

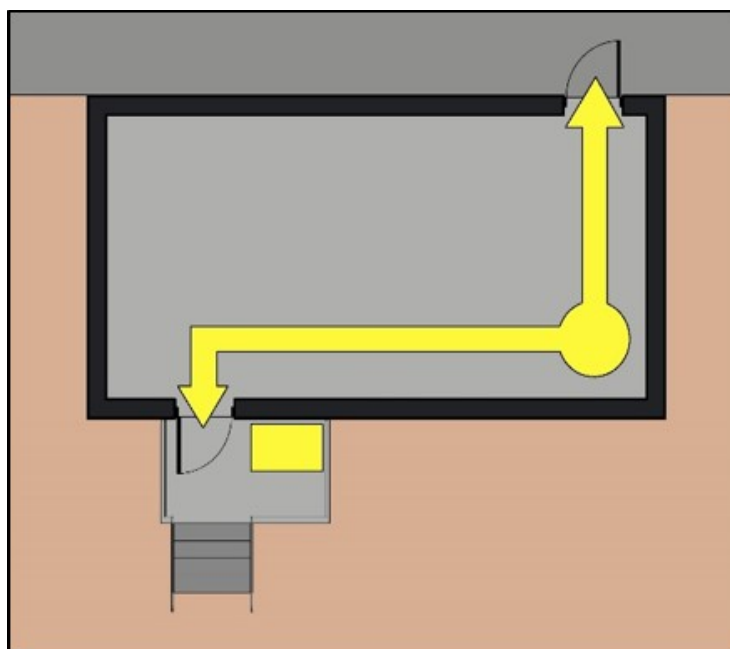
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Exterior Areas for Assisted Rescue

For new construction – Access to the Public Way is required from the required means of egress. Accessible spaces shall have not less than one *accessible means of egress*, providing a continuous path of travel from the accessible space to the public way or a safe dispersal area located at least 50 feet from the building in accord with VCC 1028.5. Required exits from the building that do not have an accessible path of travel to the public way or safe dispersal area may require an Exterior Area for Assisted Rescue at the level of exit discharge. (Areas of Refuge may also be used to fulfill this requirement – but that is an article for another day).

Steep terrain and other constraints can make it difficult to provide an accessible means of egress from building exits to the Public Way. The 2015 VCC permits an Exterior Area for Assisted Rescue, a protected area located immediately outside a building exit, where a connecting accessible route to a public way from the level of exit discharge is not practicable. The Exterior Area for Assisted Rescue is an open air location where a physically disabled building occupant can safely wait for rescue assistance.

