

COUNTY OF PLACER Community Development Resource Agency

BUILDING

Administrative Policy
Accessibility and
Applicability Truncated
Domes

TO:

Building Department Staff

From:

Bob Martino, Chief Building Official

Approved:

Chief Building Official, Bob Martino

Effective Date:

3-20-2008

ISSUE:

Application of the provisions of the 2007 California Building Code as it relates to California accessibility standards. More specifically; the requirement for the installation of Detectable Warning at hazardous vehicular ways and under what circumstances they are required.

Reference:

2007 California Building Code Chapter 11B, Section 1133B.8.5

Department of the State Architect Interpretive Checklist

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

Building Department past practice of enforcing the requirements for installation of truncated domes as it relates to walkways adjacent to vehicular ways, and to what specific locations these are required, has been somewhat inconsistent due to confusing and unclear code language. Interpretations from other government agencies have been equally inconsistent.

In 1991 the requirement for Detectable Warnings and their installation was enacted. Due to controversy, in 1994 the requirement was suspended to allow further study of this requirement. On July 26, 2001 the suspension was allowed to expire. As of that date detectable warning surfaces have been required for curb ramps and adjacent to hazardous vehicular ways.

There is no clear or consistent definition as to what constitutes a "hazardous" vehicular way. A policy is needed to define this term for Placer County in order for the Building Department to provide consistent enforcement of the installation of truncated dome detectable warning devices.

ANALYSIS:

Current code language has provided some clarity as to the application of this requirement. However, a formal policy was determined to be needed.

Code language states, (paraphrased) that detectable warning is required if a walk crosses or adjoins a "hazardous vehicular way" and is not separated by curbs, railings, or other elements between pedestrian areas and vehicular areas.

In these situations the code requires a 36" wide continuous detectable warning to define the boundary between pedestrian areas and vehicular ways.

There has been argument that when vehicular speed is reduced to below 5mph via speed bumps or other speed limiting devices, or where parking spaces are designed adjacent to the walkway which divides it from the main traffic lane, then a hazard no longer exists and the potential hazard for a vision impaired person is eliminated. The Building Department rejects that concept.

It is the building departments position that where vehicular travel is allowed or designed for, the potential for a hazard exists to the pedestrian public and more so for an individual with a visual impairment. For this purpose the building department makes no distinction between travel lanes, travel lanes with speed limiting devices, or parking areas.

POLICY:

As of the effective date of this policy, all buildings that are processed for a building permit that require accessibility, including an accessible path of travel to the public way, shall have detectable warnings installed in locations specifically addressed by the California Building Code.

For clarification and consistency, detectable warnings shall be installed at all walkways that cross a vehicular way. Detectable warnings shall also be installed where the walkway is adjacent and/or parallel to the vehicular way. The fact that the traffic lane may contain speed bumps or some other speed regulating device is irrelevant. The fact that there may be parking spaces, accessible or not, that separate the walkway from the traffic lane is irrelevant.

Detectable warnings shall be installed at walkways that cross vehicular ways the full width of the walkway and 36 inches deep.

Detectable warnings shall be installed at walkways adjacent to and /or parallel to vehicular ways the full length of the walkway, where no curb, railing, or other separating element exists, at a width of 36 inches.

As authorized by the California Building Code, The Building Department shall have the sole enforcement responsibility for enforcement and interpretation of all site accessibility requirements prescribed in the county adopted code. No other department shall approve, change, or waive any accessibility requirements under the authority of the Building Department without prior Building Department written approval.