



Accessing State Laws Online

Part 1- Introduction

This educational document was created by the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) for the purpose of assisting users of building codes that may also need to access state laws. State and local government officials have need for the state laws relating to the design, construction and use of buildings, the development of building standards in Title 24, and the many mandates for enforcement by local government. This 10-page document will provide an introduction to the process of using the Internet to access California state laws along with necessary background information.

We also have other educational materials at the CBSC website (<http://www.bsc.ca.gov/>). They include:

- Guide to Title 24
- Guide to the 2013 California Green Building Standards Code (Nonresidential)
- Guide for Local Amendments and Filings of Building Standards
- Guide to Filing Permit Surcharge Fees
- It's Your Building Department
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Glossary of Terms
- Accessing State Regulations Online
- Accessing State Legislation Online

Please visit our website (<http://www.bsc.ca.gov/>) for matters relating to the activities of the California Building Standards Commission including:

- Proposed building standards
- Online access to Title 24
- Meeting and hearing schedules
- Informational bulletins and announcements
- Our newsletter, called the CAL Code Quarterly, and more.

Part 2- Background

First understand that California state laws and state regulations are not the same. State regulations are discussed in our educational document named [Accessing State Regulations Online](#), which is available on the CBSC website. In short, state regulations contained in the California Code of Regulations, are adoptions by the state agencies in the Executive Branch of state government for the purpose of implementing, clarifying, interpreting, and carrying out the intent of state laws. State law must authorize the adoption of a regulation.

California state laws are enacted by the legislative process involving the Legislative and Executive Branches of state government. The Legislative Branch consists of two houses of the state legislature; the State Senate and State Assembly. The Executive Branch consists of the Governor who may sign or veto legislative bills presented by the Legislature, or allow the legislation to become law without action. Learn much more about the legislative process in our [Accessing State Legislation Online](#), available at this CBSC website.

California has divided state laws into 29 separately named codes. The California Vehicle Code, Business and Professions Code, and Health and Safety Code, are three examples among the 29 codes of California state law. Here is a complete listing of the 29 codes of California state law.

Business and Professions Code	Insurance Code
Civil Code	Labor Code
Code of Civil Procedures	Military and Veterans Code
Commercial Code	Penal Code
Corporations Code	Revenue and Taxation Code
Education Code	Probate Code
Elections Code	Public Contract Code
Evidence Code	Public Resources Code
Family Code	Public Utility Code
Financial Code	Streets and Highways Code
Fish and Game Code	Unemployment Insurance Code
Food and Agricultural Code	Vehicle Code
Government Code	Water Code
Harbors and Navigation Code	Welfare and Institutions Code
Health and Safety Code	

The Government Code, Health and Safety Code, Business and Professions Code, Education Code, Public Resources Code, Water Code, Penal Code and the Food and Agricultural Code, contain provisions relating to buildings, or specific areas or features of buildings. These state laws provide the authority for various state agencies to adopt or develop building standards (a type of state regulation) that are found in the California Building Standards Code in Title 24, California Code of Regulations. Here is a listing of the state laws most commonly used in relation to building standards, building design, construction and use:

- Health and Safety Code, Division 13, Part 2.5, spanning from Section number 18901 to 18949.31, known as the **California Building Standards Law**. This body of state law establishes the California Building Standards Commission, the process for adopting the California Building Standards Code in Title 24, California Code of Regulations, and many mandates for local government regarding buildings.
- Health and Safety Code, Division 13, Part 1.5, spanning from Section 17910 to 17998.3, known as the **State Housing Law**. Requires the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Office of the State Fire Marshal to develop building standards for Title 24 on regulating housing occupancies. Includes many mandates to be carried out by local government.
- Government Code, Sections 12955 through 12955.1.1, establishing accessibility requirements in multifamily dwellings, and the requirement for the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop building standards for accessibility in and about privately funded multifamily dwellings, and for the Division of the State Architect to develop building standards for accessibility in and about publicly funded housing.
- Government Code Section 4450 through 4461, establishing accessibility requirements in public buildings and sidewalks, and requires the Division of the State Architect to develop the building standards for such buildings and sidewalks.
- Health and Safety Code, Division 13, Parts 5.3 and 5.5, spanning from Section 19952 through 19959.5, establishing accessibility requirements in privately funded buildings open to the public and for commercial facilities, and requires the Division of the State Architect to develop the building standards for such buildings and associated surroundings.
- Health and Safety Code, Division 12, Part 2, spanning from Section 13100 through 13263, establishing fire and panic safety requirements, and requires the Office of the State Fire Marshal to develop building standards and other regulations for fire safety in buildings.