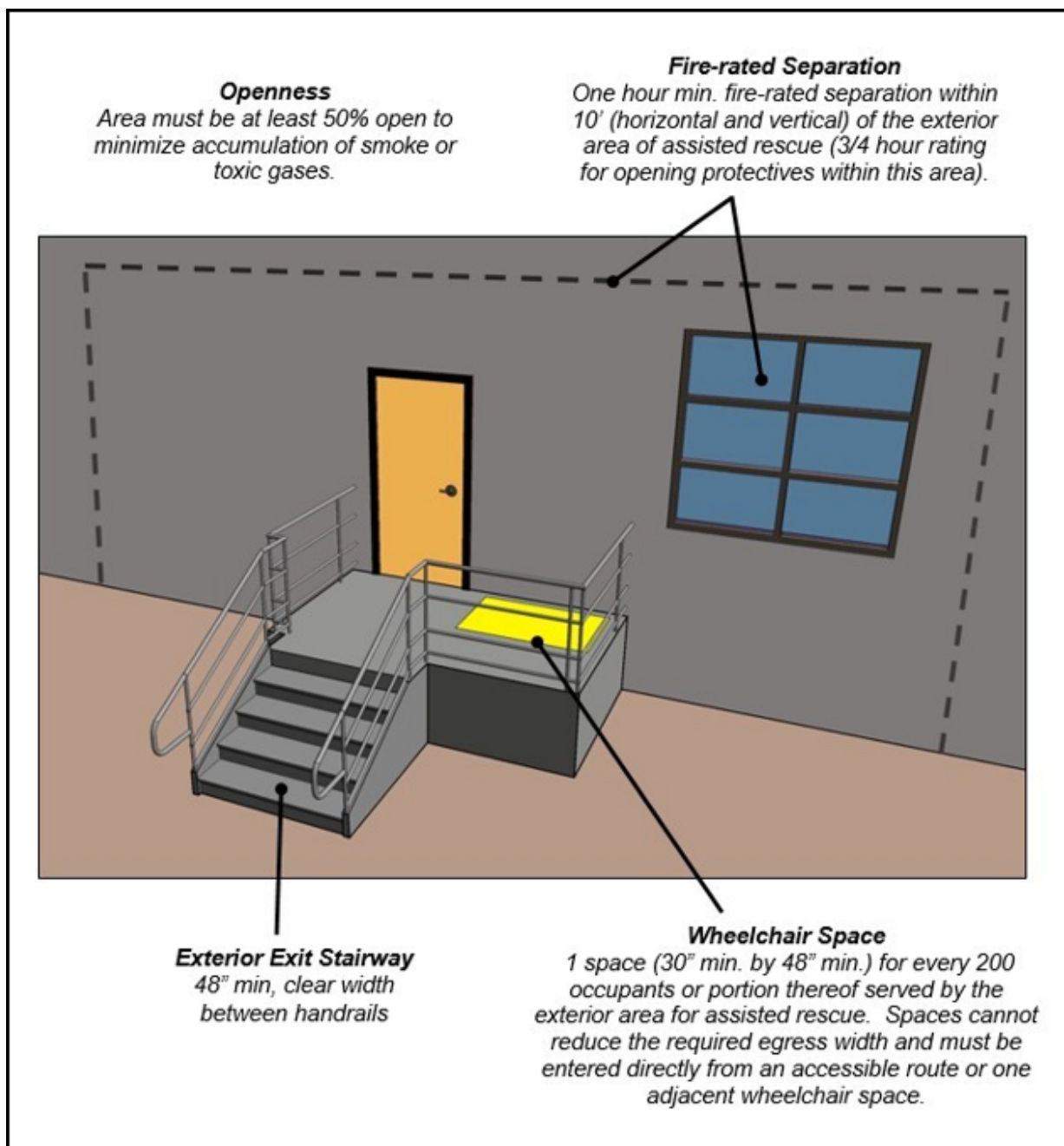


Exterior Area for Assisted Rescue

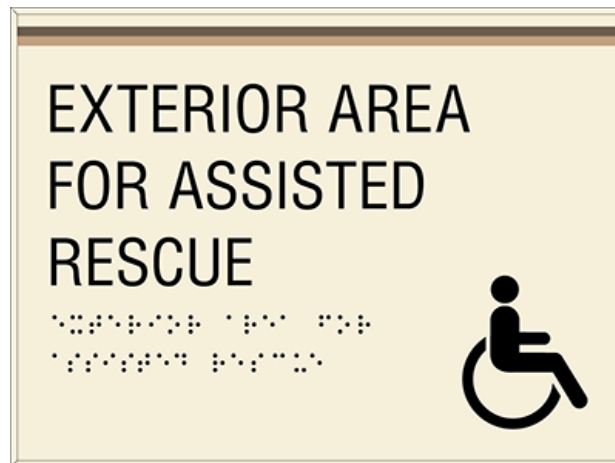
The requirements for Exterior Areas for Assisted Rescue can be found in the 2015 Virginia Construction Code Section 1009.9 (formerly Section 1007.7 in the 2012 VCC).

