In such a case where a mobility-impaired person is also visually-impaired or blind, it is very likely that an able-bodied care-giver will also be present. It would be extremely difficult for a blind wheel chair user to operate the wheelchair at the same time as using a cane to discern the path of travel. So, **ANSI 308** provides a generic reach range requirement that is applicable when referenced from other chapters in the **ANSI** standard while **ANSI 703.4.5** provides a more specific requirement that is applicable to a designated situation.

2012 NC Rehab Code vs. 2015 NCEBC

Until March 1st, 2018, the option still exists to use the **2012 NC Rehab Code [NCRC]** instead of the **2015 NC Existing Building Code [NCEBC]** when renovating a building. After that date, everyone is required to use the **2015 NCEBC**.

For accessibility requirements when using the 2012 NCRC, don't forget that the language in **Section 1.1j References** (bottom of page 10 – reprinted below) is applicable to ALL accessibility issues.

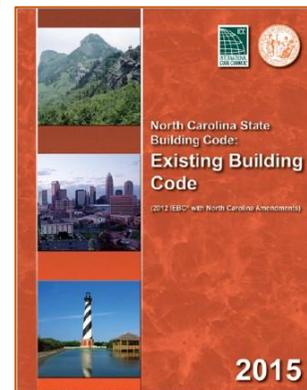
All references to accessibility in the NC

Rehabilitation code shall mean the 2012 NC Building Code Chapter 11, Section 1007, Section 3411, Appendix E, and ICC/ANSI A117.1-2009 as applicable. Where differences occur between the NC Rehab Code and the NC Building Code, the provisions of the NC Building Code shall govern.

All **NCBC Ch. 34** references revert to the **2015 NCEBC** since the **Building Code Council** elected to delete

NCBC Ch. 34 when the **2015 NCEBC** became applicable on Jan. 1st, 2016.

In shorthand, if you use the **2012 NC Rehab Code** to renovate a building, you will have to use the **2015 NCEBC** for all related accessibility requirements.



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SIGNAGE WITH TACTILE
CHARACTERS REQUIRED BY
NCBC 1011.3



RECOMMENDED FOR USE
ONLY IN ALTERATIONS TO
EXISTING BUILDINGS
WHERE
2015 NCEBC 806.1
EXCEPTION 2 PERMITS
EXISTING EXITS TO REMAIN
INACCESSIBLE (AND NO
OCCUPANT LOAD
INCREASE OCCURS)

NCBC 1007.1 + NCBC 1007.2

Clarification is helpful when addressing accessible egress per **NCBC 1007**, so this section will discuss the specifics of the **NCBC 1007.1** and **1007.2** requirements.

NCBC 1007.1 states *Where more than one means of egress are required by Section 1015.1 or 1021.1 from any accessible space, each accessible portion of the space shall be served by not less than two accessible means of egress.*

1. This references egress from a space, not a building. Note that the language says '...from any accessible space, each portion of the space...'
2. **NCBC 1007.1** does not require only two accessible exits, nor does it limit the number of exits to only two. What it does say is that 'not less than two' shall be provided. The language has to be considered with **NCBC 1007.2**.

NCBC 1007.2 states:

1007.2 Continuity and components. *Each required accessible means of egress shall be continuous to a public way and shall consist of one or more of the following components:*

1. Accessible routes complying with Section 1104.
2. Interior exit stairways complying with Sections 1007.3 and 1022.
3. Exterior exit stairways complying with Sections 1007.3 and 1026.
4. Elevators complying with Section 1007.4.
5. Platform lifts complying with Section 1007.5.
6. Horizontal exits complying with Section 1025.
7. Ramps complying with Section 1010.
8. Areas of refuge complying with Section 1007.6.

Exceptions:

1. *Where the exit discharge is not accessible, an exterior area for assisted rescue must be provided in accordance with Section 1007.7.*
2. *Where the exit stairway is open to the exterior, the accessible means of egress shall include either an area of refuge in accordance with Section 1007.6 or an exterior area for assisted rescue in accordance with Section 1007.7.*

The interpretation is that each and every exit is required to be accessible by some means that complies with **NCBC 1007.2**. The definition of **ACCESSIBLE MEANS OF EGRESS** does not change the intent of the language in any way.

ACCESSIBLE MEANS OF EGRESS. *A continuous and unobstructed way of egress travel from any accessible point in a building or facility to a public way.*

While both the **2006 and 2009 IBC Commentaries for Section 1007.1** states: *In new construction and additions, accessible means of egress are required in the same number as the general means of egress, up to a maximum of two.*

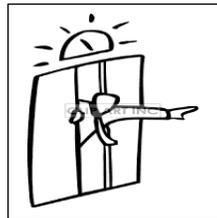
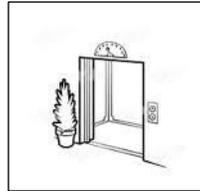
If you remember, the **2004 NC Accessibility Code** was certified by the USDOJ in 2005 as complying with the **ADAAG** and was enforced throughout the state for ten years, setting a precedent. The **2004 NCAC** stated that *On the level of exit discharge, all means of egress provided shall be accessible. [2004 NCAC 6.3.1]* While this code is no longer in effect and has not been for a while, it has set the standard for how the state views access and egress from buildings.

