



## California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	02-05-04	Interpretation	03-043 <b>Revised</b>
Topic	Stairway Width in Group I, Division 1.1 Occupancies		
Code Section(s)	§1006.2, California Building Code (1995 ed)		
Requested by	Tuk Vorapani Schirmer Engineering Corporation 21221 S. Western Ave. #100 Torrance, CA 90501		

***When measuring the width of stairways in Group I, Division 1.1 occupancies, is it the intent of the code to provide a minimum of 44 inches of clear width between handrails or between walls?***

Section 1006.2 of the California Building Code (1995 ed) required a minimum stair width of 44 inches. However, this edition of the Code allowed the handrails to project into the width of the stairway by a maximum of 3.5 inches on each side. Consequently, the 1995 CBC did not require a minimum of 44 inches of clear width between handrails.

Therefore, in a stairway that was 44 inches wide, the clear space between rails could be 37 inches and still meet the requirements of the Code. At that time, the Code also required 44 inches of clear width on exit doors serving bed or litter patients, as per Section 1019.2, but did not require not a clear width of 44 inches throughout the exiting system.

Amendments to the 1998 CBC and subsequently continued in the 2001 CBC require a clear width of 44 inches throughout the exiting system including the stairs. Consequently, current code does not allow the projections to intrude into the required 44 clear width measured between handrails.