



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	August 5, 2015	Interpretation	15-005
Topic	Multi-Purpose Buildings at School Site		
Code Section(s)	2013 CBC 303.1.3 / 903.2		
Requested by	Carmichael-Kemp Architects Mark Kemp, Architect & Vice President		
Date Received	October 31, 2014		

Questions:

1. Per CBC Section 303.1.3, can a Multi-Purpose Building (MPR) Assembly constructed at a school campus Group E Occupancy be classified as Group E Occupancy?

Answer: No. Generally assembly buildings, as a portion of the Group E occupancy, are still considered as assembly in nature and must comply with assembly space requirements, which are predominately classified as A-2 or A-3. These requirements specify the building type, protection, means of egress, occupant load factor, accessibility, etc. School campuses are generally thought of as “E” occupancies but are in fact made up of potentially multiple building occupancies, comprising various occupancy classifications dictated by the actual use of the buildings. For the MPR to be classified as Group E Occupancy, the assembly functions must be ancillary and supportive to the educational operation of the building.

MPR spaces are routinely utilized for community functions and outside activities, which in some cases have no relationship to normal campus activities. These functions reinforce the A-2 or A-3 Occupancy class designation and requirements.

2. If the Multi-Purpose Building (MPR) is classified as Group E, can fire sprinklers required by CBC Section 903.2 be omitted?

Answer: Yes. If the room is solely used for educational purposes and is not used as an assembly, it can be classified as a Group E occupancy. Sprinklers may be omitted provided that they meet the provisions of CBC section 903.2.3.

3. If the Multi-Purpose Building (MPR) is determined to be Group A Assembly Occupancy, what functions are exempt under 303.1.3? Libraries, cafeterias, conference rooms, etc.?

Answer: Some Multi-Purpose rooms are also used as libraries, computer labs, dining, performances (some with raised platforms or full stages), and a multitude of other activities, hence the term “multipurpose”. The most restrictive use requirements must be incorporated into the basic design to account for the various uses that the area can or may be able to accommodate.