
FIRE PREVENTION AND BUILDING SAFETY COMMISSION
Department of Homeland Security

Written Interpretation of the State Building Commissioner

Interpretation #: CEB-2022-11-2014 IBC-1003.2-Exc 4

Building or Fire Safety Law Interpreted

[675 IAC 13-2.6](#) 2014 Indiana Building Code, Section 1003.2 Ceiling height. The *means of egress* shall have a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet 6 inches (2286 mm).

Exceptions: *[Exceptions 1-3 and 5-8 omitted for lack of relevance to the request.]*

4. Stair headroom in accordance with Section 1009.5.

Issue

Whether the allowance for reduced ceiling height for stairs granted by Exception 4 of Section 1003.2 of the *2014 Indiana Building Code (IBC)* applies to all floor areas contained within the stair enclosure.

Interpretation of the State Building Commissioner

No. The allowance for reduced ceiling height for stairs granted by Exception 4 of Section 1003.2 of the *2014 IBC* does not apply to all floor areas contained within the stair enclosure.

Rationale

Exception 4 of Section 1003.2 refers to Section 1009.5, so both sections must be considered.

Exception 4 of Section 1003.2 states specifically that the reduced ceiling height is for "stairs". "Stair" is a code-defined term, to wit: "A change in elevation, consisting of one or more risers.". Flat, level floor surfaces do not change elevation, and they do not contain risers. Therefore, these surfaces cannot be considered a stair.

Section 1009.5 describes the ceiling height reduction referenced in 1003.2, stating it applies at "stairways", which is also a code-defined term. "Stairway" is defined as "One or more flights of stairs. . .with the necessary landings and platforms connecting them, to form a continuous and uninterrupted passage from one level to another.". While that definition includes landings and platforms, they are mentioned in the context of being portions of a system designed to convey occupants "from one level to another". Once the occupants have reached the terminus of the conveyance between levels, there is no connection to be made to additional flights. They cannot be said to be on the stairway any longer, even if they remain in the stairway enclosure as they traverse the remaining flat floor surface. Further, 1009.5 specifies the reduced ceiling height is to be measured vertically from a line connecting the edge of the nosings. There are no nosings on landings and platforms. As such, the mechanism required for measuring this height does not exist at landings and platforms. As a result, the minimum ceiling height in these areas reverts to the 7 feet 6 inch distance required by 1003.2, with the reduction applying only to the portion of the ceiling over flights of stairs.

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