This section covers:

- **Size:** Based on occupant load served with spaces sized to accommodate wheelchairs.
- **Separation:** Fire separation from the interior of the building.
- **Openness:** Open to the outside air to minimize the accumulation of smoke or fumes. Sides of the exterior area of assisted rescue (other than separation walls) must be at least 50% open.
- **Stairways:** Required clear width of 48" between handrails with an exception for sprinklered buildings.



Signage (VCC 1009.9): Each door providing access to an Exterior Area for Assisted Rescue shall have a sign on the interior of the building (see example below). Raised characters and Braille are required, and the sign shall be illuminated where exit sign illumination is required.



Other requirements:

Directional Signage (VCC 1009.10) Each door providing access to an Exterior Area for Assisted Rescue shall have directional signage to locations of other accessible means of egress.

Instructions (VCC 1009.11) Instructions on the use of the area under emergency conditions shall be posted within the Exterior Area for Assisted Rescue. Each building's means of egress and fire and life safety plans are unique, so the specific wording of the instructions posted depends on the situation. The signage instructions shall inform the occupants how assistance will be provided at this location and direct ambulatory persons who are not assisting others to promptly egress to the Public Way. The intent of these instructions is to explain how assistance will be provided to those occupants who must wait for assisted rescue and to encourage ambulatory occupants to safely exit as soon as possible.

Evacuation Plans When fire and safety evacuation plans for buildings are provided in accordance with the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code, identify locations of Exterior Areas for Assisted Rescue on the evacuation plans.

Note: A two-way communication system is NOT required for an Exterior Area for Assisted Rescue.

Drawings courtesy of the [Access Board](#)

Egress and Fire Protection Issues in Open Parking Structures

Open parking structures have requirements for means of egress and fire protection that are sometimes overlooked in the designs submitted to DEB for review. The items discussed in this article reference the 2015 edition of the Virginia Construction Code (VCC), although similar requirements can also be found in the 2012 edition.

Means of Egress

Except for areas in the parking structure where access is limited to parking attendants, VCC 406.5.7 requires the means of egress to comply with Chapter 10. When considering the requirements for exit stairway enclosures, VCC 712.1.12 indicates that vertical openings are permitted for exit access stairways and ramps that comply with VCC 1019. In the case of open parking garages, VCC 1019.3 Item 6 is applicable when the stair serves only the garage. The number of exits required is based on the Number of Exits and Exit Access Doorways per VCC 1006 and Exit Access Travel Distance per VCC 1017.

Unlike enclosed exit stairways travel distance requirements, the exit access travel distance is based on the exception to VCC 1017.3, which indicates that the travel distance is measured to the closest riser of an exit access stairway or the closest slope of an exit access ramp. Essentially, with this exception, stairways in open parking garages serving only the garage are typically not required to be enclosed by fire resistance rated construction. In other words, if the allowable travel distance to the start of a stair in an open parking garage is exceeded, an additional exit access stairway would be required in order to comply, but a requirement for a rated enclosure would not come into play.

Elevators

VCC 406.5.9 indicates that vertical openings in open parking structures are not required to be enclosed except as required by VCC 406.5.7 (see above). Revisiting the Chapter 7 provisions for vertical openings, VCC 712.1.10.2 indicates that vertical openings for elevators in parking structures (open or enclosed) "shall be permitted". This is a provision that is unique to parking structures where the elevator, like the stairs, serves only the garage and is therefore not required to be enclosed by fire resistance rated construction. In most other scenarios (i.e., non-parking), VCC 713.14 and 3002.1 would govern elevator enclosures and require the hoistways to be constructed in accordance with the shaft provisions of VCC 713.

Standpipes

Where standpipes are required by VCC 905.3, this section indicates that Class I manual dry standpipes are allowed for open parking structures subject to freezing, except that the hose connections shall be located as required for Class II standpipes per VCC 905.5. The NFPA 14-2013 design requirements for Class I systems, including Sections such as 7.6.1 (pipe size), 7.7 & 7.8 (pressure), and 7.10 (flow rates and calculations) shall be met. VCC 905.5 requires that all portions of the building shall be within 30 feet of a nozzle attached to 100 feet of hose. The path of the 100 feet of hose shall be based on a pressurized hose, so the bends and turns need to be taken into account.