Provided above are some of the most commonly used provisions of California state law relating to buildings. There are others that are less common to the work relating to building

codes. All the state laws that authorize or require the development of building standards are listed in Authority and Reference citations of Sections 1.2 through 1.14 of Chapter 1, Division 1, of the 2013 California Building Code, which is Part 2 of Title 24, California Code of Regulations. Those specific sections of state laws require the listed state agencies to adopt or develop building standards for publication in Title 24.

California state laws may be accessed in public libraries, private law offices, and through the California state website. Let's learn how to access state laws through the California state website. It is easier than you may think.

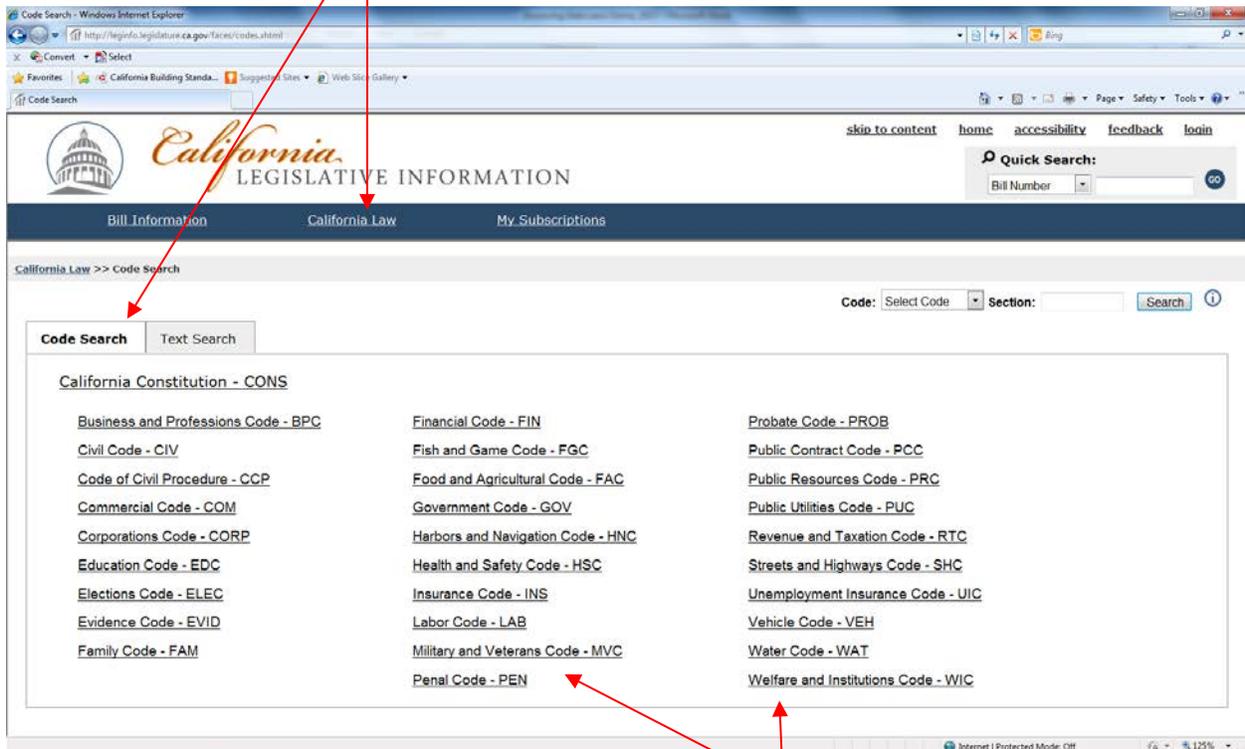
Part 3-Accessing California State Laws through the Internet

An index of the 29 codes of California state laws is provided at the state's website. From any Internet webpage, enter (type in or copy and paste) the state law website address <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes.xhtml>.

