

## Introduction

Intent statements are **new information** that is intended to help Code users understand the reasons for Code provisions. They are published in the User's Guide – NBC 2005, Application and Intent Statements (only available on CD-ROM).

## What is an Intent Statement?

*Intent statements* explain, in plain language, the basic thinking behind each Code provision in Division B. In other words, they explain what might happen if the Code provision is not satisfied. Each intent statement is unique to a specific provision.

## Wording of Intent Statements

Intent statements use standard phrases that are repeated for every requirement. The most common phrases are “*to limit the probability that/of*” and “*which could lead to.*”

## Format of Intent Statements

Sentence 3.2.3.13.(4) of Division B is used here as an example to illustrate the format of an intent statement.

Text of provision: The opening protection referred to in Sentences (1), (2) and (3) shall consist of

- a) glass block conforming to the requirements of Article 3.1.8.14.,
- b) a wired glass assembly conforming to D-2.3.14. in Appendix D, or
- c) a closure conforming to the requirements of Subsection 3.1.8. and Articles 3.2.3.1. and 3.2.3.14.

One of the intent statements for Sentence 3.2.3.13.(4) is reprinted here:

Intent Statement: To limit the probability of the spread of fire from exterior walls or openings of a building to exit facilities, which could lead to:

- delays in evacuating or moving to a safe place, which could lead to harm to persons, and
- delays in access to the building by emergency responders, which could lead to fire emergency response operations being delayed or ineffective, which could lead to the spread of fire, which could lead to harm to persons, including emergency responders.

(Note: There are additional intent statements for this provision.)

An intent statement typically starts with the standard phrase “*To limit the probability that/of*” followed by a description of an **initial consequence**, i.e. what might happen if the provision is not implemented as stated.

In the example, if openings near an unenclosed exit stair are not protected, the initial consequence is:

→ **the spread of fire from exterior walls or openings of a building to exit facilities**

The initial consequence is followed by the standard phrase “*which could lead to*” followed by a **chain of consequences** resulting from the initial consequence. For example:

→ To limit the probability of the spread of fire from exterior walls or openings of a building to exit facilities, which could lead to:

- **delays in access to the building by emergency responders**, which could lead to
- **fire emergency response operations being delayed or ineffective**, which could lead to
- **spread of fire**, which could lead to...

The description of the chain of consequences is completed by the **negative outcome** the Code attempts to prevent.

The NBC provisions aim to prevent three possible negative outcomes:

- **harm to persons** (illness or injury),
- **impeded access** (inability of a person to have access to or to circulate in a building without the assistance of another person), or
- **damage to buildings or adjacent buildings.**

## Multiple Intent Statements

A provision may have more than one intent statement if:

- there is more than one initial consequence,
- there is more than one negative outcome, and/or
- the provision is linked to more than one objective.

Recall the Code's four top-level objectives: OS Safety, OH Health, OA Accessibility, and OP Fire and Structural Protection of Buildings. If a provision satisfies more than one objective, its intent statements will be grouped according to the related second-level objectives (e.g. OS1, OS2, OS3). In the electronic version of the Code and in the User's Guide, each second-level objective has a separate tabbed "window," as shown below.

The diagram shows a tabbed window with two tabs: 'OS1' (active) and 'OP1' (inactive). The active tab is highlighted with a dark border. Below the tabs is a rounded rectangular box containing the following text:

**[F03-OS1.2]**

**Intent 1:** To limit the probability that a fire involving a room into which a linen chute discharges will spread to other parts of the building, which could lead to harm to persons.

The diagram shows a tabbed window with two tabs: 'OS1' (inactive) and 'OP1' (active). The active tab is highlighted with a dark border. Below the tabs is a rounded rectangular box containing the following text:

**[F03-OP1.2]**

**Intent 1:** To limit the probability that a fire involving a room into which a linen chute discharges will spread to other parts of the building, which could lead to damage to the building.

## Summary

The key points of this Module are:

- Intent statements explain the **reason(s)** for each Division B provision.
- The **standard phrases** used in the intent statements for a requirement are:
  - “To limit the probability that” and
  - “which could lead to”
- An intent statement describes three types of reasons for the existence of a particular requirement:
  - an **initial consequence** the Code aims to limit,
  - a **chain of consequences** that could follow, and
  - a final **negative outcome** that is to be avoided.
- A Code provision may have **more than one intent statement**. Intents are grouped by second-level objective in separate tabbed “windows” on the CD-ROM. It is important to review all intent statements related to a provision.
- Code users should read intent statements to verify the reasons for Code provisions. This will help achieve a common understanding and consistent application of the Code.
- Intent statements are not a legally binding part of the Code. Like the Appendices, they provide additional information.
- **Two products**, available at [www.nrc.gc.ca/virtualstore/](http://www.nrc.gc.ca/virtualstore/), **contain the intent statements**:
  - The National Building Code of Canada 2005 on CD-ROM includes the User’s Guide – NBC 2005, Application and Intent Statements, with links between the Code provisions and their intent statements and objectives.
  - The User’s Guide – NBC 2005, Application and Intent Statements CD-ROM includes the intent statements and objectives attributed to the provisions in Division B but does not contain any Code provision text.