



**OCEAN CITY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE**  
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**MEMORANDUM**

Subject: Means of Egress Plans Review and Inspections Fire Marshal's Office/Planning and Zoning Department	Memo #: 2023-002
	Effective: June 1, 2023
Authority: Deputy Chief Josh Bunting, Fire Marshal Chief Building Official James Metzgar	Internal (FMO & P&Z Staff)

This memorandum serves to clarify the overlapping code requirements and related inspections related to means of egress within the International Building Code (IBC) (*enforced by the Town's Planning and Zoning Department*), and Life Safety Code (NFPA 101) (*enforced by the Office of the Fire Marshal-OFM*).

It remains the mandate of both agencies to ensure that, where code conflicts exist, the terms and provisions of the most stringent chapter/ordinance shall apply, in accordance with OC Code Chapter 10, Sec. 10-33. It is also the intent that the plans review and inspection process be streamlined in order to ensure code compliance and maximize efficiency, to provide the best service to contractors, business owners, and the general public.

Regulation Comparison

The majority of means of egress requirements are objectively similar throughout the two related codes. The following NFPA 101 requirements exist as more stringent than that found within the IBC:

1. New handrails shall be installed to provide a clearance of not less than  $2\frac{1}{4}$  in. between the handrail and the wall to which it is fastened. (NFPA 101, 2018: 7.2.2.4.5.6)
2. Outside stairs shall be arranged to avoid any impediments to their use by persons having a fear of high places. Outside stairs more than 36 ft (11 m) above the finished ground level, other than previously approved existing stairs, shall be provided with an opaque visual obstruction not less than 48. in. (1220 mm) in height. (NFPA 101, 2018: 7.2.2.6.2)
3. Variation in excess of  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (4.8 mm) in the sizes of adjacent tread depths or in the height of adjacent risers shall be prohibited. (NFPA 101, 2018: 7.2.2.3.6.1)

### Department Focus

Building officials/inspectors will continue to review plans and inspect projects to the requirements of IBC, along with additionally reviewing and enforcing the specific requirements of NFPA 101 enumerated above, as part of the plans review, stair framing and building final inspections, in order to identify issues related to the construction of stairs/ramps/means of egress components as early as possible in the construction process.

OFM personnel will continue to be responsible for reviewing plans and inspecting for the *remaining* requirements within NFPA 101 Chapter 7 (*Means of Egress*), including egress capacity, number, arrangement, common path of travel, travel distance, discharge, illumination, emergency lighting, marking, protection, and various special provisions, also with the intent to identify issues as early as possible in the construction process.

Nothing in this memo shall preclude either department from identifying potential code violations outside of their respective scopes identified above and relaying them to the appropriate department.