We have used the front page of the California Building Standards Commission website as a starting point. You can use any website you wish. Just type in or copy and paste the website address <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes.xhtml> in this space and press your enter key. The results are shown on the next page.



The state website address for state laws will bring you to this *California Legislative Information* page. It provides access to the 29 codes of California state laws. See the listing of the 29 code names as previously discussed? You may need to select the *California Law* link. Also, be sure the *Code Search* is selected.



We are able to select any one of the 29 codes of state laws. Just move your cursor over the code name you wish to access and click on it. Let's assume we have clicked on the Health and Safety Code. The results will be shown on the next page.

This state website has other useful features. You may access state constitution and legislative bills from this site. Our *Accessing State Legislation* document available on our website provides information on how to access legislation.

Codes: Codes Tree - Health and Safety Code - HSC - Windows Internet Explorer

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Codes: Codes Tree - Health and Safety Code - HSC

Health and Safety Code - HSC

GENERAL PROVISIONS

- [DIVISION 1. ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH \[130 - 1179.72\]](#)
- [DIVISION 1.5. USE OF SECLUSION AND BEHAVIORAL RESTRAINTS IN FACILITIES \[1179.72 - 1179.72\]](#)
- [DIVISION 2. LICENSING PROVISIONS \[1200 - 1795\]](#)
- [DIVISION 2.5. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES \[1797 - 1799.207\]](#)
- [DIVISION 3. PEST ABATEMENT \[2000 - 2910\]](#)
- [DIVISION 5. SANITATION \[4600 - 6127\]](#)
- [DIVISION 6. SANITARY DISTRICTS \[6400 - 6982\]](#)
- [DIVISION 7. DEAD BODIES \[7000 - 8030\]](#)
- [DIVISION 8. CEMETERIES \[8100 - 9703\]](#)
- [DIVISION 10. UNIFORM CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT \[11000 - 11651\]](#)
- [DIVISION 10.7. DRUG DEALER LIABILITY ACT \[11700 - 11717\]](#)
- [DIVISION 10.5. ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAMS \[11750 - 11975\]](#)
- [DIVISION 10.6. DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE MASTER PLANS \[11998 - 11998.3\]](#)
- [DIVISION 10.7. ILLEGAL USE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL \[11999 - 11999.3\]](#)
- [DIVISION 10.8. SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT FUNDING \[11999.4 - 11999.13\]](#)
- [DIVISION 10.9. SUBSTANCE ABUSE TESTING AND TREATMENT ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM \[11999.20 - 11999.25\]](#)
- [DIVISION 10.10. SUBSTANCE ABUSE OFFENDER TREATMENT PROGRAM \[11999.30\]](#)
- [DIVISION 11. EXPLOSIVES \[12000 - 12761\]](#)
- [DIVISION 12. FIRES AND FIRE PROTECTION \[13000 - 14960\]](#)
- [DIVISION 12.5. BUILDINGS USED BY THE PUBLIC \[16000 - 16684\]](#)
- [DIVISION 13. HOUSING \[17000 - 19997\]](#)
- [DIVISION 14. POLICE PROTECTION \[20000 - 20115\]](#)

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This page provides links to the Divisions of the Health and Safety Code. Only the top half of the page is shown here. The section number ranges are shown for each Division of the Health and Safety Code. There are more Divisions with the Health and Safety Code than can be shown here.

Let's click on Division 13 where the Building Standards Law is located in Part 2.5. The results will be shown below.

