

**CHAPTER 4  
SPECIAL DETAILED REQUIREMENT BASED ON USE AND OCCUPANCY**

**SECTION 402.8.7  
2012 Edition  
IBC Interpretation 38-13  
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**402.8.7 Service areas fronting on exit passageways.** Mechanical rooms, electrical rooms, building service areas and service elevators are permitted to open directly into *exit passageways*, provided the *exit passageway* is separated from such rooms with not less than 1-hour *fire barriers* constructed in accordance with Section 707 or *horizontal assemblies* constructed in accordance with Section 711, or both. The *fire protection rating* of openings in the *fire barriers* shall be not less than 1 hour.



**Q:** Can electrical, plumbing, and mechanical equipment, such as wiring, conduit, water supply or DWV piping, and supply and exhaust air ductwork penetrate and be located within the exit passageways of covered mall buildings, if all penetrations are protected as required by Chapter 7 and the required egress width within the exit passageway is maintained?

**A:** No.

Exit passageways are generally treated similar to exit stairways (shafts) in that only openings from normally occupied spaces are permitted as specified in Section 713.8.1. This would prohibit doors or utility penetrations to such mechanical/electrical rooms in an exit stairway enclosure.

The specific provisions of Section 402.8.7 were simply provided to allow access to rooms such as mechanical rooms and electrical rooms from the exit passageway. It was not intended for mechanical equipment such as wiring, conduit, water supply or other building utilities to be located within the exit passageway itself. It should be noted that such wiring, conduit, water supply and similar utilities could be located next to or above the exit passageway but would be required to be separated by a 1-hour fire barrier or horizontal assembly as any other portion of the building would be required. The intent is that they are not within the same space.

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