

ADMINISTRATIVE BULLETIN**NO. AB-018**

DATE : September 18, 2002 (Updated 01/01/08 for code references)

SUBJECT : Fire and Life Safety

TITLE : **Local Equivalency for Approval of Emergency Escape or Rescue Windows at Courts and Light Wells**

PURPOSE : The purpose of this Administrative Bulletin is to provide standards and procedures for the application and case-by-case review of requests for a local equivalency to allow exiting from emergency escape or rescue windows into enclosed courts or Light wells where such means of escape or rescue do not strictly comply with the provisions of the 2007 San Francisco Building Code (SFBC) regarding emergency escape or rescue windows.

This bulletin permits the continuing application of code provisions of former editions of the SFBC regarding emergency escape or rescue windows. In conformance with current State law, requests for approval of emergency escape or rescue windows opening into courts or Light wells will be considered on a case-by-case basis when reasonably equivalency is proposed.

REFERENCE : 2007 San Francisco Building Code
- Section 104A.2.7, Modifications.
- Section 104A.2.8, Alternate Materials, alternate design and methods of construction.
- Section 1026 Access and Means of Egress Facilities and Emergency Escapes.
DBI Administrative Bulletin AB-005, Procedures for Approval of Local Equivalencies
DBI Administrative Bulletin AB-019, Local Equivalency for Approval of Fire Escapes
as
a Required Means of Egress

DISCUSSION : Project sponsors may request the application of this local equivalency allowing emergency escape or rescue windows to open into a court or lightwell without strict compliance with the provisions of SFBC Section 1026 when it can be demonstrated on a case-by-case basis that there are practical difficulties in meeting the provisions of the SFBC, that the modification is in conformance with the intent and purpose of the SFBC, and that reasonable equivalency is provided in fire-protection and structural integrity.

Such proposed modification may be approved by the Department if it conforms with the below-listed standard provisions. The Department of Building Inspection and other City departments may impose additional requirements, in addition to those listed below, in the approval of any request for a code modification or alternate based upon individual building and property conditions. The San Francisco Fire Department may also review such case-by-case requests.

If a project sponsor wishes to propose emergency escape or rescue windows opening into courts or Light wells which differ from those listed below, proposals for the use of alternate materials, designs, or methods of construction may be submitted for review in the same manner as for this Local Equivalency. The Department of Building Inspection may require that additional substantiation be provided supporting any claims made for such proposals.

Procedure for Application of Local Equivalencies

Project sponsors wishing to apply local equivalencies must fill out and submit the Request for Approval of Local Equivalency form (Attachment A). Fees to be paid and scheduling of review of requests are as noted on that form. Following DBI review, each request will either be approved, approved with conditions, disapproved, or placed on "Hold" pending submittal of additional information.

Further details of procedures for the review of local equivalencies and appeal of departmental determinations may be found in Administrative Bulletin AB-005, Procedures for Approval of Local Equivalencies.

Conditions of Local Equivalency

Emergency escape or rescue windows opening into courts or Light wells without direct access to a yard or public way may be permitted on a case-by-case basis when the following provisions or approved equivalent provisions are met and the project sponsor provides documentation of the practical difficulties involved in carrying out the provisions of the regular code.

The standard provisions for this local equivalency include:

1. The building in which the emergency escape or rescue windows are proposed shall not exceed four (4) stories in height.
2. Emergency escape or rescue windows shall have access to a stairway, a fire escape or a permanently affixed balcony and ladder leading to a roof having a slope of not more than 4:12. Fire escape, balcony and ladder construction shall comply with Administrative Bulletin AB-019, Local Equivalency for Approval of Fire Escapes as a Required Means of Egress. Such stairway, fire escape or balcony and ladder shall have at least 50% net open area to allow the penetration of required light and ventilation.
3. A level path of travel shall be provided on the roof to a stairway enclosure or to another approved exit. Such path of travel shall be not less than three (3) feet in width.
4. Roofs used as part of the path of travel shall be at least one hour fire-rated.
5. The building shall be fire sprinklered per applicable standards.
6. A permit application and related submittal documents shall detail all construction which is approved as a result of this request for local equivalency.

Attachment A: Request for Approval of Local Equivalency

Approved by the Building Inspection Commission on September 18, 2002

Originally signed by:
Gary Massetani, Fire Marshal
October 9, 2002

Frank Y. Chiu, Director
October 3, 2002

ATTACHMENT A



DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION
City & County of San Francisco
1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, California 94103-2414

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF LOCAL EQUIVALENCY FOR MODIFICATION
OR ALTERNATE MATERIALS, DESIGN OR METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION**

DATE SUBMITTED _____ [Note: This form shall be recorded as part of the permanent construction records of the property]

If no permit application has been filed, a Preapplication Review Fee is required for review of a request for local equivalency or modification, per SFBC Table 1-B, Item 8. Additional fees may be required by Fire Department and other City review agencies.

If a permit application has been filed, no additional fees are required for this review.

Permit Application # _____

Property Address: _____

Block and Lot: ____/____ Occupancy Group: _____ Type of Construction: _____ No. of Stories: _____

Describe Use of Building _____

Under the authority of the 2007 San Francisco Building Code, Sections 104A.2.7 and 104A.2.8; the 2007 San Francisco Mechanical Code, Section 108.7; the 2007 San Francisco Electrical Code, Section 089.16; and the 2007 San Francisco Plumbing Code, Section 108.7; the undersigned requests modifications of the provisions of these codes and/or approval of alternate materials, designs or methods of construction. Two copies of supporting documents, including plans showing the proposed modifications or alternate materials, design or methods of construction, are attached.

Regular Code Requirement (specify Code and Sections)

Proposed Modification or Alternate

Case-by-Case Basis of Request - Describe the practical difficulties presented in meeting the specific conditions of the code and how the proposed modification or alternate meets the intent of the code. A separate form should be filled for each requested modification or alternate. Attach copies of any Administrative Bulletin, Code Ruling, reference, test reports, expert opinions, etc., which support this request. The Department may require that an approved consultant be hired by the applicant to perform tests or analysis and to submit an evaluation report to the Department for consideration.

Requested by:	PROJECT SPONSOR	ARCHITECT/ENGINEER	
Print Name:	_____	_____	
Signature:	_____	_____	[PROFESSIONAL STAMP HERE]
Telephone:	_____	_____	

PLAN REVIEWER COMMENTS:			
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>			
RECOMMENDATIONS: [signed off/dated by:]	Approve	Approve with conditions	Disapprove
Plan Reviewer:	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Division Manager:	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
for Director of Bldg. Inspection	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
for Fire Marshal:	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL or OTHER COMMENTS			
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