Codes: Code Search - Windows Internet Explorer

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Codes: Code Search

- CHAPTER 8. Regulations—General Provisions
- CHAPTER 9. Lots
- CHAPTER 10. Building Construction, Plumbing, Electrical, Fuel Gases, and Fire Protection
- CHAPTER 11. Penalties
- PART 2.4. CAMPS
- PART 2.5. STATE BUILDING STANDARDS**
- CHAPTER 1. General Provisions and Definitions
 - ARTICLE 1. Title
 - ARTICLE 2. Definitions
- CHAPTER 2. Organization
 - ARTICLE 1. The California Building Standards Commission
 - ARTICLE 2. The Executive Director of the State Building Standards Commission
 - ARTICLE 3. The Coordinating Council and Advisory Panels
- CHAPTER 3. Powers of the Commission
- CHAPTER 4. The California Building Standards Code
 - ARTICLE 1. General Provisions and Definitions
 - ARTICLE 2. Guidelines for Materials
 - ARTICLE 3. Construction Guidelines
- CHAPTER 5. Appeals and Enforcement
- CHAPTER 6. Regulations
 - ARTICLE 1.1-18949.7
- CHAPTER 7. Construction Inspectors, Plans Examiners, and Building Officials
 - ARTICLE 1.1-18949.31
- PART 2.7. STATE HISTORICAL BUILDING CODE
- PART 3. MISCELLANEOUS
 - CHAPTER 1. Scope and Application

18920-18924

18925

18926-18929.1

18930-18934.9

18935-18944.18

18944.30-18944.41

18944.30-18944.33

18944.35

18944.40-18944.41

18945-18949

18949.1-18949.7

18949.25-18949.31

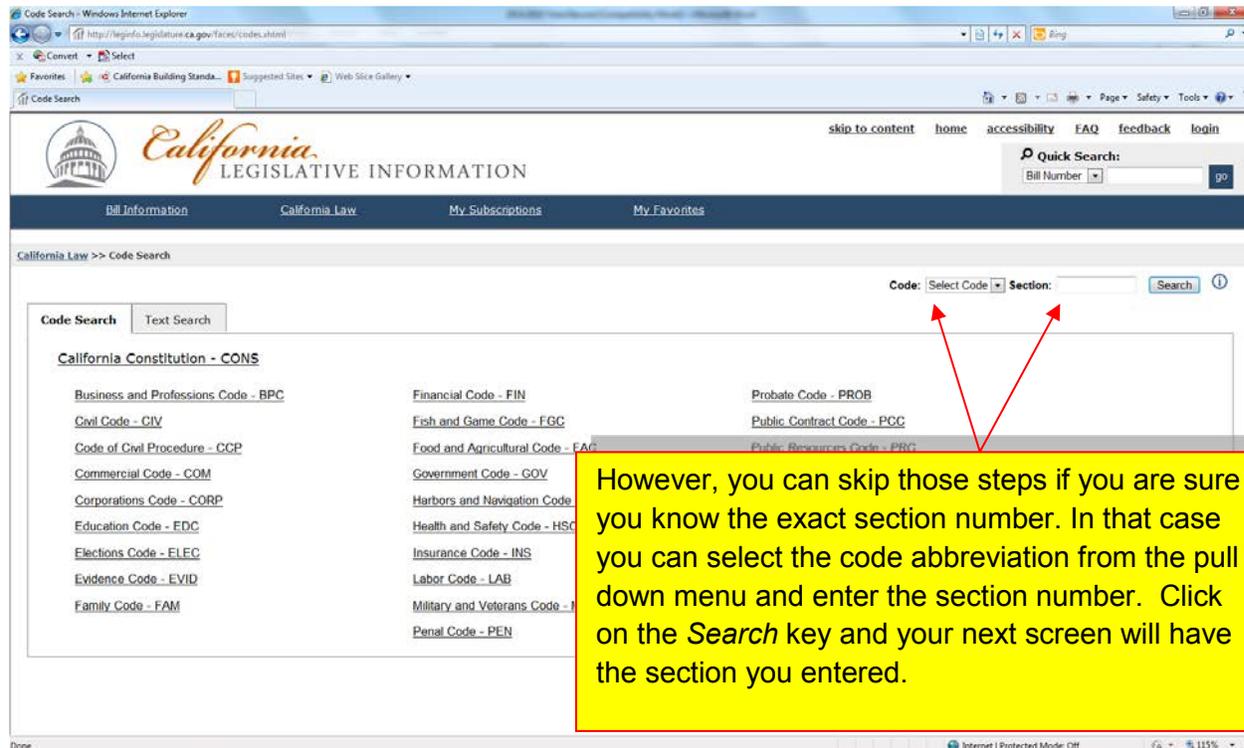
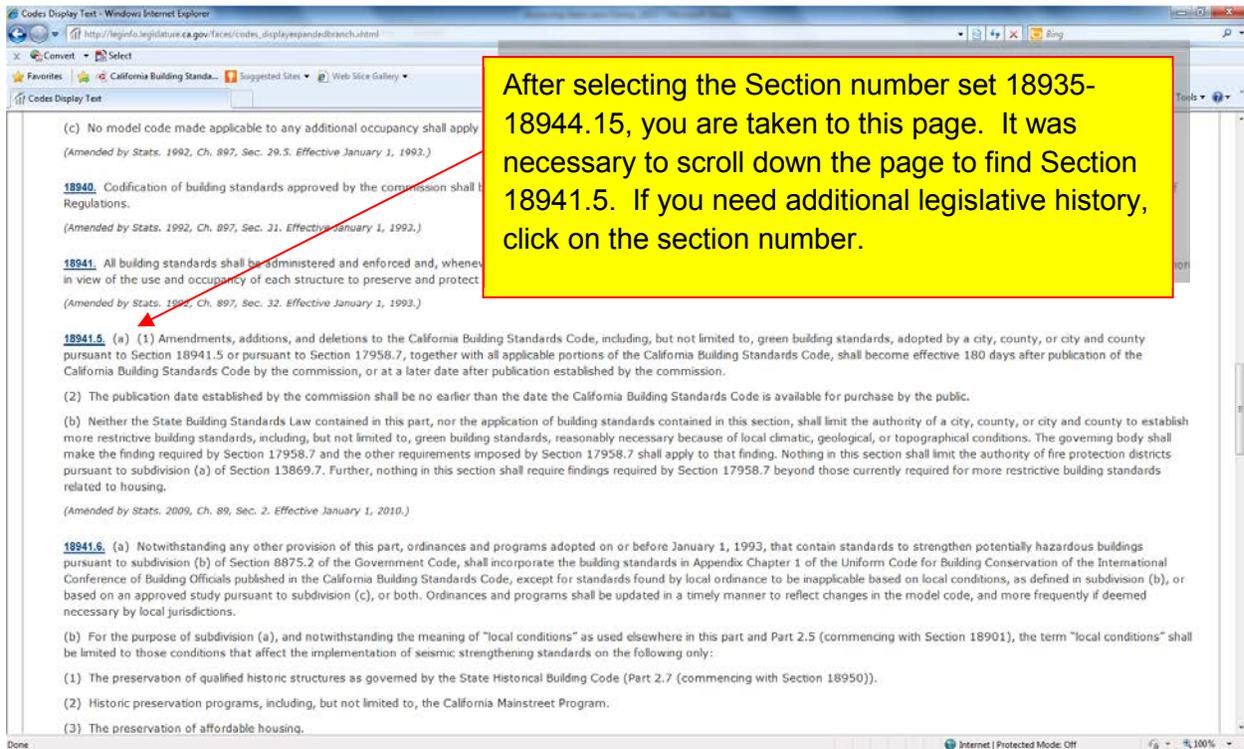
18950-18961

