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## 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.

Since May 5, 2003, the State's building code document was the International Building Code 2000 (IBC2000). Section 1008.7 dealt with aisle requirements. This section gave eight conditions which if met, would exclude the need for an aisle. The popular 3 and 4 row "Low-Rise" bleachers were designed to conform to these conditions.

When the IBC was revised in 2003, they decided to also publish the International Code Council 300 (ICC300) to deal specifically with bleachers, grandstands and telescoping/folding bleachers. The aisle details, including the eight exceptions, were moved to ICC300 Section 405.1. Section 1024.1.1 of the IBC2003 referred to ICC300 requirements. New Jersey did not adopt the 2003 revisions, remaining instead with the IBC2000 until March of 2008.

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, 1025.13, 1025.14 and 1025.15 all pertain to bleachers, along with ICC/ANSI A117.1-2003 for Accessibility. They can be viewed at <http://www.nj.gov/dca/codes/>

IBC2006 Section 1025.1.1 Bleachers is where 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 Code, all 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 seating cutout 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 requirements do provide bleachers that are more comfortable for adults and have better site lines than low-rise bleachers.

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