



# Building Standards and Codes

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## TECHNICAL BULLETIN

**Code Effective Date:** October 31, 2017<sup>1</sup>  
**Source Document:** 19 NYCRR Part 1220 – RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION  
19 NYCRR Part 1221 – BUILDING CONSTRUCTION<sup>2</sup>  
**Topic:** Accessibility Requirements for Townhouses

This document is to clarify the accessibility requirements of the Uniform Code as it pertains to townhouses.

The 2015 International Residential Code (2015 IRC) as modified by the 2017 Uniform Code Supplement, regulates: *the construction, alteration, movement, enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, removal and demolition of... townhouses not more than three stories above grade plane with a separate means of egress...*

Chapter 2 of the 2015 IRC defines Townhouses as:

*A single-family dwelling unit constructed in a group of three or more attached units in which each unit extends from foundation to roof and with a yard or public way on not less than two sides.*

Although townhouses are regulated by the 2015 IRC, the provisions for accessibility be may regulated by the 2015 International Building Code (2015 IBC) as shown below.

Section R320.1 of the 2015 IRC states that “*where there are four or more dwelling units or sleeping units in a single structure, the provisions of Chapter 11... [of the 2015 IBC]... for Group R-3 shall apply.*” Section 1107 of the 2015 IBC addresses accessibility for dwelling and sleeping units. Section 1107.6.3 is specific to Group R-3 and states: “*every dwelling or sleeping unit shall be a Type B unit*”<sup>3</sup> with permitted reductions in the number of units per Section 1107.7.

Section 1107.7.2 of the 2015 IBC does not require multistory dwelling units that are not provided with elevator service to be Type B units. This results in a permitted reduction in the number of Type B units from all to none in multistory townhouses without elevators. Therefore, only townhouse dwelling units contained wholly within one story, multistory units with an elevator service, and “*a multistory unit... provided with external elevator service to only one floor*” are required to be Type B units, pursuant to the other provisions and exceptions of Section 1107.7 of the 2015 IBC.

Per Section 1107.2 of the 2015 IBC, dwelling and sleeping units required to be accessible, “*shall comply with the applicable portions of Chapter 10 of ICC A117.1.*”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The “Code Effective Date” for this Technical Bulletin is October 31, 2017, which is the effective date of the current version of the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (the Uniform Code).

<sup>2</sup>The 2015 International Residential Code (2015 IRC) is a publication incorporated by reference in 19 NYCRR Part 1220 and the 2015 International Building Code (2015 IBC) is a publication incorporated by reference in 19 NYCRR Part 1221.

The 2017 Uniform Code Supplement is a publication incorporated by reference in 19 NYCRR Parts 1219 through 1228. The 2015 IRC and IBC as amended by the 2017 Uniform Code Supplement are all part of the Uniform Code.

<sup>3</sup> Type B Unit is defined in Chapter 2 of the 2015 IBC as a dwelling unit or sleeping unit designed and constructed for accessibility in accordance with this code and the provisions for Type B units in ICC A117.1, consistent with the design and construction requirements of the federal Fair Housing Act.

<sup>4</sup>The 2009 version of the International Code Council standard A117.1 titled ‘Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities’ is incorporated by reference in the Uniform code.