

BUILDING DIVISION

LANDINGS AT DOORS - MICHIGAN RESIDENTIAL CODE

By Larry Lehman, Chief
Building Division

The bureau continues to get questions related to residential stairways and the landings associated with them. R311.4.3 of the Michigan Residential Code (MRC) states "there shall be a floor or landing at each side of each exterior landing." R311.4.3 allows an exception for exterior landings provided the stairway has two or fewer risers and is not the required exit door. There no longer is an exception for exterior sliding doors.

The main question centers on the permissible height of an exterior landing at doorways. The second exception in R311.4.3 states "The landing at an exterior doorway shall be not more than 7 3/4 inches below the top of the threshold, provided the door, other than an exterior storm or screen door does not swing over the landing." Where exterior landings are required, **the landing**

may be a maximum of 7 3/4 inches below the threshold for the required exit door provided the exterior door doesn't swing over the landing, and the landing is not required to be part of an accessible route as referenced to the Michigan Building Code by R322 of the MRC. Additional landings where required at exterior doors other than the required exit door, may be a maximum of 8 1/4 inches below the threshold.

The threshold for the required exit door is limited to a maximum height 1 1/2 inches above the adjacent interior floor surface. This has been confused with the permissible exterior landing height but is only intended to limit the height of the threshold at the required exit door.

Questions may be directed to the Building Division at (517) 241-9317.

PLAN REVIEW DIVISION

ACCESSIBILITY & PRIVATELY-OWNED CONDOMINIUMS

By Usha Menon
Plan Review Division

The Plan Review Division has received several questions regarding the compliance for accessibility in privately-owned condominiums. In the 2003 Michigan Building Code (MBC), buildings are classified based on the use and occupancy. Residential occupancies are classified into different groups based on the nature of stay, permanent or transient and number of occupants. **Ownership or tenancies are not an issue in use group classifications or code compliance.**

For all residential occupancies regulated under the MBC, compliance is required for accessibility when there are four or more dwelling or sleeping units in one structure. The level of accessibility is dictated based on the number of units in one structure and/or site.

Because the condominium occupants are permanent in nature, the dwelling units are classified as group R-2 or R-3. Based on the number of units, these occupancies shall provide type A and type B dwelling units. The design guidelines for these dwelling units are specified in the ICC/ANSI A117.1-98. Section 322 of the 2003 Michigan Residential Code also directs the code user to the MBC for accessibility requirements. Section 1107 provides the requirements for accessible dwelling and sleeping units with no exceptions for ownership. Therefore, privately-owned condominiums shall be in compliance in accordance with the MBC accessibility guidelines.

It should be noted that developers, designers, and building departments have been successfully sued by the federal government. Developers and designers have been fined and required to provide the required accessibility. Cities have been required to train all code officials in the requirements of accessibility. Building officials in Michigan, who ignore the accessibility requirements may face sanctions by the Construction Code Commission. The Barrier Free Design Board has not accepted individual ownership of units as a reason for an exception to the code. Questions can be directed to the Plan Review Division at (517) 241-9328.

PLAN REVIEW DIVISION

ISSUING A PERMIT FOR A PREMANUFACTURED HOME

By Irvin J. Poke, AIA, Chief
Plan Review Division

Before the permit is issued for a premanufactured unit approved by the Bureau of Construction Codes and Fire Safety (BCCFS) the building official should request a copy of the Building System Approval Report (BSAR). This document will show the manufacturer's model number and the specific design data that has been approved by BCCFS. Each manufacturer is issued this document for each unit approved. Do not take the applicant's assertion that the unit is "similar to" a model that has been approved. If a specific unit does not have a BSAR that shows exactly what is being set, the model is not approved.

The building official should also request a copy of the approved drawings, which have the approval stamp of the BCCFS and the exact layout of what has been approved. The manufacturer cannot make any changes in the construction unless the BCCFS approves them. If there are any changes, other than color, wall coverings, floor coverings and appliances, the plans must go back through the approval process in accordance with rule 1141. The BCCFS requires approximately 3 weeks for the review approval process for construction changes.

The enforcing agency may issue permits for the foundations and other site work before the BSAR is approved. The construction documents for the foundations and other site work must be reviewed and approved by the code official. These documents should

be specific to the site and the soil conditions.

The approved building system (construction documents) will show what is constructed in the factory and the work that must be completed at the site for a complete building. The code official shall review these construction documents and inspect as required. If violations are found, it should be determined if they were caused during the manufacturing process or during installation. Violations caused during installation are to be cited to the permit holder for the work involved as would be done for any on site work. The bureau does not need to be notified. The violations attributed to the manufacturer shall be reported in writing to the Plan Review Division as required by rule 1142. The form for reporting such violations is available at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/cis_bcc_premvio_36796_7.pdf. It is recommended that an inspector take this form to all inspections of premanufactured units to assure that all the right information is gathered the first time. The violations will be investigated and the manufacturer ordered to make the corrections as necessary.

The Plan Review Division publishes the approved BSAR's on the BCCFS web site at <http://www.cis.state.mi.us/dms/home-bcc.asp>. If you have the BSAR number or the manufacturer name you can check to see if the model you are considering is approved. Questions may be directed to the Plan Review Division at (517) 241-9328.