



Code Interpretation Committee
Response Form

IBC 1005.3.2

DEPARTMENT OF
BUILDING & FIRE SAFETY

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Code Interpretation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Code Inquiry
<input type="checkbox"/>	Training Issue
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alternate Material
<input type="checkbox"/>	Department Policy

CIC #: 00015

Question/issue:

1. When is a vertical exit enclosure required?
2. Can a stairway that is not required to be a vertical exit enclosure have surrounding walls?
3. Can an interior stair with surrounding walls that is not required to be a vertical exit enclosure be required to provide rated walls and penetrations?
4. Can you build a vertical enclosure that does not require it to be fire-rated?

Position:

1. A vertical exit enclosure is required at all interior stairs per Section 1005.3.2, however, the Section also lists 8 exceptions. Unless a stair meets one of the exceptions, it must be within a vertical exit enclosure.
2. Yes. An interior stair that meets one of the exceptions to require enclosure within a vertical exit enclosure may have surrounding walls. These walls may fully enclose the stair, including doors, or may partially enclose the stair on any amount of sides.
3. Yes. Even though the stair may not require a vertical exit enclosure, all other aspects of the code still apply. The walls surrounding the stair may be required to be rated due to many reasons, such as:
 - Travel distance,
 - Adjoining room requirements
 - A given level of protection already in place, etc.
4. No. If the stair is labeled on the plans as "vertical exit enclosure," "stair enclosure" or similar, it must meet such requirements. The plans should be revised to comply with the requirements, or re-labeled.

Justification:

The position is supported by the language in the code and policy IBC 10.03 of the Building Plans Examination Division.

Code references:

IBC Section 1002, 1005.3.2, 1005.3.2.1, 706.3.1, 706.4, IBC Commentary Volume 1, Page 10-88, 89

MANAGEMENT APPROVAL	
<i>Michael W. Bouse</i> (Building Official)	Date: <i>3-28-06</i>