



[Building Code Discussions Group \(BCDG\)](#)

[FAQ](#)

<http://bcodes.infopop.cc/eve>

August 1, 2009

1. What is the BCDG?

The BCDG is a powerful Online Community accessed only by "Premium Members". Some of the forums are accessible to guests and visitors for reading only (registration on the BCDG is still required). The BCDG was developed by Imad Naffa in 1995. Imad is also the Administrator for the BCDG. The BCDG is one of the largest, most-active, professional, advertisement-free Building Code Communities on the Internet. The following topics are addressed on the BCDG: Building, Fire and Accessibility/ ADA Codes, Life-Safety, M-P-E Codes, Structural, Energy Conservation, ADA/ ANSI, LEED and GREEN codes and related topics.

Explaining, educating, interpreting and deciphering the complex Building Codes for the masses (*novices and experts alike*) along with providing a platform for Building Code and related subject matter experts to interact- are the goals of the BCDG!

The BCDG is a storehouse for thousands of Building Code discussions and resources that can easily be searched by the members. The community has national participants and experts in every code-related field that stand ready to offer interpretations, second opinions and code-related critique and solutions to proposed designs that are posted on the BCDG. The BCDG is professionally maintained and updated daily.

Only "Premium Members" can read, post, reply, use the search functions, upload drawings for discussion, interact with the experts on the BCDG and use the available notification and filtering features built into the BCDG.

2. Who are members of the BCDG?

Architects, Designers, Engineers, Builders, Consultants, Developers, Attorneys, Code Officials, Plan Examiners, Building Inspectors, CAsp Certified individuals, Homeowners, Students, and anyone dealing or has interest in Construction, Code Enforcement, Development, Design, Inspection, Building and Energy Codes, Plan Check or the Building Permitting process.

Members read the discussions taking place, currently or since their last visit or since the last time they logged on; for continuing education and to keep up with the ever-changing codes, related news and legislation. In addition, members post questions and upload drawings for discussions, review, second opinions and technical interpretations by the BCDG membership. All building codes and related standards used in the US are fair game on the BCDG.

The BCDG consists of 24 different Technical Forums (*i.e. Accessibility/ADA, Means of Egress, Fire-Resistive Construction, Fire Suppression Systems, Occupancy Groups, etc.*) to choose from for posting/replying to questions and for searching of previous code discussions. The BCDG is a powerful tool that designers can use to help them in performing Life-Safety Code Analysis for any Occupancy, Building or Structure.

A simple-to-use, yet sophisticated search and notification functions are built into the BCDG to facilitate easy and efficient retrieval of information by the members as they are doing their research.

The BCDG is the home for hundreds of national code experts and participants from throughout the US and 100+ countries.

3. How can someone, such as an architect or designer, benefit from the BCDG?

Anyone dealing with the building codes, construction, design, inspection, code enforcement, legal topics related to codes, development and the permitting process will greatly benefit from using the BCDG. Students and individuals starting out in the design and code enforcement arenas will receive massive amount of practical cross training related to all the codes by reading the Q&A available on the BCDG forums.

For Architects and Designers, here are some of the benefits:

A. Reading the daily Q&A is a powerful Continuing Education for all current and proposed codes, upcoming changes to the codes, news and legislation affecting design and construction and related topics.

B. Posting code-related questions for membership to answer. Any construction code question is fair game. Ever wanted to know why a code section is asking for something? Need an alternate design critique by the professional membership? Need second opinions from practicing professionals? You can get your needs met by asking away and having the BCDG assist you.

C. Uploading design sketches for the membership to comment on. You literally have thousands of experienced professionals from throughout the US helping you with code-related compliance and alerting you for potential problems in the design or code analysis.

D. Ability to search thousands of previous code discussions (current and archived) instantly by “key word” or by using the advanced search functions across all the forums. Most of your questions will be answered by the previous Q&A. If you cannot find exactly what you are looking for, then post it! Within hours (sometimes minutes) the responses start pouring in.

E. Customizing the BCDG features such as alerts and notifications. If you want to follow a specific member’s posts, you can easily do that. If you want to follow a certain discussion, you can do that too. It all comes to you via email.

4. How do I become a “Premium Member” and start using the BCDG?

You can participate on the BCDG by becoming a “Premium Member”. **Only premium members can access all the BCDG forums; read, post, upload documents for review, research thousands of previous and current code discussions and interact with other professionals on the BCDG.**

Note! The administrator has some of the forums and active discussions open for reading only by guests and visitors of the BCDG (registration on the BCDG is still required).

Premium Membership is a simple two-step process, in this order:

1) **STEP#1:** Becoming a registered member of the BCDG. This allows you to choose a username and password. You can start from here:

<http://bcodes.infopop.cc/eve/login>

*Existing members of the BCDG have this step completed already (*i.e. they have a username and password that they used in the past to access the BCDG*). STEP #1 would then apply to brand new members that have not used the BCDG before!

