



Informal Interpretation Report Number 7150



Date February 22, 2013

Edition 2010

Section 311.7.9.3

Question:

Is it the intent of FBC Residential to require stairs in midflight (change of direction) becoming circular to meet the minimum tread depth of the Circular stair portion of the code? Also, is the intent of the word "may" used in the Circular stairways code mean the stairs can be designed to be less than the minimum required tread depth?

Answer

Q 1. No. The circular stair provisions are permissive and are an alternate to the tread depth and walkline requirements for winders.

The circular stair provisions are applicable to stairs that change direction in a sweeping circular pattern. While the code does not define sweeping, synonyms contained in the dictionary include extensive, broad, comprehensive. I would not classify a change of 90 degrees as sweeping. The circular stair is still required to meet the tread and walkline provisions of R311.7 with the modifications provided in R311.7.9.2.

Q 2. No. The Section is permissive and establishes the minimum tread depth for circular stairs at 9 inches. However, while the code allows a 9 inch tread for circular stairs, there is also a requirement for a 1 inch nosing, effectively providing 10 inches of

walking surface depth for the tread.
Again, this applies to stairs with a
sweeping turn which, in my view, is much
less than a 90 degree turn. The AHJ
would have to agree with the architect
that the turn created a circular stair

Commentary:

Q 3 in Comment. Yes.

Notice:

The Building Officials Association of Florida, in cooperation with the Florida Building Commission, the Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation, ICC, and industry and professional experts offer this interpretation of the Florida Building Code in the interest of consistency in their application statewide. This interpretation is informal, non-binding and subject to acceptance and approval by the local building official.