19000-19091

19000

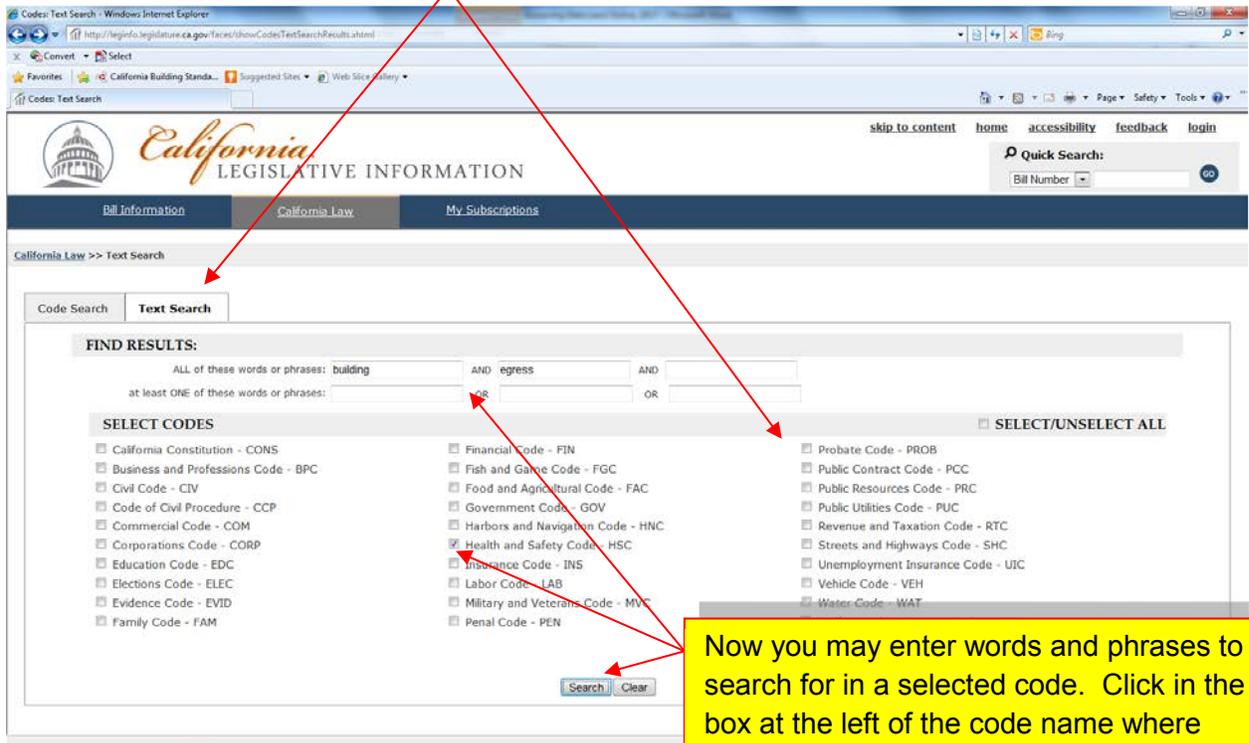
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After selecting Division 13, we need to scroll down to find Part 2.5. On this page the Chapters and Articles of Part 2.5 are shown. The section numbers are shown at the right. For example, if you wanted to access Health and Safety Code Section 18941.5, you will need to scroll down to the link provided for section number set 18935-18944.18, that would include Section 18941.5. If you click on that link it will take you to those sections as shown on the next page.



That is all there is to it! A little practice and you can be cruising through California's state laws with ease. Next, let's look at how we can find a state law by using the *Text Search* feature.

At the California Legislative Information webpage, switch from the *Code Search* tab to the *Text Search* tab and body of the screen will change and list the 29 codes with a box to the left of each code names as shown below.



Now you may enter words and phrases to search for in a selected code. Click in the box at the left of the code name where you wish to search for your entered word or phrase. For example, we have entered the words "building" and "egress", selected the Health and Safety Code, and clicked the *Search* key. The results are shown on the next page.

The screenshot shows the California Legislative Information website. The search results page displays a list of bills related to the search terms 'building' and 'egress'. The results are organized into sections, with the first section containing 13 bills. The page is currently on page 1 of 2 pages. A yellow callout box highlights the search results and provides instructions on how to navigate through multiple pages of results.

The resulting page is page 1 of 2 pages from the Health and Safety Code where the words "building" and "egress" appear. You may need to scroll down through the provided pages until you find the section of law you need.

Sometimes a search will result in numerous pages where the words or phrases exist. The process is slow and may require some time to find the section of state law you are searching for. But it will work when you don't have a section number.

Part 4- Conclusion

Here are some good rules to remember when working with laws.

1. When using state laws, be aware of the identity of the code, part, division, chapter etc., to be certain you are in the proper location for the desired subject.
2. Look for and read any section named "application and scope", "application", "scope", "intent", "purpose", or similar words. Such a section is generally located near the beginning of a code segment (chapter, division, part, etc.) to explain what the provisions of the segment apply. For example, a segment may be identified as applying to only high-rise buildings. You don't want to apply those provisions to buildings that are not high-rise buildings by definition.
3. Look for definitions of terms. This is generally provided near the beginning of a code segment (chapter, division, part etc.). This is very important. Some words and terms are defined specifically for the purpose of that particular code segment, and the same words and terms may be defined differently in other segments of the code.

We recommend practicing the steps provided in this document in order to become completely familiar with the process. Good luck.

Contact our office if additional clarification is needed.

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We welcome your feedback. Use our feedback feature on our CBSC website.

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