


DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION

City and County of San Francisco
1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

Building Code Interpretation Egress 005

Exit Barrier Requirements

Subject: Exit barrier construction requirements	Date: March 27, 2008
San Francisco Building Code Sections: 1005.2, 1008.3, 1011.3, 1011.5.1, & 1020.1.5	Code Year: 2007
Approved By: Isam Hasenin, Director, P.E., C.B.O. Barbara A. Schultheis, Fire Marshall	Signatures: 
Question: What requirements apply to barriers installed in exit enclosures that prevent persons from unintentionally continuing to levels below the level of exit discharge?	

Answer: Barriers, such as gates, in exit enclosures that prevent persons from unintentionally continuing to levels below the level of exit discharge must meet all of the following requirements: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Swing of barrier must be in the direction of egress2. Barrier must be self-closing3. If hardware is provided, such hardware must meet all egress hardware requirements4. Barrier, in any position, shall not decrease the required exit width by more than one-half.5. Signage, in addition to other exit signs required in the code, shall be provided, including:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. a sign on the barrier, placed on the side facing the direction of egress travel, that reads "NOT AN EXIT" in all uppercase letters (in addition to tactile lettering) complying with the signage lettering requirements of Section 1011, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6" minimum letter height• 2" minimum letter width• 0.75" minimum principal letter stroke• 0.375" minimum space between letters

- Letters shall have a high contrast with the background
6. If a landing is not provided at both sides of the barrier at the top of the stair where the barrier is located, the barrier must
 - a. have two horizontal components, one of which has the lowest edge located between 6 inches and 27 inches of the walking surface and the other at not more than 39 inches above the walking surface, and
 - b. be substantially open to allow both visibility and smoke evacuation through the barrier.

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