

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-54-99

December 6, 1999

The following is offered in response to your letter in which you request an interpretation of Section 1107.4.2.1 of the BOCA National Building Code/1996 portion of the 1999 State Building Code, as it applies to townhouse units in the above referenced project.

The units in question are two story townhouses, Use Group R-2, with an accessible route for persons with disabilities to the first floor of the unit only. The first floor contains a bathroom and kitchen which, you state, fully meet the requirements for Type A dwelling units. In addition, there is a large area, on an accessible route, designated for living, dining and sleeping, much the same as a studio apartment would be designed. The second floor of the townhouse, which is not accessible, contains two bedrooms, a bathroom and laundry facilities. Your question to me is, does the first floor meet the requirement for a Type A dwelling unit?

The answer to your question is found in the intent of Section 1107.4.2 of the above referenced code. Exception 1 to this section states "Where a multistory dwelling unit is provided with elevator service to only one floor, the floor provided with elevator service shall comply with the requirements for a Type A dwelling unit and a toilet facility shall be provided on that floor." Your design is similar in that only the first floor is on an accessible route, therefore if you provide a complete Type A dwelling unit on the first floor, the second floor is exempt from accessibility requirements.

In reading the ICC/ANSI A-117.1-1998, which sets forth the requirements for Type A dwelling units, I see no specific requirement for a confined or enclosed sleeping area, therefore the studio apartment setting you propose is acceptable. However, I take note of the fact that you propose to place the laundry facilities on the second floor. This is not in keeping with Section 1002.3.1 of the ICC/ANSI A-117.1-1998 which requires an accessible route to all elements of the dwelling unit. I note that on the small scale plan which accompanied your letter, a laundry room is shown adjacent to the lobby in the North Wing. If this Laundry Room is fully accessible and available to all residents of both wings of the building, it would meet the requirements for an accessible laundry facility. If not, then the laundry facilities on the second floor of the townhouse must be relocated to the first floor of the townhouse and made to comply with Section 1002.10 of the ICC/ANSI A-117.1-1998.

It is my interpretation that, once the laundry facility issue is resolved, the first floor of the townhouse units as described will comply with requirements for Type A dwelling units, and the second floor of said townhouse units need not be accessible.