



Informal Interpretation Report Number 8109



Date May 07, 2018

Edition 2004

Section 106

Question:

Is a terrace or a balcony in a high-rise condominium building considered a "space or element" as defined? Is access to the balcony or terrace part of the accessible route requiring accessible thresholds?

Answer

Yes, there are requirements for the threshold but not the 1/2-inch limit. While the standard requirements for a threshold to a balcony is 3/4", the FBC-A - Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines specifically address Exterior deck, patio, or balcony surfaces in covered dwelling units. . Since the requester states high-rise, we will assume the balcony is concrete. FHAG Requirement 4 Item (5) will allow a 4-inch difference from the floor level of the interior of the dwelling unit if the balcony or deck floor is of impervious material such as concrete, brick, or flagstone.. . See the commentary attached.

Commentary:

While the interior of a private residence may not be required to comply with certain elements of the accessibility guidelines, Fair Housing requirements apply. Fair Housing falls under the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and has requirements that differ from accessibility in some cases. One of the important distinctions is the allowance for something to be made adaptable. The final decision rests with the Building Official and if it is appealed, the appeal would follow a process defined by the guidelines and laws in place at the time.

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.