

In 2017, the city council formalized the building commissioner's authority to issue interpretations of the building code. Over the years, the Department of Buildings has issued a variety of documents under different names that interpret and provide guidance on application of the building code. As a transitional measure, this interpretation incorporates a range of earlier documents by reference.

## Earlier Guidance Incorporated by Reference

The following older documents are incorporated by reference and shall have the same legal effect as if issued pursuant to Section 13-8-031. These documents can be found on the Department's web site.

### Administration

Clarification 1.1: Changes in Contractors or Owners After a Permit Is Issued (2011)

Clarification 1.2: Assessing Stop Work Order (SWO) Fees (2011)

### Building (New Construction)

Clarification 3.1: Wood Framing Into Masonry Walls (3-4 hr. Fire Rated) (2011)

Clarification 3.2: Exterior Stairway Serving 2nd Floor of Single Family Residence (2011)

Clarification 3.3: Health Clubs and Fitness Centers Occupant Load (2011)

Clarification 3.4: Occupancy Content – Residential Rooftop Decks (2011)

Clarification 3.5: Occupancy Content – Floor Area Per Person (2011)

Clarification 3.6: Restroom Doors in School Corridors (2011)

Clarification 3.7: Assembly Occupancy – Classification (2011)

Clarification 5.2: Parking Garages in Residential Buildings (2011)

Clarification 5.3: Retail Occupancy in Residential Buildings (2011)

Memorandum: Use of Cold Formed Steel Framing for Bearing Walls in Residential Buildings of Type I Construction (2017)

Clarification 6.1: Framing Into Wood Walls (2011)

Clarification 6.2: Type III-B Construction – 1 hr. Floor System (2011)

Clarification 6.3: Mixed Construction Types (2011)

Clarification 6.4: Fire Protection for Lintels (2011)

Clarification 7.1: Use of Combustibles in Type III Construction Roof Assemblies (2011)

Clarification 7.3: Combustible Material Used to Enclose Heating Equipment (2011)

Clarification 7.4: Skylights and Sloped Glazing (2011)

Clarification 7.5: Protection of Openings (2011)

Clarification 7.6: Size of Fire Rated Windows (2011)

Clarification 7.7: Fire Rated Windows and the Energy Conservation Code (2011)

Clarification 7.8: Enclosure of Pipe Shafts and Ducts (2011)

Clarification 7.9: Enclosure of Heating Plants and Boilers (2011)

Clarification 7.10: Stairwell Enclosure – Nonessential Openings (2011)

Clarification 7.11: Convenient Stairway Enclosures (2011)

Clarification 7.12: Convenient Stairways – No Enclosure Required (2011)

Clarification 7.17 Use of Fire Rated Glazing in Class A Fire Doors (2016)  
Clarification 7.18 Fire Rating in Hours and Minutes for the Separate Classes of Fire Doors (2016)  
Clarification 7.19 Clarification of Roofing Materials (2016)  
Clarification 9.1 Visual and Audible Fire Alarm Devices (2011)  
Clarification 9.2 Remote Power Supply Control Unit – Fire Alarm System (2011)  
Clarification 9.3 Buildings Equipped with Automatic Sprinklers System – Excluded Areas (2011)  
Clarification 10.1 Definition of Travel Distance (2011)  
Clarification 10.2 Maximum Travel Distance – Permitted Increase (2011)  
Clarification 10.3 Direction in Line of Travel (2011)  
Clarification 10.4 Power-operated Sliding Doors (2011)  
Clarification 10.5 Sliding Exit Doors (2011)  
Clarification 10.6 Electro-magnetic Locks on Egress Doors (2011)  
Clarification 10.7 Residential Duplex Units – Exits (2011)  
Clarifications 10.8 and 10.9 Basement Level – One Exit (2011)  
Clarification 10.12 Stairway Landings (2011)  
Clarification 10.14 Minimum Number of Exits from 2nd Floor of Single-Family Residence (2011)  
Clarification 10.15 Continuous Means of Exit (2011)  
Clarification 10.16 Exits Through Storage Areas in Mercantile Buildings (2011)  
Clarifications 12.1 and 12.2 Natural Light and Ventilation (2011)  
Memorandum: Skylights Used for Natural Light and Ventilation (2016)  
Memorandum: Roof Requirements (2016)  
Memorandum: Pile Deep Foundations (2017)  
Memorandum: Soil Improvement Systems – Geopiers or Stone Columns (2016)  
Memorandum: Earth Retention Systems (2016)  
Memorandum: Masonry Reference Standards (2016)  
Memorandum: Glass as a Structural Material in Guardrails and Handrails (2016)  
Memorandum: Glass as a Structural Material in Awnings and Canopies (2016)  
Clarification 33.1: Stair Railings and Guardrails (2011)

### Conveyance Devices

Clarification 7.16: Elevator Enclosures (2011)  
Memorandum: Skip Hoist Anchorage Intervals (2016)  
Memorandum: Firefighter's Emergency Operation – Existing Elevators (2016)

### Electrical

(none)

### Mechanical

Memorandum: Approved HVAC Test and Balance Organizations (2016)

Memorandum: Refrigerants Allowed for Use in the City of Chicago (2016)  
Memorandum: Separation of Air Intake and Exhaust Outlets on Rooftop HVAC Equipment (2016)  
Memorandum: U.L. 710 Listed Commercial Cooking Hoods (2016)  
Memorandum: Polypropylene Plastic as an Approved Piping Material for Hydronic Systems (2016)  
Memorandum: Gas Distribution Piping Inside of Buildings (2016)  
Memorandum: Use of Door Undercut for Make-Up Air Transfer to Dwelling Unit (2016)  
Memorandum: Power Ventilators for Restaurant Exhaust (2017)

### Plumbing Code

Memorandum: Use of Portable Hand Sinks for Temporary Cooking or Food Preparation Stations (2016)  
Memorandum: Requirements for Drinking Fountains in Commercial Office Tenant Spaces (2016)  
Memorandum: Single-User Unisex Restrooms (2017)  
Memorandum: Minimum Number of Public Restrooms for New Food Service Establishments (2017)

### Rehabilitation Code (Repairs, Alterations and Additions)

Clarification 5.4: Basements in Pre-1995 Buildings (2011)  
Clarification 10.13 Exits in Existing Buildings (2011)  
Memorandum: Natural Light and Ventilation Requirements for Basements in Existing Residential Buildings (2017)  
Clarification 16.1 Replacement of Rooftop Decks Installed Before October 2003 (2011)  
Clarification 34.1 Exit Requirements – Assembly and Institutional Occupancies (2011)  
Clarification 34.2 Change of Occupancy (2011)  
Clarification 34.3 Light and Ventilation in Existing Buildings (2011)  
Clarification 34.4 Replacement of Existing Porches and Decks (2011)  
Clarification 34.5 Materials and Installation Standards for Retrofit Fire Protection Systems (2011)  
Memorandum: Energy Conservation Code Compliance for Work in Existing Buildings (2017)

### Minimum Requirements for Existing Buildings

(none)

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**Interpretation of Section(s):** various

**Revision History:** Issued November 9, 2018.

This formal interpretation of the specified provision(s) of the Chicago Building Code is adopted by the building commissioner pursuant to section 13-8-031 of the Municipal Code of Chicago and is enforceable in the same manner as the building code. To confirm current version, please visit <http://www.cityofchicago.org/buildings>.