



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	November 12, 2015	Interpretation	15-001 Revised
Topic	Capability of Visible Alarms		
Code Section(s)	2013 CBC 907.5.2.3.4		
Requested by	Pyro-Comm Systems, Inc. Kyle J. Schuler, SET		
Date Received	April 01, 2015		

Questions:

Does the California Building Code (CBC) Section 907.5.2.3.4, require that dwelling and sleeping unit bathrooms be prewired for the capability to support visible alarms in Group R-2 occupancies.

Answer: No. Section 907.5.2.3.4 states “In Group R-2 occupancies required by Section 907 to have a fire alarm system, all dwelling units and sleeping units shall be provided with the capability to support visible alarm notification appliances in accordance with NFPA 72. Such capability shall be permitted to include the potential for future interconnection of the building fire alarm system with the unit smoke alarms, replacement of audible appliances with combination audible/visible appliances, or future extension of the existing wiring from the unit smoke alarm locations to required locations for visible appliances.”

Since NFPA 72 requires the installation of audible notification appliances in sleeping areas i.e. bedrooms and living spaces, Section 907.5.2.3.4 does not provide direction to pre-wire or install visual notification within R-2 occupancy bathrooms. Section 907.5.2.3.1 does have requirements to install visible notification appliances within public sanitary facilities including restrooms, bathrooms, and shower rooms not private occupancies such as an R-2.

Section 907.5.2.3.4 does give the designer three options to choose from to accommodate someone with a hearing impairment in the future which include the following:

- Potential for future interconnection of the building fire alarm system with the unit smoke alarms.
- Replacement of audible appliances with combination audible/visible appliances.
- Future extension of the existing wiring from the unit smoke alarm locations to required locations for visible appliances.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	August 5, 2015	Interpretation	15-002
Topic	High-Rise Tenant Separation		
Code Section(s)	2013 CBC 708.1, 708.3		
Requested by	Jensen Hughes Steven Dannaway, Fire Protection Engineer		
Date Received	April 01, 2015		

Questions:

1. **For a high-rise building of Type I construction, equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1, and with multiple tenant spaces on various stories that are classified as Group B occupancies, does Section 708.3, Exception 3 exempt the walls separating different tenants from the requirement to be constructed as fire partitions?**

Answer: Yes. Section 708.3 Exception 3, allows high-rise buildings equipped throughout with an automatic fire sprinkler system to be permitted to utilize non-fire resistant rated walls for the separation between Group B tenants, if not required by other sections of the CBC.

2. **If Section 708.3, Exception 3, is applicable, are full height walls required between different tenant spaces?**

Answer: No. If 708.3 Exception 3 is used for Group B occupancies, then the wall between tenant spaces are not required to be full height walls, if not required by other sections of the CBC.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	August 5, 2015	Interpretation	15-003
Topic	R-2.1 Alarm Requirements		
Code Section(s)	2013 CFC 907.2.9.4		
Requested by	Fresno Fire Department Timothy Henry, Deputy Chief / Fire Marshal		
Date Received	April 01, 2015		

Questions:

- 1. Does the extent of automatic detection device coverage need to include the client rooms in addition to the corridor system serving those rooms and the common use areas?**

Answer: Yes, the provisions of 907.2.9.4 do not exempt client rooms. Additionally, 907.2.11.2 requires single- or multiple-station smoke alarms in the client rooms, however, exception 2 allows the smoke detector to be used in place of the smoke alarm in the sleeping rooms. If this exception is used, the sleeping rooms will still need to be provided with local notification, and only a supervisory signal must be reported to the fire alarm panel.

- 2. Does the automatic detection described above have to be extended to the first floor also or is the exception to 907.2.9.4 still valid for a two or more story building if there will not be nonambulatory clients housed on the first floor?**

Answer: No. The exception to 907.2.9.4 only applies when nonambulatory clients are housed on the 1st floor only. The exception is not applicable for a two story building where nonambulatory clients are housed on the 2nd floor.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	August 5, 2015	Interpretation	15-004
Topic	Fire Flow at Existing Schools		
Code Section(s)	2013 CBC Appendix BB		
Requested by	Carmichael-Kemp Architects Mark Kemp, Architect & Vice President		
Date Received	October 31, 2014		

Questions:

1. In calculating the required fire flow for additions to an existing school site campus, is it the largest existing building or the largest new building that shall be applied to Table BB 501.1?

