

Dissecting the codes one word at a time

An IBA member who is really code savvy asked questions about the new amendments the other day, questions other members may have when they read the new amendments.

He wanted to know why our old amendment had been deleted that required a handrail for only three or more risers; he was worried that his building officials would now start requiring handrails for one or two risers. And he couldn't find that we deleted the word "continuous" from handrails on full flights of stairways, a word that has caused some officials in the past to require handrails on landings between flights of stairs.

The first answer is: we don't need an amendment for the handrail and number of risers anymore because the model code now requires a handrail for four or more risers only. (We used to have an Indiana amendment for this when the model code required a handrail for two or more risers. The model code changed when statistics regarding injuries on stairs of fewer than four risers showed a lack of need for a handrail.)

In the new amendments, here's how you find the answer:

The link is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/iac/T06750/A00140.PDF?>. Scroll to the latest amendments, at 675 IAC 14-4.3. Continue scrolling to the code section for handrails and number of risers, which is Sec. R311.5.6. Whoops! You will see that the new amendments go from amending code section R311.5.3.2 Tread depth, to amending code section R311.5.6.2 Continuity. No amendment is there for Sec. R311.5.6, so we are obliged to follow the model code.

The second answer is: yes, the word "continuous" is deleted. Note that the rule sec-



Understanding the Code

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tion that amends code section R311.5.6.2 is Sec. 32.

In the new amendments, here's how you find this answer:

Go to the link; scroll to 675 IAC 14-4.3, continue scrolling to the code section for continuity of handrails, which is Sec. R311.5.6.2 Continuity. The new amendment to delete "continuous" is found at rule section 32(a), which reads, "Change the first sentence of Section R311.5.6.2 to read as follows: Handrails for stairways shall serve each tread for a full length of the flight, from a point directly above the top riser of the flight to a point directly above the lowest riser of the flight." By this amendment, the model code words "be continuous" are deleted and the amendment words "serve each tread" are inserted.

It helps to know how to read the amendments. Remember that sometimes the answer is in what is not in the amendments. Sometimes the answer is in the *charging language* for a sentence found at the beginning of an amendment, such as, "Change the first sentence to read as follows:":

When in doubt, contact a Codes Committee member or IBA's Marlys Pedtke at (800) 377-6334 or mpedtke@aol.com.