

**ADMINISTRATIVE BULLETIN**

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**NO. AB-020** :

**DATE** : September 18, 2002 (Updated 01/01/2014 for code references)

**SUBJECT** : Fire and Life Safety

**TITLE** : **Local Equivalency for Exiting Through a Garage Area for Type V, Group R Buildings**

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**PURPOSE** : The purpose of this Administrative Bulletin is to provide standards and procedures for the application and case-by-case review of requests for a Local Equivalency to allow exiting from a rear yard through garages in Type V [wood frame], Group R Occupancies when such paths of exit travel do not strictly comply with the provisions of the 2013 San Francisco Building Code (SFBC).

This bulletin permits the continuing application of code provisions of former editions of the SFBC regarding exiting through Group R garages. In conformance with current State law, requests for approval of this alternate path of exit travel will be considered on a case-by-case basis when reasonable equivalency is proposed.

**REFERENCES** : 2013 San Francisco Building Code

- Section 104A.2.7, Modifications.
- Section 104A.2.8, Alternate materials, alternate design and methods of construction.
- Chapter 10, Means of Egress.

DBI Administrative Bulletin AB-005, Procedures for Approval of Local Equivalencies

**DISCUSSION** : Project sponsors may request the application of this Local Equivalency allowing exiting through a garage without strict compliance with the provisions of SFBC Chapter 10 when it can be demonstrated on a case-by-case basis that there are practical difficulties in meeting the provisions of the SFBC, that the modification is in conformance with the intent and purpose of the SFBC, and that reasonable equivalency is provided in fire-protection and structural integrity.

Such proposed modification may be approved by the Department if it conforms with the below listed standard provisions. The Department of Building Inspection and other City departments may impose additional requirements, in addition to those listed below, in the approval of any request for a code modification or alternate based upon individual building and property conditions. The San Francisco Fire Department may also review such case-by-case requests.

If a project sponsor wishes to propose means of egress which differ from those listed below, proposals for the use of alternate materials, designs, or methods of construction may be submitted for review in the same manner as for this Local Equivalency. The Department of Building Inspection may require that additional substantiation be provided supporting any claims made for such proposals.

**Procedure for Application of Local Equivalencies**

Project sponsors wishing to apply local equivalencies must fill out and submit the Request for Approval of Local Equivalency Form. Fees to be paid and scheduling of review are as noted on that form. Following DBI review, each request will be approved, approved with conditions, disapproved, or placed on "Hold" pending submittal of additional information.

Further details of procedures for the review of local equivalencies and appeal of departmental determinations may be found in Administrative Bulletin AB-005, Procedures for Approval of Local Equivalencies.

**Conditions of Local Equivalency**

A required exit access from dwelling units in a Type V, Group R occupancy may be permitted to use a garage as part of the exit access on a case-by-case basis when all of the following provisions or other approved equivalent provisions are met and when the project sponsor provides documentation of the practical difficulties involved in carrying out the provisions of the regular code.

The standard provisions of Local Equivalency include:

1. The entire garage area and any covered driveway area shall be provided with ordinary-temperature, quick-response fire sprinklers; and
2. The building has only one street frontage, and such street frontage is not greater than 37-1/2 feet; and
3. The path of exit travel through the garage shall be marked by at least 2 inches wide stripes placed parallel at 24 inches on center in clearly contrasting colors. The marked path shall be at least 10 feet wide, except that portions may be 3 feet wide when used solely for exiting and when separated from any parking area or covered driveway by permanent noncombustible railings or building walls at least 3 feet high. Such railings or building walls shall extend the full length of the pathway on each side, and any railings shall be set in a concrete curb at least 12 inches high and 8 inches thick; and
4. The path of exit travel through the garage shall be posted with a permanent, prominently displayed sign in block letters not less than 3 inches in height reading: "EXIT PATH. DO NOT OBSTRUCT"; and
5. All doorways or openings in the path of exit travel shall be a minimum of three feet wide. Sliding and overhead doors shall not be permitted in buildings under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Fire Department. In other buildings, sliding and overhead doors shall not be permitted when the occupant load served is greater than ten. Any door installed in the path of exit travel shall meet the requirements of SFBC Section 1008.1; and
6. The path of exit travel shall be illuminated in accordance with SFBC Section 1006; and
7. A permit application and related submittal documents shall detail all construction which is approved as a result of this request for local equivalency. No work to create a required exit which passes through a garage in a Type V, Group R Occupancy shall be done prior to approval and issuance of such permit application.

Originally Signed By:

Frank Y. Chiu, Director  
October 3, 2002

Gary Massetani, Fire Marshal  
October 9, 2002

Approved by the Building Inspection Commission on September 18, 2002

Attachment A: Request for Approval of Local Equivalency

**ATTACHMENT A**

**DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION**  
**City & County of San Francisco**  
**1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, California 94103-2414**

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF LOCAL EQUIVALENCY FOR MODIFICATION  
 OR ALTERNATE MATERIALS, DESIGN OR METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION**

DATE SUBMITTED \_\_\_\_\_

[Note: This form shall be recorded as part of the permanent construction records of the property]

If no permit application has been filed, a Preapplication Review Fee is required for review of a request for local equivalency or modification, per SFBC Table 1A-B, Item 5. Additional fees may be required by Fire Department and other City review agencies.

If a permit application has been filed, no additional fees are required for this review.

Permit Application # \_\_\_\_\_

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Block and Lot: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Occupancy Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Construction: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Stories: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe Use of Building \_\_\_\_\_

Under the authority of the 2013 San Francisco Building Code, Sections 104A.2.7 and 104A.2.8; the 2013 San Francisco Mechanical Code, Section 103.0; the 2013 San Francisco Electrical Code, Section 89.117; and the 2013 San Francisco Plumbing Code, Section 301.2; the undersigned requests modifications of the provisions of these codes and/or approval of alternate materials, designs or methods of construction. Two copies of supporting documents, including plans showing the proposed modifications or alternate materials, design or methods of construction, are attached.

Regular Code Requirement (specify Code and Sections)

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## Proposed Modification or Alternate

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Case-by-Case Basis of Request - Describe the practical difficulties presented in meeting the specific conditions of the code and how the proposed modification or alternate meets the intent of the code. A separate form should be filled for each requested modification or alternate. Attach copies of any Administrative Bulletin, Code Ruling, reference, test reports, expert opinions, etc., which support this request. The Department may require that an approved consultant be hired by the applicant to perform tests or analysis and to submit an evaluation report to the Department for consideration.

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Requested by:	PROJECT SPONSOR	ARCHITECT/ENGINEER
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Print Name:	<hr/>	<hr/>
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Signature:	<hr/>	<hr/>	[ PROFESSIONAL STAMP HERE]
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Telephone:	<hr/>	<hr/>
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## PLAN REVIEWER COMMENTS:

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## RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approve

Approve with conditions

Disapprove

[signed off/dated by:]

Plan Reviewer:

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Division Manager:

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for Director of

Bldg. Inspection

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for Fire Marshal:

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## CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL or OTHER COMMENTS

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