Answer: The Fire flow would be calculated based on the most demanding building.

2. If reconfiguring the interior of a larger existing building, would the fire flow be based upon the largest building that is being remodeled?

Answer: If the reconfiguration changed occupancy, use or character of building, or square footage it would be used to determine the fire flow.



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.



California State Fire Marshal CODE INTERPRETATION

Date Issued	December 3, 2015	Interpretation	15-006
Topic	Garage Conversions to Dwellings Units and Residential Fire Sprinkler Requirements		
Code Section(s)	CRC Section R313.2		
Requested by	Randall Metz, Fire Marshal Carlsbad Fire Department		
Date Received	November 16, 2015		

Question 1: Is it the intent of the exception listed under California Residential Code (CRC) Section R313.2 to apply to the existing one- and two-family dwelling on the property or does it extend to alternations/additions to other detached structures anywhere on the property?

Question 2: Was it the intent of the CRC Section R313.2 to require residential fire sprinklers in new second dwelling units in the following scenarios?

Example A: A new dwelling unit is added to the existing detached garage (or other existing detached accessory structures).

Example B: An existing detached garage (or other existing detached accessory structure) is converted to a new dwelling unit.

Example C: An existing detached garage (or other existing detached accessory structure) is converted to a new dwelling unit and additional floor area is added for the new unit.

Answer: The State Fire Marshal’s adoption of and intent of the exception to CRC Section R313.2 is to apply only to existing one- and two-family dwelling buildings located on the property that are undergoing an addition or alteration. The exception does not apply to other detached structures located on the property that are adding or converting into a new dwelling unit that is detached from the existing dwelling unit on the property.

Detached garages and accessory structures (typically Group U Occupancies) are not considered a one- or two-family dwelling (Group R-3 Occupancy). Detached garages and other detached accessory structure are made to comply with the California Building Code (CBC) when a change in use is made in accordance with CRC Section R110.2, this section further references CBC Section 3408. The CBC Section 3408 states “No change shall be made in the use or occupancy of any building... unless such structure is made to comply with the requirements of this code.” When a detached garage or accessory structure are converted to a one- or two-family dwelling it is considered a change of occupancy, and the new occupancy must comply with the current codes. Therefore, residential fire sprinklers would be required in all detached garages and accessory structures converted to a one- and two-family dwelling.

Background and Intent of Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems for One- and Two-Family Dwellings as adopted and amended by the Office of the State Fire Marshal

In October 2008 and again in April 2009 the Office of the State Fire Marshal convened representatives from various disciplines to study issues concerning the water supply of residential sprinklers and the installation of residential sprinklers. The purpose of the two task groups was to provide information, recommendations, and suggested strategies for solutions to the State Fire Marshal. This was in preparation for a statewide residential fire sprinkler requirement for new construction scheduled for implementation January 1, 2011.

Reasons supporting residential sprinkler were numerous. They included:

- Vulnerable and special need populations are growing and require higher levels of protection than we commonly think of with able-bodied, English-speaking adults.
- Sprinkler fire protection systems are the best, first defense against life and property loss but are not infallible. Layered fire protection is the appropriate risk mitigation approach.
- Our life loss history in California continues to need improvement. Too many people still die in preventable, mitigable fires.
- Firefighter safety is important. More firefighters are injured or die in residential fires than any other occupancy.
- The State Fire Marshal is charged with setting the fire and panic standards for California and has done so with an open, participative, researched and professional process for this adoption.
- The impact of our amendments is not far-reaching or overly restrictive. They are reasonable, focused, limited to those buildings with the greatest risk of life loss, and economically neutral.

