

Section 3 – Definitions

“Access staircase” means a staircase so designed and constructed as to allow firemen safe and unobstructed access to all storeys of a building in the event of fire.

“Balcony approach” means a balcony which is used as an external approach to a common staircase and which serves two or more occupancies.

“Basement” means any storey, which is below the lower or lowest ground storey and from which any exit route is in an upward direction. A basement may have one or more sides open to the air, due to a sloping site.

“Bounding Conditions” means the set of fire safety provisions that must be maintained as a result of a performance-based approach to the fire safety design and that if altered will invalidate the performance-based fire safety design.

“Compartment area” means the area of the floors of a building contained within the external surfaces of a fire compartment.

“Compartment volume” means the volume of the portion of a building contained within the external surfaces of the walls and floors forming a fire compartment.

“Cubical extent”, in relation to a building, means the space contained within the external surfaces of its walls and roof of a building and the upper surface of the floor of its lowest storey, excluding any space within any enclosure on the roof used exclusively for accommodating a water tank or lift gear or any other services, and, if any side of the building is not enclosed by a wall, that side shall be deemed to be enclosed by a wall extending downwards from the outer edge of the roof;

“Deadend travel distance” means the overall length of travel within an exit route before an alternative exit is available.

“Discharge value” means the number of persons that a staircase of a given width may be assumed to be capable of discharging from a given number of storeys.

“Element of construction” means:

- any floor, beam, column, or hanger;
- any loadbearing wall or loadbearing member other than a member forming the roof or part of the roof;
- any required staircase including the landings and supports thereto.

(Note: Any raised flooring system at a height of not more than 600 mm from the original floor will not be considered as an element of construction. In such case, the compartment walls or other fire barriers should start from the structural floor and not just rest on the raised floor.)

“Emergency Vehicular Access (EVA)” means a vehicular access used or to be used for access of a vehicle of the Fire Services Department to the building in the event of a fire or other emergency.

“Exit door” means a door from a storey, flat, or room, which gives access from such storey, flat or room on to an exit route.

“Exit route” means the continuous path of travel from any part of a building to the ultimate place of safety, not including a revolving door, lift or escalator (see Diagram A2).

“Factory” is as defined in the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Cap. 59).

“Fire barrier” means the construction that has a fire resistance rating separating one space from another. It may form part of a fire compartment.

“Fire compartment” means a space enclosed by fire barriers or appropriate construction to all sides such that fire will not spread from the space; or spread into adjoining space.

“Firefighting and rescue stairway” means a stairway accommodating an access staircase and a fireman’s lift;

“Fire resistance rating (FRR)” means the period of time that a building element is capable of resisting the action of fire when tested in accordance with ISO 834, BS 476: Parts 20 to 24 or equivalent. Fire resistance ratings are designated by three terms, to represent the make up of the element of construction, i.e. X/Y/Z, where:

- X - Stability fire resistance rating (minutes)
- Y - Integrity fire resistance rating (minutes)
- Z - Insulation fire resistance rating (minutes)

“Fire safety provisions” means the installations, equipments, systems, building elements or methods used in a building to achieve the fire safety objectives as stated within Subsection A2. The provisions include active fire safety provisions (sprinklers, detectors, alarms etc.) and passive fire safety provisions.

“Fireman’s lift” means a lift designed and installed to be used by firemen in the event of a fire;

“Flat” means a separate and self-contained dwelling, forming a part of a building from some other part of which it is divided horizontally, and includes a maisonette and tenement floor.

“Ground storey” means the storey in which is situated an entrance from a street to the building and, where a building fronts or abuts on more than one street and due to a difference in street levels there are two or more entrances serving different streets and situated in different storeys, means each such storey.

“Industrial undertaking” is as defined in the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Cap. 59).

“Maisonette” means a flat not being a tenement floor and having more than one but not more than three storeys.

“Non-combustible” means a material which satisfies a recognized non-combustibility test stipulated in Part E.

“Notifiable workplace” is as defined in the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Cap. 59).

“Occupant capacity” means the number of persons, which the room or storey or fire compartment of a building, for the purposes of this Code, is capable of holding. Provided that where there is on any storey the entrance to a maisonette, that storey shall, for the purpose of this definition, be deemed to include all floors of the maisonette.

“Passive fire safety provisions” means permanent building features and architectural aspects of a building that prevent fire development and spread. Examples include required staircases, fire rated doors, spandrels, fire barriers, linings with low combustibility etc.

“Places of public entertainment” means any building or that part of a building constructed or adapted to be used for any public entertainment and includes the place itself and any means of ingress or egress for the purpose of and in connection with such place, and in cases in which such place consists of a part or parts only of a building includes also any other part or parts of such building used or intended to be used for the purpose of and in connection with such place. Public entertainment in this context is as defined in the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance (Cap. 172).

“Protected exit” means a required staircase, or ramp, or passageway, being enclosed by fire barriers, that leads to an ultimate place of safety.

“Protected lobby” means a lobby formed by fire and smoke resisting construction in accordance with Part C to prevent the spread of heat and smoke.

“Redevelopment site” means a site that is not a virgin site.

“Refuge floor” means a protected floor that serves as a refuge for the occupants of the building to assemble in case of fire, for a short period of time, before reaching an ultimate place of safety.

“Required staircase” means an access staircase, whether in a firefighting and rescue stairway or not, or a staircase required for means of escape in case of fire.

“Smoke seal” means a sealing compound or component installed at an opening to limit the spread of smoke between two adjoining spaces. Typically it is provided to a door, damper or other penetration where smoke is required to be inhibited.

“Special hazard” means a hazard that requires special consideration given the occupant awareness, knowledge of building, fire services systems installed, physical construction and location and width of exits, relative to the ignition risk, spread of fire, generation of smoke, heat or toxic gases that may endanger the life and safety of the occupants. Areas of special hazard have a relatively higher fire risk with regard to ignition. These areas include transformer rooms, central A/C plant rooms, lift machine rooms, main switch rooms, generator rooms, boiler rooms, dangerous goods store rooms, fuel tank rooms and the like.

“Storey” means the space between the upper surface of every floor and the upper surface of the floor next above it where such a floor exists and in the case of a top storey the space between the upper surface of that floor and the mean height of the ceiling or roof.

“Travel distance” means the horizontal distance measured on the floor along the centreline of the exit route between the furthest point (most remote point) on a storey or within a fire compartment to:

- (a) the centre of the fire rated door to a protected exit or a required staircase, as the case may be; or
- (b) if there is no such door, the first tread of the required staircase; or
- (c) if the exit route leads directly to an ultimate place of safety, any one of the discharge points to the ultimate place of safety.

“Ultimate place of safety” means a place of safety for final exit discharge where a protected exit terminates that provides access to an area clear of the effects of fire, where people may safely disperse. The ultimate place of safety is a street or an open area outside the subject building and connects directly with a street, with a width not less than 1.5m wide or the total required width of exit routes discharging into the area, whichever is greater, from which occupants can safely disperse away from the subject building.

“Usable floor area” means the aggregate of the areas of the floor or floors in a storey or a building excluding, unless otherwise specified, any staircase, public circulation space, lift landings, lavatories, water-closets, kitchens in flats, and any space occupied by machinery for any lift, air-conditioning system or similar service provided for the building.

“Use Classification” means the categories of use of premises stipulated in Table A1.

“Virgin site” means a site where there is no temporary or permanent building, including a building exempted from the Buildings Ordinance under the Buildings Ordinance (Application to the New Territories) Ordinance, in existence before.

Diagram A2: Illustration of Exit Route



