

Report on Means of Egress from the Second Floor of Pier Building C

Pier Committee Report

By John Hiatt, Member

October 5, 2022

On September 28, 2022 the SSB Town Administrator, Bill Shanahan, and the SSB Fire Marshall, Keith Williams, sent an email entitled 'Means of Egress from Above Grade Locations' to the SSB Pier Committee. The email was in response to a request by the SSB Pier Committee regarding whether the second floor of building C could be used as a place for the customers of a proposed downstairs restaurant to carry their food up to for consumption at tables and chairs located there.

In the email Mr. Williams stated that the second floor of Bldg C required two means of egress in order to be used for public occupancy per the 2018 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) model codes, which have specifically been adopted (with amendments) by the South Carolina Fire Code (SCFC).

However, the Pier Committee was not certain if Mr. William's in his code interpretations was aware that an exception can be found in the South Carolina Fire Code (SCFC) Chapter 10, Means of Egress, Section 1006.3.3 entitled Single Exits.

Section 1006.3.3 states: "A single exit or access to a single exit shall be permitted from any story...where one of the following conditions exists: #(1.) The occupant load...and common path of egress travel distance do not exceed the values in table...1006.3.3(2)." (Attached)

Referencing the South Carolina Building Code section 303.1 "Assembly Group A", which is what the "A" in the Table 1006.3.3(2) "Occupancy" column appears to refer, it defines occupancy as the gathering of persons for the purpose of "food and drink consumption," among others. Thus, Table 1006.3.3(2) appears to allow customer access to stories with only one exit as long as the Maximum Occupant Load does not exceed 49 persons and the Egress Travel Distance does not exceed 75 feet. The travel distance on the second floor of Building C is not in excess of 75 feet.

Other parts of the SCFC only permit the number of occupants that a rules based floor space calculation by the Fire Marshall determines. In the case of Building C, the second floor occupancy actually allowed by the Fire Marshall's calculation may be less than 49, but that is not material in applying Section 1006.3.3 toward the use of the second floor by the public as long as whatever the final occupancy allowed is 49 or less.

In addition, Section 1006.3.3 # (2.) also permits occupancy of a floor above grade in accordance with Table 1006.3.3(2) if the exit discharges directly to the outside at ground level, which the second story on building C does. So it appears there are two South Carolina Fire Code provisions that allow the use of the second story of building C for public occupancy so long as the occupant load doesn't exceed 49 and the travel distance to the exit doesn't exceed 75 ft.

The author's research included talking with the pier's architect, Troy Roehm. From him I learned that the window to be installed in the second floor of building C is planned to be opaque.

Therefore, in my reply to Mr. Shanahan and Mr. William's email, in which I detailed the findings of this report, I also asked on behalf of the Pier Committee if the opaque window could be changed to see through glass so the customers occupying that second story could be afforded the grand views of the pier and ocean available from that floor.

At a subsequent Pier Committee meeting on October 10, 2022, Fire Marshall Williams addressed the Committee and stated that the second floor of Building C could be used for occupancy by the public so long as pertinent regulations were followed.

The Pier Committee has not yet received a response to the request for a clear glass window upstairs in Building C, except for being told the request is being looked into.

[BE] TABLE 1006.3.3(2)

STORIES WITH ONE EXIT OR ACCESS TO ONE EXIT FOR OTHER OCCUPANCIES

STORY	OCCUPANCY	MAXIMUM OCCUPANT LOAD PER STORY	MAXIMUM COMMON PATH OF EGRESS TRAVEL DISTANCE (feet)
First story above or below grade plane	A, B ^b , E, F ^b , M, U	49	75
	H-2, H-3	3	25
	H-4, H-5, I, R-1, R-2 ^a , c	10	75
	S ^b , d	29	75
Second story above grade plane	B, F, M, S ^d	29	75
Third story above grade plane and higher	NP	NA	NA