

## **CODE ON BARRIER-FREE ACCESSIBILITY IN BUILDINGS 2002**

The Code on Barrier-Free Accessibility in Buildings sets out the fundamental design and construction requirements for making specified buildings, as required under the Building Control Regulations, accessible to persons with physical or sensory disabilities. The Code was first introduced in 1990, revised in 1995 and is now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

### **Objective of the Code**

The Code is intended primarily for wheelchair users. However people with other forms of physical infirmities or limitations but who are not wheelchair bound such as those with visual impairment, older persons and families with young children will also be able to derive benefit from its provisions. The Code aims to make building designs inclusive so that persons with disabilities would also be able to access buildings, make use of its facilities and participate in activities as an integral part of the community. With the elderly population expected to increase significantly in the future, as in the Report of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Aging Population (1999), the Code will serve a greater number of people by creating a physical environment that is also conducive to the well being of the elderly.

### **What are the changes in the revised Code?**

The mandatory requirements in the 1995 Code have been reviewed and revised taking into account comparable standards in the developed countries. Some provisions that are open to interpretation are refined to remove any possible ambiguity and provisions that may not be necessary are relaxed. In addition, four sets of design guidelines with non-mandatory requirements are introduced.

### **What are these design guidelines?**

They are design guidelines for older persons, persons with visual impairment, children with disabilities and families with infants or young children. These guidelines are not mandatory. It is to guide designers incorporate features for specific target users that will enhance the minimum standards. Therefore if an apartment in a residential development is intended for older persons, designers should incorporate in the building suitable elderly-friendly design features as in the guidelines.

### **What are the main features designers have to look out for when designing a building?**

The main considerations include facilities for persons with disabilities e.g. toilets, carparks, etc, movement from one level to another e.g. ramps, lifts, etc, opening widths and maneuvering spaces at doors, passageways and internal spaces and signages within or outside the building.

## **Does the Code apply to all buildings?**

The Code applies only to the types of buildings set out in Table 1 of the Code. It is applicable only to communal areas where the public or staff, employees, students, inmates, patients as the case may be, have access to.

## **Will the Code apply to additions and alterations to existing buildings?**

If the building works involve repairs, alterations or additions to an existing building and are fairly extensive or substantial, facilities for persons with disabilities have to be provided in accordance with the Code.

## **Is the revised Code applicable to on-going projects?**

The revised Code will not apply retrospectively to projects under construction or existing completed buildings. It applies to new buildings and existing buildings undergoing major retrofitting works, where the building plans are submitted for regulatory approval on or after 1 Jan 2003.

## **How often is the Code amended?**

The Code is reviewed as and when the need arises based on feedback from designers, developers, the intended users and the public. BCA also monitors developments of similar codes in other countries and these are considered in any future revision of the Code.

## **How was the Code revised?**

A Working Committee led by BCA provided the inputs and recommendations for the revised Code. Members of the Working Committee include Handicaps Welfare Association, Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped, Asian Women's Welfare Association, Ministry of Community Development and Sports, Housing and Development Board, Land Transport Authority, Singapore Institute of Architects and National University of Singapore. The draft Code was also circulated for public comments before it was finalized for adoption.

## **How can I get a copy of the Code?**

The revised Code is available free of charge and can be viewed and downloaded from BCA internet website at <http://www.bca.gov.sg>.

## **Is there any tax deduction for building modification?**

Employers who decide to modify their workplace to facilitate the mobility of their employees with disabilities can apply for a tax deduction. This incentive scheme applies for employers who have undertaken either an addition to or alteration of their business premises specifically for the above-mentioned purpose.

## **How can I apply for such tax deduction?**

You can obtain the application form from Bizlink Centre Singapore Ltd which acts as the evaluator. This form is then forwarded to Ministry of Community Development and Sports for endorsement. After that, it is submitted to Ministry of Finance for processing. The particulars of Bizlink are as follows:-

Address: Block 512 Chai Chee Lane  
#01-09 Bedok Industrial Estate  
Singapore 469028  
Tel: 64495652  
Fax: 64495694  
Email: [epd@bizlink.org.sg](mailto:epd@bizlink.org.sg)  
Website: [www.bizlink.org.sg](http://www.bizlink.org.sg)

## **What should I do if I want to make an enquiry on this Code?**

You can contact us via e-mail at [bca\\_enquiry@bca.gov.sg](mailto:bca_enquiry@bca.gov.sg) if you have further queries or feedback on the Code.