2) **STEP#2:** Transition your registered membership (*which you completed in STEP#1*) into a “Premium Membership” in order to access all the BCDG forums.

Premium Membership comes has two options:

A) "Free Trial" Premium Membership and lasts for 14 days. OR,

B) "Paid" Premium Membership (you choose individual or corporate and the time period).

You must complete STEP #2 (*select a Premium Membership, either Free Trial or Paid*) in order to start posting questions and using the BCDG. To select a Premium Membership, you can use this link: <http://bcodes.infopop.cc/eve/premium>

Please note: The free trial premium membership is good for 14 days only. One free trial membership is permitted per account. After the 14 days, if you wish to continue using the BCDG, you will have to transition to a paid “Premium Membership Option”.

Please note! Access to the BCDG is granted upon Groupee's (*our host software company and credit card processor*) approval of the order. The queue is checked once a day, 7 days a week typically in the morning.

From: <https://sitepay.groupee.com/eve/tos>

"Groupee shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that subscription requests to the BCDG are processed in a timely manner, but we make no representations or warranties regarding the amount of time needed to complete processing because the GSPS is largely dependant upon many factors outside of our control, such as delays in receipt of payment due to outside entities and approval by Participating Sites. Some states do not allow the disclaimer of implied warranties, so the foregoing disclaimer may not apply to you. This warranty gives you specific legal rights and you may also have other legal rights that vary from state to state. "

5. What Premium Membership options are currently available?

Currently there are two "Premium Membership" Options available: Individual *and* Corporate.

In addition, for qualified students, there is Student Version of the BCDG, known as "BCDG -SV". You can read more about the "BCDG SV" from here:

<http://www.naffainc.com/PDF-Files/BCDGFAQ-SV.pdf>

Individual Membership applies to only one registered member (one account with a dedicated email address).

Corporate Membership applies to cities/counties *and* companies that choose to provide more than one member within their operations access privileges to the BCDG. This membership option, allows for unlimited number of members from any one entity.

This is how it works: One member of the "Corporate Membership" group signs up for a paid "Corporate Membership". He/she becomes the primary member of the Corporate Membership. Next, a list of the usernames of all other members in the group (*they would be registered on the BCDG, i.e. have usernames and passwords; but not yet "Premium Members"*) will be emailed to the Administrator (imad@bcodes.com). The Administrator will transition all Corporate Members into Premium Membership.

At that point, all members of the Corporate Membership group become “Premium Members” with access privileges to the BCDG.

For both Individual and Corporate Premium Membership Options, you can choose the free trial option to test drive the BCDG for 14 days. After the trial period, if you wish to continue using the BCDG, you will have to choose from a paid membership option.

What are Premium Memberships?

Premium membership is offered by the BCDG to provide special services and/or features (i.e. accessing the BCDG forums and privileges to all built-in features) for paying members. The BCDG uses “Groupee SitePay” service to collect payments and administer the membership plans. Note that the BCDG has complete autonomy over its memberships. The BCDG host company, Groupee, is merely an administrator and has no role in the management, content, prices, or actions of the BCDG. To sign up for a paid or free trial “Premium Membership”, please use this link: <http://bcodes.infopop.cc/eve/premium>

6. What are the payment options available?

“Premium Membership” options accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express for payment.

The membership setup allows the user to choose between automatic or manual renewal. The Membership Options allow for 1, 3, 6 or 12 month payment options. **With the yearly payment option, you will benefit from discounted pricing**. To get started, follow this link: <http://bcodes.infopop.cc/eve/premium>

If you encounter any difficulty signing up and paying for your new membership, please use this site for help with the credit card payment processing: <https://support.socialstrata.com/q/q.php?>

7. What if I have one or two code or design-related questions and won't be needing the BCDG long term?

The Free Trial "Premium Membership" would be ideal for your situation. Please refer to item 3 above for instructions on how to become a free trial "Premium Member". This allows you access to all the features of the BCDG for 14 days. **Please note that only one free trial membership is permitted per member**. After the free trial period, if you wish to continue using the BCDG, you would have to choose from the paid "Premium Membership" options available to you.

The BCDG is as valuable as you make of it and how often you need it and use. For architects, designers, engineers and code officials that require accurate and timely information and resources; for the cost of a code book or one training session, an annual "Premium Membership" can provide you with 100's of hours (*and possibly a lot more, depending on the level of your participation*) of training, interpretations and access to experts in all building code fields helping you out throughout the year! The cost and financial investment in ones training, continuing education, access to up-to-date information and resources and interaction with national code experts; of a Premium Membership (*Individual or Corporate*) is minimal in the overall picture.

For qualified students, the Student Version Premium Membership of the BCDG, "BCDG- SV", may be the ideal way to access the BCDG. For more information about the "BCDG- SV", please read this file:

<http://www.naffainc.com/PDF-Files/BCDGFAQ-SV.pdf>

8. Is paying though a credit card online safe?

Yes. The payment site uses "https" secure site for credit card payment. The BCDG administrator is not involved with the payment processing which is handled by the BCDG host company, "Groupee SitePay". All the information is kept private, secure and not divulged to the BCDG administrator. The BCDG does not ever have access to your payment information.