The adoption of residential automatic fire sprinkler systems was approved by the Building Standards Commission (BSC) on January 12, 2010 (with an effective date of January 1, 2011). This provision required residential sprinklers in all new one- and two-family dwellings.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	December 11, 2015	Interpretation	15-007
Topic	Stairway Penetrations		
Code Section(s)	CBC Section 1022.5, 714.3.2		
Requested by	UC Irvine Scott Jackson, Lead Campus Fire Marshal		
Date Received	June 23, 2015		

Background:

The California Building Code (CBC) Section 1022.5 and 1023.5 discusses penetrations into stairs and exit passageways. These sections permit penetrations and openings into the enclosure based on the premise that these penetrations must serve the enclosures. This section makes the exception that these penetrations shall be allowed per CBC Section 714.3.2. CBC Section 714.3.2 does not specify that these membrane penetrations must serve the enclosure.

Questions:

1. Does this new change now mean that what serves the stair is no longer relevant?

Answer: No, it is relevant. Only systems that serve the exit enclosure can penetrate through the assembly as per the 2013 edition of CBC 1022.5.

2. Does this mean that membrane penetrations still need to serve the stair enclosure?

No. Membrane penetrations that are in compliance with CBC 714, that only penetrate the exterior membrane of the exit enclosure are now allowed per the 2013 section 1022.5 exception.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	January 28, 2014	Interpretation	14-001
Topic	Group 1-4, day care facilities		
Code Section(s)	1308.5		
Requested by	Keith Richter, Fire Chief, Orange County Fire Authority		
Date Received	December 9 2013		

Questions:

1. *What is the definition of "custodial care" as it is used in the 2010 California Building Code Chapter 3, Section 308.5?*
2. *What is the definition of "supervision" and "personal care services" as it is used in the 2010 California Building Code Chapter 3, Section 308.5.1?*

OSFM response: The OSFM does not have specific regulations for defining custodial care as used in the 2010 California Building Code based on the 2009 International Building Codes model code provisions for Group I-4 adult day-care facilities. However, to provide guidance in defining such the OSFM reviewed regulations contained in California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 3, commonly defined terms as contained in Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged (as referenced in California Building Code, Section 201.4) and newly defined terms used in the 2012 International Building code (IBC).

The OSFM offers the following definitions for these terms as used in the 2010 California Building Code for Group I-4 occupancies:

Custodial care:

Webster's – *Medical Definition of Custodial relating to care, providing, or being protective care or services for basic needs <nursing and custodial care>.*

2012 IBC – *Assistance with day-to-day living tasks; such as assistance with cooking, taking medication, bathing, using toilet facilities and other tasks of daily living. Custodial care include occupants who evacuate at a slower rate and/or who have mental and psychiatric complications.*

Supervision:

Webster's – *The action or process of watching and directing what someone does or how something is done: the action or process of supervising someone or something.*

Personal care services:

2012 IBC – *The care of persons who do not require medical care. Personal care involves responsibility for the safety of the persons while inside the building.*

CCR, Title 22 – Additionally not specifically referenced in the code for Group I-4 day-care facilities, CCR, Title 22, Section 82001(c)(3) and the 2010 CBC provide the following definition of Care and Supervision:

"Care and Supervision" means any one or more of the following activities provided by a person or day program to meet the needs of the clients:

- (A) Assistance in dressing, grooming, bathing and other personal hygiene.*
- (B) Assistance with taking medication, as specified in Section 82075.*
- (C) Central storing or distribution of medications, as specified in Section 82075.*
- (D) Arrangement of and assistance with medical and dental care.*
- (E) Maintenance of day program rules for the protection of clients.*
- (F) Supervision of client schedules and activities.*
- (G) Maintenance or supervision of client cash resources or property.*
- (H) Monitoring food intake or special diets.*
- (I) Providing basic services as defined in Section 82001(b).*

The above definition for "care and supervision" is a more detailed definition than that of "personal care services" and "supervision"; it does not change the intent of the base model code when applied to adult day-care.

