




# BUILDING STANDARDS ADVISORY

<b>Subject</b>  <b>Barrier-Free Design Requirements</b>	Approved by 	Advisory Number A-11 1 of 3
	Effective Date September 1996	NBC 1995 References(s) 3.8.

Compliance with *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act* (the UBAS Act) and regulations is addressed in this advisory. NBC 1995 means the National Building Code of Canada 1995 as adopted by regulations under the UBAS Act. Words in italics, other than Act titles, are defined in the NBC 1995.

## GENERAL

For the purpose of understanding the scope of the *barrier-free* design requirements, physical disability should be considered as any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness, including;

- epilepsy,
- any degree of paralysis,
- amputation,
- lack of physical co-ordination,
- blindness or visual impairment,
- deafness or hearing impairment,
- muteness or speech impairment, or
- physical reliance on a guide dog or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.

## INCLUSIONS AND EXEMPTIONS

*Barrier-free* design requirements in the NBC 1995 are adopted as accessibility standards under the UBAS Act and regulations. The UBAS Act states that the accessibility standards do not apply to existing *buildings*, but that the standards do apply to *alteration*, renovation or change of *occupancy* of such *buildings*. (Existing *buildings* are those that were under construction or completed before June 6, 1988 or for which a permit was issued before June 6, 1988. For more information on application to existing *buildings* see the heading EXISTING BUILDINGS.) Also, the accessibility standards do not apply to *farm buildings*, *residential occupancies* of not more than four *dwelling units*, and any *buildings* exempted by the regulations.

The UBAS regulations adopt the NBC 1995 which further exempts town houses, row houses, boarding houses, *buildings* classified as *high hazard industrial major occupancy*, and *buildings* which are not intended to be occupied on a daily or full time basis (Article 3.8.1.1.). The Appendix to the UBAS regulations also states that:

**3.8.1.6.** Notwithstanding Clause 3.8.2.3.(2)(a), in a *building* of *residential occupancy*, except where *dwelling units* are intended to be individually controlled by separate owners, at least the greater of

(a) one, or

(b) 5%

of the *dwelling units* shall be *barrier-free* in conformance with Article 3.8.3.17. (See Article 9.5.2.3.)



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The NBC 1995 requires that a *barrier-free* path of travel is provided on the entrance *storey* and on each *storey* served by an elevator or passenger elevating device [Sentence 3.8.2.1.(1)], but does not require installation of elevators or passenger elevating devices. The *barrier-free* path of travel is not required to extend into some areas of a floor, such as service rooms and janitor's rooms [Sentence 3.8.2.1.(2)].

Any area or facility of a *building* that is built, installed or provided to serve a particular purpose must be considered when applying the *barrier-free* requirements. Where a *barrier-free* path of travel to areas or facilities is required, not every unit of a type of area or facility need be *barrier-free*, but enough units must be *barrier-free* to permit a person with physical disabilities to enjoy a level of use similar to that enjoyed by able-bodied persons. For example, not all water closet stalls or lavatories in a washroom need to meet *barrier-free* design requirements. In fact, none have to be provided in a particular washroom, if an alternate washroom with *barrier-free* facilities is available on the same *storey* within 45 m [Sentence 3.8.2.3.(2)]. However, all types of facilities and services available on a *barrier-free storey* [except those areas specifically exempted in Sentence 3.8.2.1.(2)] must be available to persons with a physical disability.

- A restaurant and lounge in a *barrier-free storey* of a *building* should not have all the restaurant service on a raised floor portion that does not provide a *barrier-free* path of travel — either a *barrier-free* path of travel should be provided to the raised portion or a portion of the lower level should be designed for restaurant service.
- Some additional examples of facilities to which *barrier-free* access must be provided include: holding cells in a courthouse or police station; detention quarters in a care or detention occupancy; service sinks in a barbershop, hairdressing shop or beauty parlour; turnstiles, controlled check-out lanes, shopping-cart barriers, etc.; and lockers. In passenger depots, *barrier-free* facilities may be enhanced by provision of visual and audible directions and information to indicate the location of entrances, ticket counters, public lockers, washrooms, restaurants, public telephones, points of arrival and departure, local transportation and *building exits*.
- Although a *barrier-free* path of travel is required into the portion of a *barrier-free storey* of a *building* that houses a swimming pool, whirlpool or similar facility, *barrier-free* access to the pool or similar facility is not governed by the NBC 1995.
- Access to parking areas is required in Article 3.8.2.2. *Barrier-free* parking stalls should be provided in proportion to the total number of stalls and should conform to NBC 1995 Appendix Note A-3.8.2.2.(1).
- Where an entrance to a *building* is not designed to accommodate persons with physical disabilities, signs should be provided as far ahead of the entrance as is practicable to indicate the location of the nearest *barrier-free* entrance.
- Where a passenger elevator does not serve every *storey* in a *building*, signs should be installed at the hoistway entrances on the entrance *storey* and every transfer *storey* that are located immediately adjacent to or below the call button panel, and indicate the floors that are served by the elevator.
- Information display units should be constructed so that the information displayed can be seen by a person in a wheelchair.

