

ENB-15.36 - Accessibility to Work Areas and Spaces; Visible Alarms - UBC/11/#4

ACCESSIBILITY TO WORK AREAS AND SPACES; VISIBLE ALARMS

Administrative Rule Adopted by Bureau Pursuant to Rule-Making Authority

ARB-ENB-15.36

TOPIC: Accessible Design - UBC/11/#4

CODE: Structural Specialty Code: 1998 Edition

REVISED: March 1, 1999

REFERENCE: Sections 1102, 1106 and 1108 " Structural Specialty Code

SUBJECT: Accessibility to Work Areas and Spaces; Visible Alarms

QUESTION: 1. Do the features in an employee break room have to meet accessible standards? What about a lunch room?

RESPONSE: 1. Employee break rooms, coffee rooms, lunch rooms and similar facilities are by definition common use rooms. While they may not be open to the general public, they are available to all employees. The code does not provide any specific exemption for such rooms and therefore they need to be accessible. People need to be able to enter such spaces and be able to use the key features of the room. Chapter 11 specifically regulates built-in storage (Sec 1108.4.6), tables and seating (Sec. 1108.4.5) and sinks (Sec. 1108.4.11).

An accessible sink is required (Sec. 1108.4.11). However, only the counter including the sink needs to be at the accessible height. Thus if a dishwasher or refrigerator are planned for below the counter, this can still occur. The code, by requiring an accessible sink in these spaces, is by default requiring a forward approach sink with knee and toe clearance beneath the sink.

QUESTION: 2. In open offices where partitions are installed to create individual work areas, must the individual work areas be accessible according to the standards of Chapter 11?

RESPONSE: 2. Portable partitions which are less than 5 feet, 9 inches tall are exempt from requiring a permit (Sec. 106) but their arrangement must still comply with the code. Employee work areas are defined in Chapter 11 as areas where someone with disabilities can approach, enter and exit such spaces. It goes on to say that maneuvering in the space or equipment within the space need not be accessible. Thus a 5 foot turning radius need not be provided, nor an accessible desk nor similar features are required by the code. Light switches and electrical/communications outlets incorporated into the partition design/construction are also exempt from Chapter 11. An accessible route must be provided to the work space, and there must be a pathway into each space which is at least 32 inches wide. Even though such partitions are generally considered "furniture" and therefore exempt from permit, the bureau is still concerned with how access to each space, and exiting from each space, is provided.

QUESTION: 3. Do mechanical rooms need to be accessible? Is a maneuvering space required within such rooms?

RESPONSE: 3. Where a workspace or workstation is located within a mechanical room, then the room is treated like other employee work areas (See question 2). This requires that the mechanical room be located on an accessible route, and allow an individual to enter and exit the room. Space allowing an individual to back out of the area is sufficient. Maneuvering space allowing an individual to turn around is not required. In addition, it is not necessary to make the equipment itself accessible.

There are two exceptions to this rule:

1. If the mechanical room is located in a building that houses only mechanical equipment, such as a cellular telephone tower or a pump house, and personnel only visits the equipment on a rare occasion, then access is not required. The building cannot be a place of employment or house a workstation. If either of these conditions exist then access must be provided to the employee work area.
2. If the mechanical equipment is located on a mezzanine, in a basement or in a penthouse that only houses mechanical equipment, then access is not needed to the area. Again, the mezzanine, basement or penthouse cannot be used for any purpose other than housing the mechanical equipment, and the area cannot contain an employee workstation.

QUESTION: 4. Do circuit breaker/panel boxes have to be accessible?

RESPONSE: 4. Circuit panel boxes located inside individual adaptable dwelling units are required to be on an accessible route and located within accessible reach ranges. Other circuit panel boxes are not required to be accessible.

QUESTION: 5. Where are visible alarms required? How should they be provided in medical offices? Private offices?

Apartments?

RESPONSE: 5. Visual alarms are required, according to code, in common use and public use areas. For example in an office building, visual alarms are needed in lobbies, corridors, toilet rooms, cafeterias, and employee break rooms. If the offices are in an open floor plan, visual alarms are needed. Private offices are exempt. This clearly applies to an office occupied by just one person and may also be appropriate for offices of two or three workers.

The code explicitly exempts individual dwelling units in an apartment building from having visual alarms, but common areas must still comply.

Medical offices should have visual alarms provided in the waiting/receptions areas, individual exam rooms and toilet rooms. In most medical offices the employee areas will be used by a number of employees and are therefore common areas requiring visible alarms. However, the private office for the doctor would be exempt.

HISTORY

Updates October 1, 1997 edition

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