As a result, all identified means of egress, required or provided, from all commercial buildings are required to comply with **NCBC 1007.2**. It may help to point out that any identified exit, required or provided, is signed exactly the same way. So, it would be extremely difficult to develop a different way of addressing provided exits from those that are required. Neither the **NCBC** nor **ANSI** identify any differentiation between the two. As a result, not treating them the same way may create unintended potential liabilities for the designer and the owner.

It is necessary – but sometimes difficult for a designer or inspector - to view the building and its egress system through the eyes of someone who is entirely unfamiliar with building code provisions regarding egress. Maintaining the intent of the provisions and providing as safe a means of identified egress for everyone who uses the building is crucial in times of emergency.

2015 NCEBC – Elevator for Change of Occupancy

Q: We have a project that involves the change of use to the 3rd floor of an existing building. The building is a 3-story building that was previously a storage occupancy, with each floor exceeding 3000 square feet. Both the 1st and 2nd floors have direct grade level entrances. These two floors are occupied by separate tenants with no interaction. The 3rd floor is unoccupied at this time however the owner wishes to lease this space to a fitness center. The only access to this space is via existing stairs constructed somewhere about 1950. Will an accessible route from an accessible building entrance will need to be provided to the new assembly occupancy on the 3rd floor?



A: In this particular case, using the **2015 NC Existing Building Code**, an elevator would be required as part of the accessible route only if the cost of providing it can be accomplished within the 20% disproportionate amount. The code sections regarding this are:

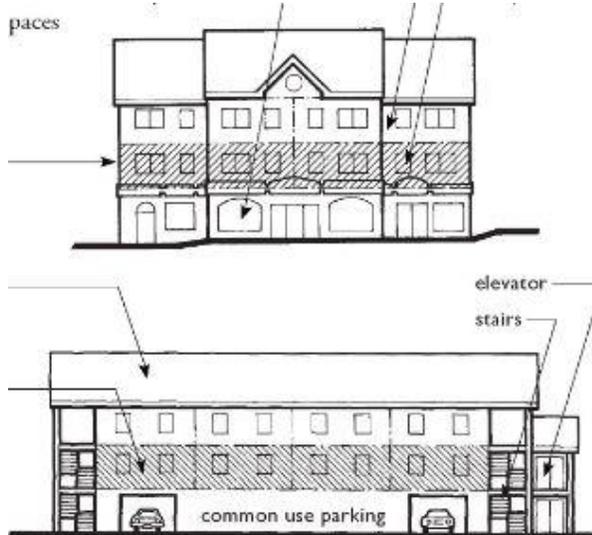
1. **NCEBC 1012.9.1** – partial change of occupancy.
 - a. References **NCEBC 806**.

- b. References **NCEBC 906**.
2. **NCEBC 906.1** references **NCEBC 806**.
3. **NCEBC 806** references **NCEBC 806.1**.
4. **NCEBC 806.1 Exc. 1** permits the altered element, i.e., the new occupancy, to not be on an accessible route unless it is required to be by **NCEBC 806.2**.
5. **NCEBC 806.2 Exc. 1** requires the route to the primary function area to be accessible only up to the disproportionate amount. [A building owner could always provide more than the minimum required if access is desired.]

Bottom Line:

1. When a change in occupancy or use exists, the new occupancy is required to comply with all the requirements for the new occupancy.
2. The accessible route within the building, from the entry level to the primary function area, is required as a matter of path of travel upgrades which are limited to 20% of the design and construction budget of the change in occupancy or use.

Residential Change of Use + Elevator Reqmt.



Walk-Up Dwelling Units Over Garages, Shops, and Other Public or Common Use Spaces Are Covered

Now, let's say you have a project where an existing multi-story building changes its use and decides to install apartments, town homes or condominiums above parking or retail on the ground floor.

The question becomes: Is an elevator required to the residential dwelling units or is it similar to the example above, where an elevator is only required if the cost of installation is within the 20% disproportionate amount?

In cases where Type A and/or Type B dwelling units are required in a project, an accessible route from public and common areas to the accessible primary entrance of the dwelling unit is specifically required by both **ANSI 1003.2 and 1003.4**. This means that an elevator providing an accessible route from the ground floor level to the primary dwelling unit entrance is required for the Type A/Type B dwelling units.

SEE FAIR HOUSING ACT DESIGN MANUAL, PAGE 1.31 FOR LARGER SKETCHES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.



One or More Grade Level Accessible Units Establishes a Ground Floor and Eliminates Need for Accessible Routes to Units Over Garages or Shops