As a result of this review, the OSFM will be readdressing these terms in a future rulemaking to provide clarification and consistency. The OSFM in the adoption of the IBC model code, which form the base for the California Building Code, does not change the intent of the base model code except where in conflict with other state statute or regulations. It does not appear that these terms as defined above are in direct conflict and should be adopted. Personal care services may however, be amended to correlate or reference the CCR, Title 22 definition of "care and supervision.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	July 29, 2014	Interpretation	14-002
Topic	Separate Buildings Created by Fire Walls & Egress		
Code Section(s)	2010 / 2013 CBC §706		
Requested by	KTTY Group Wilbur Wong, Principal		
Date Received	February 26, 2014		

Question: For a building which complies with the egress requirements of Chapter 10 of the California Building Code (CBC), and also contains fire walls solely for area, height, and construction type compliance; does the fire wall language from §503.1 and §706.1 imply that each “separate building” then must comply with the means for egress requirements independently from the rest of the “separate building”?

Answer: Fire walls are primarily utilized as a design methodology to “separate buildings” for the requirements set forth in Chapter 5 of the CBC. Fire walls may be utilized for joint service between the two buildings, including egress; with some limitations (refer to CBC Section 1025 Horizontal Exits). If the fire wall is not being used as a horizontal exit, then the exit travel distances would be measured through the fire wall opening to the required exit element. If the “separate buildings” constructed by fire walls were not being used as a Horizontal Exit and the required overall exit access travel distance to an exit was always readily available, then the egress requirements would not be required to be independent of the rest of the “separate buildings.”



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	July 29, 2014	Interpretation	14-003
Topic	Stair Pressurization Operations		
Code Section(s)	2013 CBC §909.20.4		
Requested by	Aon Fire Protection Engineering Corporation Ning Wang, Senior Fire Protection Engineer		
Date Received	March 14, 2014		

Question: should stair pressurization systems be operated in the event of a fire only (upon actuation of the fire alarm system), or at both normal (non-fire condition) and fire conditions? In other words, should the stair pressurization system be operational 24 hours a day?

Answer: No. The stair pressurization is activated by fire alarm with smoke detection (CBC 909.20.4.3) unless the rational analysis (CBC 909.4) supports the design of having the stair pressurization 24 hours a day.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	July 29, 2014	Interpretation	14-004
Topic	Emergency Voice / Alarm Communications Systems		
Code Section(s)	2013 CBC §907.2.3.3		
Requested by	Interface Engineering Joe Ripp, Senior Fire Alarm Designer		
Date Received	April 2, 2014		

- 1. Does the exception to §907.2.3.3 specifically allow an Emergency Voice/Alarm Communications System to be replaced by a standard temporal horn notification system throughout the occupancy when equipped with a telephone system or an intercom system that provides two-way communication between each classroom and the administration office in an EXISTING occupancy?**

Answer: YES. Emergency Voice / Alarm Communication systems are required in all new Group E occupancies. The exception in §907.2.3.3 allows established school campuses, to keep their existing fire alarm system until it is upgraded or replaced. These established school campuses using this exception, may use other two-way communications when approved by the authority having jurisdiction. When the fire alarm system is upgraded or replaced the new fire alarm system will need to comply with §907.5.2.2 and provide an Emergency Voice / Alarm Communication system. This exception was placed into the California Building Code to allow established school campuses who do not have the associated equipment in their existing fire alarm system to accommodate this new provision without additional upgrades and associated costs.

- 2. Does the exception to §907.2.3.3 specifically allow an Emergency Voice/Alarm Communications System to be replaced by a standard temporal horn notification system throughout the occupancy when equipped with a telephone system or an intercom system that provides two-way communication between each classroom and the administration office in a NEW occupancy?**

Answer: NO. Emergency Voice / Alarm Communication systems are required in all new Group E occupancies. The exception in §907.2.3.3 allows established school campuses, to keep their existing fire alarm system until it is upgraded or replaced. These established school campuses using this exception, may use other two-way communications when approved by the authority having jurisdiction. When the fire alarm system is upgraded or replaced the new fire alarm system will need to comply with §907.5.2.2 and provide an Emergency Voice / Alarm Communication system. This exception was placed into the California Building

Code to allow established school campuses who do not have the associated equipment in their existing fire alarm system to accommodate this new provision without additional upgrades and associated costs.