Portable Fire Extinguishers

Another issue commonly overlooked is the requirement for portable fire extinguishers per VCC 906.1. Based on Table 906.3(1), the maximum travel distance to the closest portable fire extinguisher is 75 feet for Class A hazards. Like exit access travel distance, the travel path needs to be considered in a natural and unobstructed manner in order to take all obstructions into account. A rectilinear path measurement will conservatively account for possible obstructions, such as parked vehicles.

In addition, VCC 906.5 through 906.9 shall be met. The requirements for conspicuous, unobstructed, and unobscured locations for portable fire extinguishers can be difficult to comply with due to the required mounting height in VCC 906.9.1 (not more than five feet above the floor). Conspicuous signage may be necessary so that the portable fire extinguishers comply with the conspicuous, unobstructed, and unobscured requirements.

VCCO Update

The following individuals recently passed the Virginia Construction Contracting Officer (VCCO) certification examination:

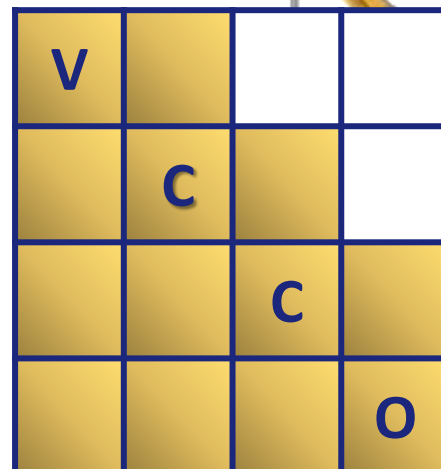
Shelly Crowe with Radford University

Teresa Hall with Virginia Commonwealth University

Erika Jones with Virginia Commonwealth University

Bill Pisa with the Department of General Services

Virginia Construction Contracting Officers are state and local government employees who have completed the necessary training and successfully passed a multi-part examination focused on state procurement law, policy and procedures. VCCOs perform several key functions in delivering projects including the procurement of professional services; the receipt, opening and review of bids; and in some cases the approval of CO-8 forms for recommending the award of construction contracts.



Job Opportunities with DEB

The Department of General Services, Division of Engineering and Buildings (DEB), is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code as it relates to buildings on state property, for developing state policies and procedures on the procurement of professional and construction services and for establishing accessibility standards for state owned buildings

DEB currently has three (3) job opportunities available – two Civil/Structural Engineer positions and one Architectural Reviewer position. These positions are posted on the [jobs.Virginia.gov website](http://jobs.Virginia.gov).

Direct links to each job posting are provided below.

The job postings provide:

- Position Information
- Job Description
- Minimum Qualifications
- Preferred Qualifications
- Special Requirements
- Application Instructions
- Contact Information
- Posting Specific Questions



WE056 – State Review Engineer (Temporary Wage Position)

We are seeking a qualified licensed Engineer to perform all tasks related to Civil and Structural Engineering Review of building construction plans and specifications and inspection of construction. This is a temporary(approximately 6 months), hourly wage position, to be worked in the DEB office during normal business hours (Monday thru Friday, 8:15 am - 5:00 pm) with a maximum of 29 hours per week and 1500 hours per year. No State benefits are provided.

EE036 – State Review Engineer (Full Time Classified Position)

We are seeking a qualified licensed Engineer to perform all tasks related to Civil and Structural Engineering Review of building construction plans and specifications; inspection of construction; and the development of policies and procedures for the procurement of design and construction services.

EE059 – State Review Architect (Full Time Classified Position)

We are seeking a qualified licensed Architect to perform all tasks related to Architectural Review of building construction plans and specifications; inspection of construction; and the development of policies and procedures for the procurement of design and construction services.