



ICC ORANGE EMPIRE CHAPTER CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

QUESTION AND CODE SECTIONS:

Can single family dwellings (R-3) have exterior exit doors swing out over exterior landings with a lower floor level than the interior finish floor level?

BACKGROUND:

2007 California Building Code (CBC) – Section 1008.1.4 **Floor elevation**, states:

“There shall be a floor or landing on each side of a door. Such floor or landing shall be the same elevation on each side of the door. Landings shall be level except for exterior landings, which are permitted to have a slope not to exceed 0.25 unit vertical in 12 units horizontal (2-percent slope).”

Exception 1.1 allows (for R2 & R3) a door to open at the top step of an interior flight of stairs, provided the door does not swing over the top step.

Exception 1.2 allows screen doors and storm doors to swing out over stairs or landings.

Exception 2 allows exterior doors as provided in section 1003.5, exception 1, and section 1018.2 that are not part of an accessible route.

(Section 1003.5, exception 1 allows a single step with a maximum rise of 7 inches for R-3 and U occupancies at exterior doors that are not required to be accessible.)

(Section 1018.2 requires at least one exterior exit door for R-3 occupancies to meet the door size requirements found in section 1008.1.1.)

Exception 3 allows Group R-3 occupancies that are not required to be adaptable or accessible, to have a lower landing, at an exterior doorway that does not exceed 7.75 inches below the top of the threshold, provided the door does not swing over the landing but exterior storm or screen doors may swing out over the lower landing.

Exception 4 limits the difference in finish materials to 0.5 inch.

DISCUSSION:

The code sections mentioned above from the 2007 CBC allow screen doors and storm doors to swing out over a lower exterior landing. The code does NOT allow for exterior exit doors to swing out over a lower landing. Additionally, Section 1008.1.4, exceptions 1.1 and 3, specifically prohibits a door from swinging out over a flight of stairs or a lower landing.

Furthermore, section 1008.1 states, “*Doors provided for egress purposes in numbers greater than required by this code shall meet the requirements of this section.*”

The International Code Council (ICC) publication – **2006 International Building Code Commentary** discusses section 1003.5 exception 1 on page 10-13. The commentary states: “*Exception 1 allows up to a 7-inch step at exterior doors to avoid blocking the outward swing of the door by a buildup of snow or ice...*”

CHAPTER INTERPRETATION:

1. The CBC clearly states exterior doors are not allowed to swing out over lower landings.
2. The International Code Council (ICC) publication – *2006 International Building Code Commentary*, neglected to insert the words, “*screen and storm*” between the words “*exterior doors*” on page 10-13 as cited above. The statement should be interpreted as follows:

“*Exception 1 allows up to a 7-inch step at exterior screen and storm doors to avoid blocking the outward swing of the door by a buildup of snow or ice...*”

DATE OF CHAPTER MEMBERS' APPROVAL: July 17, 2008