

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-12-02

May 31, 2002

The following is offered in response to your May 16, 2002 letter to me in which you request a formal interpretation of the provisions of sections 1010.2, 1010.3 and 1017.2 of the BOCA National Building Code/1996 portion of the 1999 State Building Code as they pertain to spaces with a single means of egress.

Question: A basement in a two story plus basement Use Group B building qualifies under section 1017.2 as a space with one means of egress. Do the requirements of sections 1010.2 and 1010.3 require that a second means of egress be provided from the basement?

Answer: Yes. Even though a specific floor of any given building that is required to have multiple means of egress may meet the requirements of Table 1017.2 for one means of egress, the requirements of section 1010.2 dictate that every floor area within the building shall be provided with the minimum number of approved independent exits as required by Table 1010.2, except as modified in section 1010.3. Table 1010.3 describes those buildings in which it is acceptable to provide only one exit from each floor or story of the building. It is important to note that sections 1010.2 and 1010.3 apply to the building as a whole and cannot be used to evaluate specific floors or stories.

The crucial difference here is in the application of section 1017.2 and its accompanying table. Section 1017.2 is not intended to be utilized to determine the required number of exits from a floor or story (that is set by sections 1010.2 and 1010.3), but rather the required number of means of egress from any specific room or space contained within a floor or story. The title of section 1017.2 is "Number of doorways". The intent of that section is to evaluate a room or space within a floor or story to determine how many doors leading to an exit access or constituting an exit are required from the room or space, not from the floor or story. An example of the proper application of section 1017.2 would be to determine the required number of doors providing means of egress from a conference room within a Use Group B floor or story. If such conference room had an occupant load of 50 or fewer and a travel distance within the room of 75 feet or less, only one door from the conference room would be required. However, when the occupancy exceeds 50 or the travel distance exceeds 75 feet, two doors from the conference room are required.