- 3. Does the exception to §907.2.3.3 specifically allow an Emergency Voice/Alarm Communications System to be replaced by a standard temporal horn notification system throughout the occupancy when equipped with a telephone system or an intercom system that provides two-way communication between each classroom and the administration office in a MODERNIZED occupancy?**

Answer: NO. Emergency Voice / Alarm Communication systems are required in all new Group E occupancies. The exception in §907.2.3.3 allows established school campuses, to keep their existing fire alarm system until it is upgraded or replaced. These established school campuses using this exception, may use other two-way communications when approved by the authority having jurisdiction. When the fire alarm system is upgraded or replaced the new fire alarm system will need to comply with §907.5.2.2 and provide an Emergency Voice / Alarm Communication system. This exception was placed into the California Building Code to allow established school campuses who do not have the associated equipment in their existing fire alarm system to accommodate this new provision without additional upgrades and associated costs.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	July 29, 2014	Interpretation	14-005
Topic	Pipe Joints Located Under Foundations		
Code Section(s)	NFPA 13- 10.6.5, NFPA 24- 10.6.5 as amended by California		
Requested by	Action Fire Systems Co, Inc. Tim Loewer, President		
Date Received	April 21, 2014		

Question: Is it the intent of the California amendment to the 2013 Editions of NFPA 13 and NFPA 24 Section 10.6.5 to restrict only mechanical joints from being installed under a foundation footing or all pipe joints, such as flanged fitting joint?

Answer: When the Office of the State Fire Marshal adopted the 2007 edition of NFPA 24, section 10.6.5 was amended and the intent of the amendment was to completely eliminate all joints in the sprinkler supply lines when the riser was located close to the foundation. When the 2010 edition of NFPA 24 was adopted, a second exception to Section 10.6.5 was added to allow for registered professional engineers to provide an alternate design with the approval from the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). Based upon the code sections above, all pipe joints (mechanical, flanged, etc.) in the sprinkler supply lines are not allowed under building foundations or footings unless the requirements of 10.6.2 are met or a registered professional engineer provides an alternate design with the approval of the AHJ.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	July 29, 2014	Interpretation	14-006
Topic	Fire Alarms Systems Existing High-rise Buildings		
Code Section(s)	2013 CFC §907.6.1.1		
Requested by	CAFAA Tony Locatelli, CAFAA President		
Date Received	March 24, 2014		

1. **Does §907.6.1.1(1) “Class A in accordance with NFPA 72.” apply when replacing a fire alarm system, or portion of a system, in an existing high-rise building?**

§907.6.1.1(1) shall only apply to new construction of a high-rise building and does not apply to existing high-rise buildings.

2. **Does §907.6.1.1(2) “Enclosed in continuous metallic raceways in accordance with the California Electrical Code.” apply when the local authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) allows “open fire alarm cable” when replacing or providing a Tenant Improvement (TI) project in an existing high-rise building?**

§907.6.1.1(2) shall only apply to new construction of a high-rise building and does not apply to existing high-rise buildings. The existing electrical installation method approved by the AHJ shall be utilized when replacing or providing new fire alarm equipment as part of any project in an existing high-rise building. In addition, NFPA 72, 2013 edition section 24.3.6 Pathway Survivability would not apply in an existing high-rise building.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	July 29, 2014	Interpretation	14-007
Topic	I-2 Hospitals– Patient treatment/exam rooms, and basements		
Code Section(s)	2013 CBC 202, 707.1, 407.5, 1014.2, 1014.3		
Requested by	Ratcliff Peter Tsugawa, Principal		
Date Received	March 6, 2014		

1. Do “habitable rooms” in Group I-2 occupancies include patient treatment and exam rooms (occupied rooms)?

Answer: Yes. Direct access to the corridor system from a patient sleeping room or treatment room is a key component to staff access and patient movement. The term “habitable rooms” includes patient treatment rooms, however it is not limited solely to sleeping rooms and treatment rooms. The term habitable room is used in lieu of the term ‘patient sleeping room’ to clarify that all occupied rooms in a health care facility must have direct access to a corridor leading to an exit (or must be arranged to comply with one of the exceptions) The term “habitable rooms” is not intended to include individual bathrooms, closets and similar spaces, as well as briefly occupied spaces, such as control rooms in radiology and small storage/supply rooms. Habitable areas would include staff areas within the patient treatment and sleeping areas (i.e., nutrition rooms, clean/dirty linen rooms, staff lounge, staff work areas).