"Groupee SitePay" makes it easy for members to review, extend, suspend and cancel the BCDG Premium Memberships. Members can also change their account and contact information as well, to ensure that your memberships remain active.

To access the SitePay control panel, members simply login using their Groupee email and password, which they used/created when they first ordered your premium membership. Read more: <https://sitepay.groupee.com/>

For Terms of Service (TOS) used to process payment, please read this file: <https://sitepay.groupee.com/groupee/tos>

If you encounter difficulty with SitePay credit card processing, please fill out a ticket: <https://support.socialstrata.com/q/q.php?>

You can get there through the following steps:

1) On Groupee SitePay (<https://sitepay.groupee.com/>) click the "Support" link.

2) On the resulting page, click the "Support Ticket (Existing Customers Only)" link.

3) Under "Support for Other Products/Services" click the "Groupee SitePay Questions" link.

That will take you to the ticket form I listed above. Once you fill out that ticket, the credit card processing billing department will be able to examine your site pay questions and provide help.

9. What if I want to cancel my membership?

You can do so at any time. Members can cancel their membership by logging on the SitePayment page.

“Groupee SitePay” makes it easy for members to review, extend, suspend and cancel the BCDG Premium Memberships. Members can also change their account and contact information as well, to ensure that your memberships remain active.

10. So which forums are the most active on the BCDG?

There are 24 different technical forums on the BCDG. Any code or design related question or discussion should fit in one of these forums.

The top three forums in terms of Q&A and traffic are:

- Disabled Access/ADA/ADAAG
- Exiting (Means of Egress)
- Fire Resistive Construction

11. What do the symbols mean after each member's name when they post/reply on the BCDG?

We're glad you asked! When you are a new member on the BCDG, you start off by being a "Member" of the community. Once you reach 50 points (i.e. you have 50 posts or more under your belt), then you become a "Copper Member".

After that,

At 250 you are "Silver Member"

At 500, a "Gold Member"

At 750 and above, you reach the pinnacle of membership participation by becoming a "Platinum Member"

Bottom line- your membership designation denotes your level of participation and involvement on the BCDG. The movers and shakers on the BCDG, if you will, would be the "Gold" and "Platinum" members since they are doing most of the work in the community and helping field the daily technical questions.

12. What is Term of Service (TOS) and do I have to accept it?

The [TOS](http://bcodes.infopop.cc/eve/tos) (<http://bcodes.infopop.cc/eve/tos>) represents the rules and regulations that govern the BCDG. It contains the purpose, rules and disclaimers. When you first join the BCDG, you must read and accept the TOS before your membership is accepted. You should read the TOS thoroughly to make sure you will abide with its terms. If you do not accept the TOS, you are not permitted to join the BCDG. A link to TOS appears on the bottom of each BCDG page that you can review at any time.

13. Can the responses, comments or interpretations on the BCDG be considered acceptable official interpretations by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), such as Building and Fire Departments?

No. The comments and posts on the BCDG are opinions of the individual members. Although, the majority of the contributing members on the BCDG are qualified and experienced, the comments should be considered professional opinions of the posting member only. Official interpretations to code-related items are reserved to the AHJ. The AHJ has no obligation whatsoever to accept the opinions expressed on the BCDG.

None of the posts should be construed legal opinions on any matter. As an end user, you should consult with your own Legal Council for any legal matter.

Many AHJ will entertain the opinions voiced on the BCDG; realize and appreciate the benefits of having second opinions, well-researched code analysis and the expertise presented by the BCDG membership. You are advised to read the Terms of Service ([TOS](#)) if you have any further questions.

14. Will all my questions get answered and how do I know who answered them?

The vast majority of the questions posted on the BCDG get answered. But there is no guarantee that every question will be answered. It may not be the answer you hoped for, but the contributing members usually provide practical, well-researched responses and professional opinions based on their expertise and experience with the subject. The “checks and balances” built into the BCDG (i.e. by having a large membership read, evaluate and correct each other as part of the Q&A) provides the end user with the best possible professional opinions and interpretations by accessing and leveraging the combined knowledge base of the membership.

You increase your chances of getting responses by locating your question in the appropriate forum; providing a short and “catchy” title in the subject line; and providing a concise, specific and easy-to-follow questions. Adding images and drawings that relate to your post, as attachments; when applicable, also helps.

To find out who answered your question, simply double-click on the responder’s screen name, and choose “view public profile”.

15. I still have questions, who can I contact?

At any time during your membership period, you can forward your emails with specifics to imad@bcodes.com for immediate attention. We can also assist you during the registration process or while using any of the BCDG powerful features. For additional information regarding use of the BCDG's features and functions, you may want to read these FAQ's: <http://bcodes.infopop.cc/eve/faq>

You can also follow Imad on Twitter (@imadnaffa) for latest news and developments.