

BULLETIN 2002-006-BU/EL

April 19, 2007
(Revised)

ENHANCED ACCESSIBILITY FOR MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

This is to advise building designers of recent amendments to the Vancouver Building By-law (VBBL) with respect to enhanced accessibility requirements for multi-family residential buildings containing more than 3 dwelling units, a shared public corridor and an elevator. These amendments are designed to provide a series of modest accessibility improvements to multi-family residential buildings at minimal cost embodying some of the concepts of universal design. They will enable disabled persons to visit and socialize with people in their homes.

The amendments also include simple provisions which will facilitate future adaptation of a dwelling unit so that the unit may be occupied by a person with a range of physical mobility restrictions, and are intended to extend the length of time that an elderly person may remain safely in their own home. It should be noted that these amendments apply only to newly constructed multi-family residential buildings. They are NOT intended to provide full accessibility per Subsection 3.8 of Division B of the VBBL.

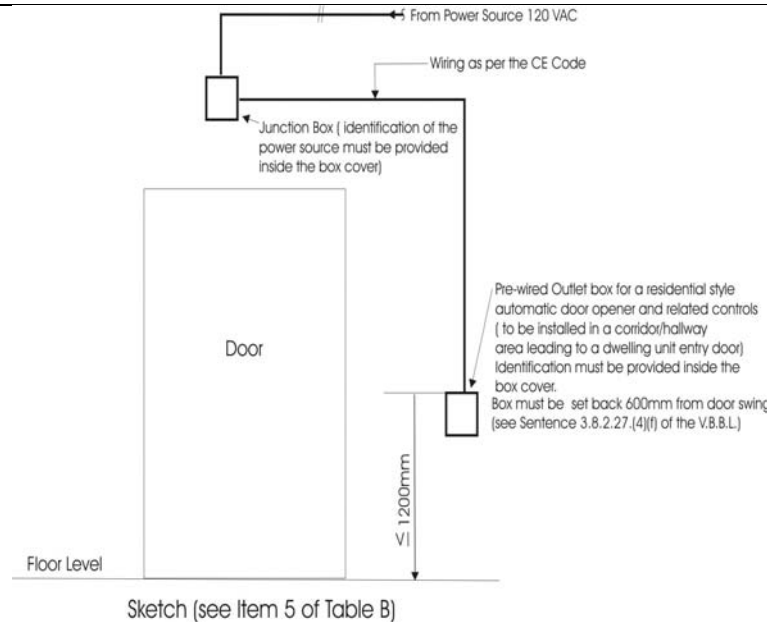
In November 2001, Council approved in principle a number of proposed amendments to the Building By-law aimed at improving access to all residential units, common amenity areas, and washrooms in multi-family residential buildings. After consultation with industry, the Building By-law regulations have been developed and approved by Council. Simple amendments that do not affect floor space, will be required immediately on all building permit applications. (See Table A) In order to avoid re-design of projects that are currently in the design process, all of the proposed amendments that have floor space implications will only apply to building permit applications submitted on or after August 15, 2003. (See Table B)

Table A - Enhanced Accessibility Provisions Effective Immediately

1.	An intercom system located at the main entrance to a condominium or apartment type building shall be installed with no user functions more than 1200 mm above the finished ground or floor area.
2.	All interior and exterior stairs and ramps that are accessible to the public shall have either a colour contrast or a distinctive pattern, readily apparent from both directions of travel to demarcate the leading edge of the tread and the leading edge of a landing as well as the beginning and end of a ramp.
3.	Door assemblies within dwelling units and common amenity areas shall: a) be operable by devices which do not require tight grasping or twisting of the wrist as the only means of operation, and b) operate when a force of not more than 38 N for exterior doors and not more than 22 N for interior doors is applied at the handle, push plate or latch-releasing device except for locations where acceptable to the Chief Building Official.
4.	All kitchen sinks and washbasins within dwelling units and common amenity spaces shall be provided with lever type faucets or be operable by devices which do not require tight grasping, or twisting of the wrist as the only means of operation.
5.	Reinforcement shall be provided in wall assemblies adjacent to a toilet and bathtub where such wall would accommodate the future installation of grab bars.

Table B - Enhanced Accessibility Provisions Effective August 15, 2003

1.	An accessible path of travel shall be provided from the main entrance and from any parking area or parking facility serving the building to entry doors of all dwelling units and to common amenity areas containing recreational, storage and laundry facilities for use by building occupants.
2.	Where washrooms are provided in public or common amenity areas of the building, the washrooms shall be accessible and available to both sexes.
3.	The interior main entry level floor of a dwelling unit must be level with the entry door threshold except where ramps or other methods conforming to Article 3.8.3.10. provide access.
4.	The main entry level of dwelling units must include a washroom that contains at least a washbasin and toilet. The doorway providing access to the washroom shall have a minimum clear opening of 800 mm. In order to allow a person in a wheelchair to use the facilities, a clear floor space of 750 mm wide by 1200 mm long shall be provided in front of the washbasin and toilet which is be clear of the door opening.
5.	<p>A clear space conforming to Clause 3.3.1.12.(10)(b) must be provided on each side of the entry door to each dwelling unit, except that the clear space beside the latching jamb of dwelling unit entry door may be reduced to 450 mm. Where it can be demonstrated that it is impractical to provide this space, the clear space requirement may be omitted provided the door is pre-wired with outlet boxes for a residential style door opener and related controls. (See notes)</p> <p>Notes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Where an option of pre-wiring is permitted is lieu of the required clear space on each side of the entry door, the extent of pre-wiring must be consistent with the sketch illustrated below. It is expected that this option will be indicated on the electrical drawings. The Electrical Plan Examiner's transmittal form/check list also reflects the use of this option to assist electrical designers.



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