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# ICC TRI-CHAPTER UNIFORM CODE COMMITTEE (TUCC)

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**POLICY NUMBER:** 007

**APPROVAL DATE:** May 1, 2008

**SUBJECT:** COMMON PATHS OF TRAVEL FROM SECOND FLOOR

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*This guideline is developed by the Tri-chapter Uniform Code Committee and is intended to enhance regional consistency in application and enforcement of the Building Code. Please verify acceptance of this guideline with your local building department prior to its application.*

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## **CODE REFERENCES:**

2007 CBC section 1002 **COMMON PATH OF EGRESS TRAVEL.** “That portion of exit access which the occupants are required to traverse before two separate and distinct paths of egress travel to two exits are available. Paths that merge are common paths of travel. Common paths of egress travel shall be included within the permitted travel distance.”

2007 CBC section 1002 **EXIT.** “That portion of a means of egress system which is separated from other interior spaces of a building or structure by fire-resistance-rated construction and opening protective as required to provide an protected path of egress travel between the exit access and the exit discharge. Exits include exterior doors at ground level, exit enclosures, exit passageways, exterior exit stairs, exterior exit ramps and horizontal exits.”

2007 CBC section 1002 **EXIT ACCESS.** “That portion of a means of egress system that leads from any occupied portion of a building or structure to an exit.”

2007 CBC section 1002 **STAIRWAY.** “One or more flights of stairs, either exterior or interior, with the necessary landings and platforms connecting them, to form a continuous and uninterrupted passage from one level to another.”

2007 CBC Section 1014.3 **Common path of egress travel.** “In occupancies other than Groups H-1, H-2 and H-3, the common path of egress travel shall not exceed 75 feet (22860mm). In Group H-1, H-2, and H-3 occupancies the common path of egress travel shall not exceed 25 feet (7620mm). For common path of egress travel in Group A occupancies having fixed seating, see Section 1025.8.”

**Exceptions:**

1. The length of a common path of egress travel in Group B, F and S occupancies shall not be more than 100 feet (30480mm), provided that the building is equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with Section 1025.8
2. Where a tenant space in Group B, S and U occupancies has an occupant load of not more than 30, the length of a common path of egress travel shall not be more than 100 feet (30480mm).
3. The length of a common path of egress travel in a Group I-3 occupancy shall not be more than 100 feet (30480mm).
4. The length of a common path of egress travel in a Group R-2 occupancy shall not be more than 125 feet (38100mm), provided that the building is protected throughout with an approved sprinkler system in accordance with section 903.3.1.1.”

2007 CBC section 1016.1 **Travel distance limitations.** “Where the path of exit access includes unenclosed stairways or ramps within the exit access or includes unenclosed exit ramps or stairways as permitted in section 1020.1, the distance of travel on such means of egress components shall also be included in the travel distance measurement.”

**ISSUES:**

- 1) How is the common path of egress travel from a second floor in existing two story buildings determined when the definition of this distance contains the phrase: *before two separate and distinct paths of egress travel to two exits are available.*
- 2) In existing two story office buildings open stairways commonly provide egress to the first floor level. Because open stairs are NOT considered an exit, it appears that the common path of travel for occupants on the second floor must extend to the first floor level (level of exit discharge) before two separate and distinct paths of egress travel to two “exits” are available. This distance can easily exceed 100 feet in many office building.

**INTERPRETATION:**

2007 CBC Section 1014.3 **Common path of egress travel -** On the second floor level of two-story buildings, once an occupant enters a circulation corridor or hallway that provides two separate directions of travel to two properly separated existing stairs, then that is the point at which the common path of travel has ended. One need not reach the ground floor level to achieve the intent of having two separate and distinct paths of egress travel if the existing stairs are properly separated.