2. Do you apply “egress through intervening spaces” when you do not want a treatment room in a “care suite?” (Provided the common path of egress is 75 ft or less)

Answer: No. California Building Code (CBC) §1014.2 ‘Egress Through Intervening Spaces’ is a general provision for all occupancies. CBC §407.4.1 is a specific provision for Group I-2 occupancies. The term ‘habitable rooms’ is specific to Group I-2 occupancies and, as noted above, includes all occupied rooms in a health care facility. §407.4.1 has two exceptions:

1. Exception 1 allows habitable rooms to egress through a care suite that complies with §407.4.3; the non-rated corridor within the care suite is considered an intervening room
2. Exception 2 exempts the requirement for direct access to a corridor if the habitable room has an exit door opening directly to the outside at ground level.

3. Are smoke barriers required in a basement of a hospital that contains no patient care or treatment areas? (i.e. central processing, locker rooms, and storage)

Answer: Yes. CBC §407.5 applies specifically to Group I-2 occupancies and requires smoke barriers on each story used by care recipients for sleeping, care or treatment and all other stories classified as Group I-2 with an occupant load of 50 or more. Therefore, smoke barriers are required in a basement of a hospital that contains patient care or treatment for one or more occupants, as well as basements classified as Group I-2 if the occupant load is 50 or more. However, if the basement is classified as a different occupancy and is separated in accordance with CBC §508.4, smoke barriers are not required in basements that are not classified as Group I-2.

However, healthcare facilities that receive Federal reimbursement from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) must also comply with the *Life Safety Code* in order to meet the conditions of participation for this program. Provisions contained in the 2000 edition of NFPA 101 *Life Safety Code* have requirements for smoke barriers that maybe more restrictive than the CBC, specifically see Section NFPA 101 Section 18.3.7



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	November 17, 2014	Interpretation	14-008
Topic	Residential Sprinklers Water Supply		
Code Section(s)	2013 CRC R313.3.5 and R313.3.6		
Requested by	Uponor Melisa Rodriguez, PE, Senior Design Technician		
Date Received	September 9, 2014		

Question: Please provide clarification on section R313.3.5 about sizing the water supply, specifically when the system being used is a "multipurpose" system with the cold water plumbing fixtures fed directly off the pipe that is feeding the sprinklers and the hot water supply coming off the system riser. Does Section R313.3.5 intend to size the supply to the home and that the 5 gpm additional flow requirement for a shared fire and domestic supply is intended to be applied to that supply line only? There is a separate section that refers to sizing the system piping, R313.3.6, and for that only the flow from the two most demanding sprinklers is required to determine that pipe size. Where should the 5 gpm be applied for a multipurpose sprinkler system?

Answer: §R313.3.5 requires that 5 GPM be added where the systems are connected. On a "multipurpose" system, as defined above, it would be at the point where the hot water supply connects to the sprinkler riser. When this California amendment was added, the thought was by adding at least a 5 GPM allowance for concurrent non-fire flow through common piping, the calculations will allow for the operation of all calculated sprinklers regardless of other consumption on the property. §R313.3.6 reconfirms this by affirming that the flow required to supply the plumbing fixtures shall not be required to be added to the sprinkler design flow.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	November 24, 2014	Interpretation	14-009
Topic	Dedicated Function Fire Alarm Systems		
Code Section(s)	2013 CBC 3006.4.1		
Requested by	Pyro-Comm. Systems, Inc. Cesar B. Fortuno, Project Engineer		
Date Received	June 19, 2014		

Question: In buildings not required to have a fire alarm system, will the code allow the smoke detectors mentioned in §3006.4.1 items 1 and 2 to be connected to a required “Dedicated Elevator Recall Control and Supervisory Control Unit” and upon activation of the smoke detector(s), actuate the alarm signaling device(s) connected to a required “Dedicated Fire Sprinkler Monitoring and Alarm Control Unit?”

