

Schematic Design (3.1) & Building Layout (4.0)

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. The program calls for two rooms to be “near”. What is “near”?

A. Always consider the door to door distance. Same half of the same floor should be sufficient. Direct access is not a substitute for “near”.

Q. How many windows should I use, and how big should they be?

A. At least one, and you can add more if it's a large room. Typically 4' to 6' wide is sufficient.

Q. If the program does not specify which floor for a room, does it matter where it goes?

A. For some rooms it will not really matter. The program does require “sound design logic”, so rooms like EM and EE logically belong on the first floor.

Q. How do I achieve “visual control”?

A. Use interior windows, not doors to provide a line-of-sight control of a particular element.

Q. The program does not call for windows in some rooms. Should I add them anyway?

A. You can, but it won't help your score, and you risk adding them where they may be prohibited.

Q. Should I add exit doors from the larger rooms even though the code and program don't require them? I'm concerned about the room capacity.

A. No. The code provided is the only one that applies.

Q. I've seen sample passing solutions with double doors. Are they required?

A. No. Egress capacity is not in the scope of this vignette unless the program says otherwise (unlikely). Many sample passing solutions contain errors, just not fatal ones.

Q. I heard that the toilet rooms must be stacked. Is that true?

A. **No.** It's only a 2 story building. Stacking toilet rooms (developing a core layout) makes sense for multi-story buildings.

Q. Does the practice software have a timer like the real exam?

A. No.

Q. On the actual exam, do they still give the tabs for Codes and Tips, or is it just the Program?

A. The exam will provide codes, tips and the program in the same format as the practice exam. You do not have to memorize the code or tips. Note the real exam may not have the same code or tips. **Read everything provided to you.**

Q. Do door locations at stairs matter? Do I have to worry about headroom issues inside the stair?

A. **There is no sure way to know how NCARB grades door locations in stairs - if at all.** The late Prof. Norman Dorf recommended using a 10x20 stair for entry/exit at the same end and 12x18 for entry/exit at opposite ends. Given a lack of evidence either way, I tend to take a

more conservative approach. Floor to floor heights are not given, so we don't really know how stairs would be configured. Since "sound design logic" is a program requirement, you should probably put the entry door to the stairs at the same end on each floor. The NCARB sample passing solution shows entry/exit at the same end, but that does not necessarily mean you have to show them that way. The attached diagram (ARE stair.pdf) explains further.

Q. The program says corridors may not exceed 25% of the program area. Does this include the lobby and stairs?

A. No. The lobby is circulation, but is not a corridor. The program is specific. Take it literally.

Q. I'm concerned about having a dead-end lobby. What if I have one end of my lobby that is more than 20' from an exit?

A. There is no such thing as a dead-end lobby. The code does not refer to dead-end circulation. The code only refers to dead-end corridors. Take the code literally.

Q. Can doorswings cross the building limit line?

A. Yes.

Common Mistakes:

1. **Doors swinging the wrong way.** Doors swing into rooms. Exit doors MUST swing in the direction of egress. If a room is required to have exit doors, **all** doors to the exterior or circulation MUST swing in the direction of egress.
2. Missing wall openings. To connect circulation elements, use the wall opening tool. **Omitting wall openings between circulation elements is likely fatal because it can create illegal dead-ends.**
3. Dead-ends exceeding 20'. Very likely a fatal error.
4. Trying to match the second floor outline to the first floor outline.
5. "island" roof. This is a first floor roof area completely surrounded by second floor elements. Placing a room or corridor there is recommended.