

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-08-12

March 13, 2012

The following is in response to your request for formal interpretation dated March 1, 2012.

Question:

If a space in the basement of a building is an unoccupied mechanical space and is not an occupied portion of the building, do the requirements of the 2005 CSBC Chapter 10, Means of Egress, apply to that space?

Answer:

Yes, (unless otherwise governed by other sections of the code for access to mechanical equipment and spaces) such space would have to comply. The Commentary to Means of Egress states in part that the means of egress is the path traveled by building occupants to leave the building and the site on which it is located. It includes all interior and exterior elements that the occupants must utilize as they make their way from every room and **usable space** within the building to a public way such as a street or alley. The elements that make up the means of egress create the lifeline that occupants utilize to travel out of the structure and to a safe distance from the structure. The means of egress provisions of this chapter strive to provide a reasonable level of life safety in every structure. According to Gary Nelson, of the International Code Council, personnel working on or servicing the mechanical equipment within this space are not exempt from being provided with a means of egress that complies with the code in order to access/exit such mechanical room or space safely.