BUILDING CODE CHANGES REDUCE CHOICE IN
COMPLIANT BLEACHER PURCHASES
By George Herberger

Recently the State adopted a new building code that requires all new bleachers in the State to be equipped with an aisle with handrails, guardrails and an ADA cutout incorporated into the structure. This is a major change to the Code. This change requires an explanation and I will try to communicate the recent events leading to this change.


The NJ Registry dated 3/3/08 reports the State adopted the revised IBC2006. According to a representative from DCA Code Assistance Unit, Chapter 10, Sections 1025.6.2, 1025.6.3, all of 1025.9, 1025.10, 1025.11, 1025.12, 1025.14, and 1025.15 all pertain to bleachers, along with ICC/ANSI A117.1-2005 for Accessibility. They can be viewed at http://www.njcode.org.

IBC2006 Section 1024.1.1 Bleachers in which the ICC300 referral is now located. The State of New Jersey has deleted this section claiming ‘the IBC2006 contains sufficient requirements for bleachers and the reference to ICC300 standard was not necessary’. Since this section was deleted and the eight exceptions for not having an aisle are not included elsewhere in the IBC2006, all the new bleachers in the State of New Jersey must have a vertical aisle to meet code. Vertical aisles are usually only installed on bleachers 5 row or higher which then kicks in the guardrail requirement.

The ADA cutout requirement is noted in the ICC American National Standard Institute A117.1 Standard Chapter 8, 802.6, Integration of Wheelchair Space Location, where a wheelchair space shall be an integral part of any seating area.

In plain English, low-rise bleachers, bleachers without an aisle, without guardrails or without an ADA cutout seating will not meet the current Uniform Building Code of the State of New Jersey. This will translate into higher procurement costs to municipalities trying to improve their facilities. On the bright side, these reusable bleachers.

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