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Building Plan & Management Group  
Building Plan & Universal Design  
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1 March 2023

See **Distribution List**

Dear Sir/Madam

## **BASIC ACCESSIBILITY IN EXISTING NON-BARRIER-FREE BUILDINGS**

### **Objective**

- 1 This circular is to inform all building owners and Qualified Persons of the requirement to provide at least basic accessibility in existing non-barrier-free buildings<sup>1</sup>.

### **Background**

- 2 In March 2020, the Building Control Act has been amended, whereby owners of existing non-barrier-free buildings may be required to provide at least basic accessibility features for Persons with Disabilities (“**basic accessibility requirement**”), if owners carry out addition and alteration (“A&A”) works requiring plan approval in any part of the non-barrier-free buildings.
- 3 The basic accessibility features include:
  - (i) a wheelchair accessible entrance;
  - (ii) a wheelchair accessible route at the entrance level; and
  - (iii) a wheelchair accessible toilet.

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<sup>1</sup> Buildings that are not accessible by wheelchair users and without wheelchair-friendly facilities and further described in paragraph 4 below.

For ease of reference, please refer to the illustration in Annex A and Frequently Asked Questions in Annex B.

## Requirement

- 4 The basic accessibility requirement applies to existing non-barrier free buildings:
  - (i) except those which are used solely for residential purposes or as factories;
  - (ii) that have gross floor area of more than 500m<sup>2</sup>; and
  - (iii) that are accessible by the public
- 5 To help architects, designers and building owners in understanding the process, key considerations and solutions to comply with basic accessibility requirements, BCA has also released a booklet with explanatory notes and illustrations, which can be downloaded from our website (<https://go.gov.sg/bcaud-basiclegis>).

## Implementation Date

- 6 The basic accessibility requirement will come into force from 1 June 2023. Building owners of existing non-barrier-free buildings should include the basic accessibility works when they submit plans of their proposed A&A works for approval. Should the basic accessibility requirement not be met, a Notice To Provide Basic Accessibility Features for mandatory basic accessibility upgrading will be issued to the building owner to comply with the requirement.
- 7 Failure to comply with the Notice without proper justification or reason is an offence under the Building Control Act. The owner is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months or to both, and to a further fine not exceeding \$250 for each day or part thereof the owner fails to comply with the Notice.

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**For clarification**

- 8 I would appreciate if you could convey the contents of this circular to members of your organization. For clarification, please email to [BCA\\_UD@bca.gov.sg](mailto:BCA_UD@bca.gov.sg) or call 1800 3425222.

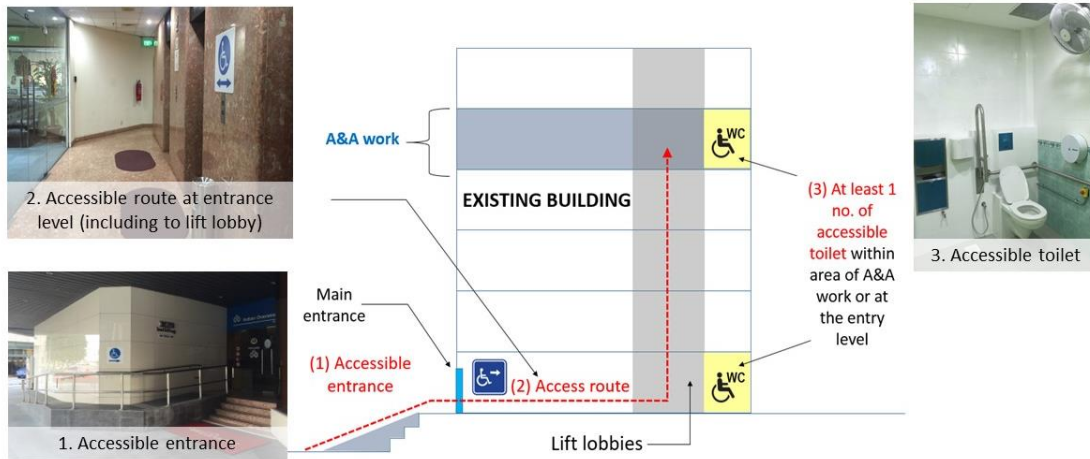
Yours faithfully



TAN JWU YIH  
DIRECTOR  
BUILDING PLAN AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN DEPARTMENT  
BUILDING PLAN AND MANAGEMENT GROUP  
for COMMISSIONER OF BUILDING CONTROL

**BASIC ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES**

**Example:** If A&A works are carried out at upper level, basic accessibility features have to be provided at the entrance level (typically first storey).



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q1: How do I comply with basic accessibility if there is no lift in the existing non-barrier-free building?**

A: A wheelchair accessible entrance, wheelchair accessible route to common facilities and a wheelchair accessible toilet should be provided to achieve basic accessibility at the entrance level (typically first storey).

**Q2: In the above scenario, what happens if there is no common toilet at the entrance level for upgrading to provide basic accessibility?**

A: For existing buildings without a lift and common toilet, building owner/QP shall study the feasibility of adding a wheelchair accessible toilet for common use at the entrance level (typically first storey).

**Q3: Can I provide the wheelchair accessible toilet at another level, which is neither the entrance level nor the area of A&A work?**

A: Yes, provided if it is a common toilet and along a wheelchair accessible route.

**Q4: Where do I provide the wheelchair accessible toilet, if there is no common toilet in the existing non-barrier-free building?**

A: For existing buildings with a lift but no common toilet, the wheelchair accessible toilet shall be provided within the individual unit as part of the A&A works (e.g. within the unit or tenanted unit with own attached toilet), since it is not feasible to provide a common wheelchair accessible toilet.

**Q5: Do I need to comply with basic accessibility if the site is not accessible (e.g. level differences or steps leading to site) in the first place?**

A: The building owner/QP should study the overall site accessibility and explore the feasibility of providing accessibility via other side entrances.

**Q6: Are all existing non-barrier-free buildings with GFA of 500m<sup>2</sup> or less exempted from the requirements in the Accessibility Code?**

A: While owners of existing non-barrier-free buildings with GFA of 500m<sup>2</sup> or less are not subject to the basic accessibility requirement, they still need to comply with the relevant requirements of the Accessibility Code, when they apply for plan approval for erection of a new building or A&A works.

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