HT 16: ENCOURAGE STAIRWAY USE WITH TRANSPARENT DOORS

New York City Building Code
Proposal developed by the Physical Activity Committee

Summary

Issue:
Opaque doors discourage stair use by making them difficult to locate, uninviting and less safe.

Recommendation:
Require doors to public access stairs to include glass.

Proposed Legislation, Rule or Study

Amendments to the New York City Building Code:

1. Add a new Section 1008.1.10 as follows:

1008.1.10 Glazing in doors. All doors in public access stairways required by Section 1007.3.1 shall have fire-protection rated glazing in accordance with Section 715.3.4.1. Glazing shall be present at eye level (between 5'7” and 6'5” measured from the floor), and shall encompass at least one third of the area of the door and half of the area of the door for doors accessible from the ground floor. Doors in any other stairway may include glazing that complies with Section 715.3.4.1.

Supporting Information

Issue – Expanded
For additional background see HT15 “Allow Stairway Use”

Stair climbing is a vigorous form of incidental physical activity that can easily be incorporated into the daily lives of most able-bodied people. Most doors to stairwells, however, are opaque, making the stairwells hard to find and uninviting. People also feel less safe traveling in spaces with limited visibility.

This proposal will require new stairwell doors for public access stairways (the proposal Allow Stairway Use requires each building to have at least one publicly accessible stairwell) to incorporate glass at eye level. Doing so will greatly improve stair visibility, increasing stair usage. It can also lead to a stronger sense of safety among people using the stairs, who may otherwise be uncomfortable traveling on a less visible staircase.

Environmental & Health Benefits
For environmental and health benefits see HT15 “Allow Stairway Use”

Cost & Savings
As described in the Executive Summary, Bovis Lend Lease prepared cost estimates for each Task Force proposal in the context of well-defined construction projects in specific buildings. Where possible, members of the Technical Committees prepared savings estimates for some of these projects and buildings. These cost and savings estimates are presented in the February 1st draft version of Appendix A. The innate uncertainty in how construction and operation will vary from one building to another, the complexity of the Task Force proposals, and the wide range of applications in which the proposals may be realized mean these figures are truly estimates.

This proposal was estimated to increase first capital costs by 0.0% to 0.02%, depending on building type. It was thus categorized as incurring no to a low capital cost increment.

Precedents
For precedents see HT15 “Allow Stairway Use”

LEED
For LEED information see HT15 “Allow Stairway Use”
Implementation & Market Availability

There are no known implementation issues for this proposal. Doors with fire-rated glass are readily available. As market demand for these doors increases, we anticipate supply of such doors to increase and costs to decrease.