

2018 British Columbia Fire Code Public Review of Proposed Changes



PROPOSED CHANGE: Emergency Lighting

CHANGE NUMBER: 2018-BCFC-02-Emergency Lighting

CODE REFERENCE: 2015 National Fire Code - Division B - Article 2.7.3.1., Appendix Note A-2.7.3.1.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

It is proposed to further clarify that the British Columbia Fire Code (BCFC) is not intended to retroactively apply current requirements for means of egress lighting, emergency lighting, and exit signs to existing buildings.

PROBLEM/BACKGROUND:

The BCFC is based substantially on the model National Fire Code of Canada (NFC). The NFC is updated about every five years and British Columbia adopts most of the NFC requirements into the next edition of the BCFC. The 2018 BCFC will be based on the 2015 NFC with some changes specific to British Columbia.

The language of this BCFC requirement has caused some confusion regarding the application of the BCFC to existing buildings.

The code language shown below is the proposed final code language that will appear in the 2018 BCFC. Comments submitted should focus on the changes noted. Changes from the 2012 BCFC to the 2015 NFC are not identified.

2018 PROPOSED BRITISH COLUMBIA CODE LANGUAGE (~~Deleted text~~ / Added text):

2.7.3.1. Installation and Maintenance

- 1) ~~Exit~~ *Means of egress* lighting, ~~exit signs and~~ emergency lighting, *exit signs and the location of exit signs in buildings* shall conform to ~~be provided in buildings in conformance with~~ the British Columbia Building Code. (See Note A-2.7.3.1.(1).)

A-2.7.3.1.(1)

Subsections 3.2.7. and 3.4.5. of Division B of the British Columbia Building Code describe the requirements for the placement of exit signs and for emergency and non-emergency lighting.

It is not intended that existing buildings or their systems and components be required to be upgraded with each new edition of the British Columbia Building Code unless the requirements apply per Article 1.1.1.1. of Division A of the British Columbia Building Code. For example, newly installed or replaced exit signs must conform to the requirements of the current edition of the British Columbia Building Code, but other existing signs that complied when the building was constructed or previously altered are not required to be upgraded as a result (unless as a function of ongoing maintenance).

RATIONALE FOR CHANGE:

To clarify the application of the BCFC's requirements for means of egress lighting, emergency lighting, and exit signs.

JUSTIFICATION/EXPLANATION:

The BCFC points to the British Columbia Building Code (BCBC) (Division A, Part 1) to determine when requirements for means of egress lighting, emergency lighting, and exit signs apply. It is not intended that these requirements be applied retroactively to existing buildings that do not conform to the current edition of the BCBC, unless the BCBC applies per Article 1.1.1.1. of Division A. Typically, this is when the building is renovated or is subject to an addition, or when building systems and components are voluntarily replaced.

However, Sentence 2.7.3.1.(1) as written, has been misinterpreted to apply to, and require the upgrading of existing buildings and systems or components. The proposed changes clarify:

- the application of lighting requirements includes lighting in means of egress as required by the BCBC, not just in exits;
- there is no requirement that existing signage be removed and replaced to current standards (e.g., removal of 'EXIT' signs and replacement with the 'running man' pictogram); and
- that Article 1.1.1.1. of Division A of the BCBC determines when requirements apply to existing buildings.