



## BUILDING CODE MANUAL

1114B.1.3  
Article 1  
04-09-01  
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### ACCESSIBLE GROUND-LEVEL ENTRANCES AND EXITS

This subject of accessibility applies to **new construction, addition and alterations** of public buildings, public accommodations, commercial buildings, and publicly-funded housing.

The general requirement is for **all entrances** and **all exterior ground-level exits** to be made accessible to persons with disabilities in compliance with Sections 1114B.1.3 and 1133B.1.1 of the Los Angeles County Building Code.

Chapter 11B of the State Building Code is concerned with accessibility into buildings through entrances that have a flow of pedestrian traffic from parking, passenger loading zones, or pedestrian walkways. This includes employees, clients, and the general public. Chapter 10 of the County Building Code is concerned, for life safety reasons, with egress from buildings through **required** exit doors.

Most frequently the use of these exterior doors is for both purposes. However, for security reasons, building entrances may be restricted to only one or two locations. There is no problem from a Code enforcement perspective as long as the entrances and exits provided are accessible to both the disabled and nondisabled in a nondiscriminatory manner.

On flat and level sites the various entrances and required exits can readily be constructed to meet the requirement of both Chapters. By contrast, where the ground floor is at dock height or where the ground slopes away from the entrance level, as with hillside conditions, constructing accessible entrances and exits may be impractical.

Section 1114B.2.1 goes on to state that accessible means of egress shall be provided in the same number **as required** for exits by Chapter 10 [more specifically Section 1003--Exits Required (which are based upon occupant load and travel distance)]. When an exit required by Chapter 10 is not accessible (i.e. difference in grade), an area for evacuation assistance (either inside or outside the building) shall be provided. Exception 1 cancels the requirement for areas of evacuation assistance in buildings having a supervised automatic sprinkler system (generally over 100 sprinkler heads) and Exception 2 eliminates the requirement for areas of evacuation assistance in existing buildings.

However, at least one entrance door must be accessible. When **required** exit doors are used as entrances by employees, clients, or the general public, they must be accessible. When **required** exit doors are not to be used as entrances, door hardware on the exterior side must not be provided. Thus, entry is denied for all persons in a nondiscriminatory manner. When parking is provided for employees, clients, or the general public, at accessible entrance doors, then a portion of the required accessible parking spaces is required near **each**

accessible entrance.

Section 1133B.1.1.1.1 further states by Exception 1 that exits serving smokeproof enclosures, stairwells, and exit doors serving stairs only need not be made accessible, and Exception 2 states that exits **in excess** of those required by Section 1114B.2.1 (disabled egress) and which are more than 24 inches (610 mm) above grade, are not required to be accessible. Those exits “in excess” are convenience doors **not required** by Code.

What this means is that for new construction (including additions), buildings having a supervised automatic sprinkler system need not provide ramped egress from buildings at ground-level point of egress when exit-only doors do not have entry hardware.

Buildings without a supervised automatic sprinkler system must provide ramped egress from all **required** ground-level exits or, alternately, provide the exit with a one-hour protected area of evacuation assistance. Where we determine that compliance with the building standards of Section 1133B.1.1.1.1 would create a hardship, existing buildings undergoing alterations would be allowed to have as a minimum, one point of entry to be used as an accessible entrance and exit.

When exit doors (whether required or convenient) are not accessible for the disabled, a warning sign stating "NOT A WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE EXIT" or "EXIT CONTAINS STAIRWAY" (or words to that affect) shall be posted adjacent to the door(s).

Similarly, when an area of evacuation assistance is provided on a landing outside the egress door, an advisory sign stating "AREA OF EVACUATION ASSISTANCE IMMEDIATELY OUTSIDE" (or words to that affect) and the international symbol of accessibility shall be placed adjacent to the egress door. Note: For the case where an exterior landing is the area of evacuation assistance and has a stairway to grade, do not confuse people with conflicting signs of the international symbol of accessibility and "EXIT CONTAINS STAIRWAY."

Given this policy, every effort should be made to make as many entrances and exits accessible to the disabled as possible when readily achievable and easily accomplished.

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