

Design 3 Architecture PC

300 Oxford Drive, Suite 120
Monroeville, Pennsylvania 15146-2361
(412) 373-2220 FAX (412) 373-4571
www.d3a.com

William A. Snyder, AIA
Michael D. Moyta, AIA, CSI
Anthony R. Scruppi, AIA
Don G. Lightner, Jr., RA

Information Advisory

ALTERATIONS & ACCESSABILITY REQUIREMENTS

March 9, 2009

If you are remodeling an existing tenant area within an existing building, the ICC International Building Code, as referenced by the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code, requires the accessible route to the primary function or tenant area of the building to comply with current accessibility standards. The accessible route includes the handicapped parking stall, curb ramp, front entrance and elevator. It also includes the toilet facilities and drinking fountains serving that tenant area.

The costs of providing the accessible route are not required to exceed 20 percent of the costs of the alterations affecting the primary function.

Please note that unisex accessible toilet rooms are only accepted when it is 'technically infeasible' as determined by the State Department of Labor and Industry.

The State's Department of Labor & Industry has recently issued a statement that the building codes, as written, must be enforced by all local code enforcement offices. It has become clear that building code enforcement officials are going to require strict conformance.

An example interpretation received from one ICC code professional:

If an office tenant area on the second floor of an existing two-story office building with no elevator is being reconfigured for a new tenant, an elevator addition would be required. (Some occupancies under 3,000 sq. ft. per floor in small two-story buildings are exempt.) However, if the new tenant's remodeling costs are \$100,000, then only 20% of the remodeling costs, or \$20,000, is required to be spent on bringing the accessible route into compliance. The amount of funds remaining after constructing other accessibility upgrades to the accessible route would not be enough to add an elevator. The recommendation in this example was to "build the pit" and then build more with each successive remodeling.

We would be glad to get those interested a copy of the ICC/ANSI A117.1-2003 Manual (American National Standards Institute's Accessible & Usable Buildings & Facilities 2003 published by the International Code Council) for reference. This is the accessibility standard referenced by the 2006 International Building Code.

We have attached the 2006 International Building Code Section 3409.7 for your review.

DGL/esd
Attachment