



## **BULLETIN RB06-007**

(Updated 2015 Dec 10)

### **DIRECTIONAL EXIT SIGNS**

**Reference: Sentence 3.4.5.1.(3), Sentence 3.4.5.1.(5), Article 9.9.10.4. and Article 9.9.10.5.**

**Sentence 3.4.5.1.(3)** "Exit signs shall consist of

- a) red letters on a contrasting background or contrasting letters on a red background, with the letters not less than 114 mm high and having a 19 mm stroke, if the sign is internally illuminated, and
- b) white letters on a red background or red letters on a contrasting background that is white or a light tint, with letters not less than 150 mm high and having a 19 mm stroke, if the sign is externally illuminated."

**Sentence 3.4.5.1.(5)** "If necessary, the direction of egress in public corridors and passageways shall be indicated by a sign conforming to Sentence (3) with a suitable arrow or pointer indicating the direction of egress."

**Article 9.9.10.4.** "Exit direction signs shall be placed in corridors and passageways where necessary to indicate the direction of exit travel."

**Article 9.9.10.4.** "Exit signs shall be installed so as to be visible from the exit approach and shall be illuminated continuously while the building is occupied."

#### **Commentary / Relevant Facts:**

This Regulation Bulletin sets out guidelines for the required locations, lighting and sizes for directional exit signs.

It appears from the above quoted Articles that the key criterion which determines the location of directional exit signs is "if necessary" or "where necessary". However, the Code does not state who will decide the locations where directional exit signs are necessary, whether it is the authority having jurisdiction, fire authority, building owner, designer or occupants.

It is reasonable to relate the phrases "if necessary" and "where necessary" to the familiarity of the building occupants with the access to exits. For a floor area which is likely to be used only by occupants who either work or live there on a daily basis, directional exit signs are not considered necessary. This will also include floor areas where a limited number of public is admitted under the control of the regular occupants as with most offices or where any visitors are likely to be in the company of regular occupants as happens with most apartments.

However, in floor areas where members of the public can enter with little or no control or where at any given time there could be large numbers of occupants who are likely to be unfamiliar with the building layout, the terms “if necessary” and “where necessary” will mean at every location where there is a choice of direction. That is, if an occupant encounters a branching off of a public corridor or passageway when using such a route, he/she should be directed towards the exit by means of a directional exit sign, if the exit sign at the exit itself is not clearly visible from that location. Buildings requiring such directional exit signs will include, but not be limited to, all assembly occupancies, and certain residential occupancies (e.g. hotels, and motels) and certain mercantile occupancies (e.g. exhibition halls and department stores).

The above will apply to both Part 3 and Part 9 buildings.

Chief Building Inspector

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Unless stated otherwise, the Code references in this bulletin are to Division B of the Alberta Building Code 2014 (ABC 2014). Bulletins do not overrule the ABC 2014 nor constitute a relaxation of the Code. They serve to clarify the Code in areas where the latter is ambiguous or does not cover a specific topic. Bulletins are City of Calgary clarifications for staff use to enable consistency in the application of the Code. These bulletins should always be read in the context of the appropriate requirements of the Code.