Answer: Yes. The 2013 edition of NFPA 72 allows *Dedicated Function Fire Alarm Systems* for purposes such as elevator recall control and/or supervisory control or sprinkler system waterflow and supervisory functions. NFPA 72 §23.8.2.3 allows *Dedicated Function Fire Alarm Systems* to work independent of each other, but they can be interconnected. Buildings not required to have a fire alarm system, are allowed to have smoke detectors required by §3006.4.1 connected to a *Dedicated Function Fire Alarm Systems* for elevator recall control and supervisory control. These can then be connected to the “Dedicated Fire Sprinkler Monitoring and Alarm Control Unit.”



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	November 24, 2014	Interpretation	14-010
Topic	Means of Egress Illumination		
Code Section(s)	2013 CBC 1006.1, Energy Code §130.1(c)		
Requested by	Schetter Electric James Hines, Electrical Engineer		
Date Received	June 20, 2014		

Questions: The California Energy Code, states that all lighting including emergency lighting must be shut off when the building is unoccupied. It states that this is to be done by occupancy sensing, automatic time switch, or building system signal. If occupancy sensing is used for a separate office and the exit path is also occupancy sensing controlled, then an occupant can be in an office with the exit path totally dark, which does not conform to section 1006 of the California Building Code. For timing or a building control system there will not be a guarantee the building will be unoccupied.

- 1. What are the exiting and emergency lighting requirements when applying the California Energy Code?**

Answer: The California Building Code (CBC) requirements for Means of Egress Illumination Section (§1006) supersede the California Energy Code. The requirements of CBC §1006 are applicable when applying the California Energy Code.

- 2. For emergencies, how will a responding party activate the lights as there is no requirement for a fire department emergency override?**

Answer: As stated in question 1, the means of egress illumination level shall not be less than 1 footcandle at the walking surface, where required per CBC. There are no fire and life safety code requirements for fire department overrides.

- 3. Are electronic methods of guaranteeing that no one is in the building acceptable? If so, must they be UL 924 (emergency), or State Fire Marshal approved, or require continuous monitoring or testing?**

Answer: As stated in question 1, the means of egress illumination level shall not be less than 1 footcandle at the walking surface, where required per CBC. There are no fire and life safety code requirements for electronic methods of guaranteeing the building is unoccupied.

4. **What is the required commissioning test for controls if required? What documentation would be required?**

Answer: As stated in question 1, the means of egress illumination level shall not be less than 1 footcandle at the walking surface, where required per CBC. There are no fire and life safety code requirements for commissioning test for controls.

5. **How should this apply to a mall, where light control timing would be used instead of occupancy control? What guarantees the mall to be unoccupied?**

Answer: As stated in question 1, the means of egress illumination level shall not be less than 1 footcandle at the walking surface, where required per CBC.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	December 16, 2014	Interpretation	14-011
Topic	Laboratories, vocational shops and other such areas not classified as Group H, located in Group E occupancies		
Code Section(s)	2013 CBC Table 509 and §509.3		
Requested by	Division of the State Architect David E. Casey, Principal Fire & Life Safety Officer		
Date Received	June 25, 2014		

Question: Is the amendment to Table 509 (“Rooms or areas with special hazards such as laboratories, vocational shops and other such areas not classified as Group H, located in Group E occupancies where hazardous materials in quantities not exceeding the maximum allowable quantity are used or stored”) subject to the provisions of §509.3 Area Limitations (“Incidental uses shall not occupy more than 10 percent of the building area of the story in which they are located.”)?

Answer: No. The intent of the SFM amendment within Table 509 is to require a 1 hour separation between rooms or areas with special hazards such as laboratories, vocational shops and other such areas not classified as Group H, located in Group E occupancies and the adjacent classrooms or prep rooms. §509.3 sets forth that incidental uses cannot occupy more than 10 percent of the building area of the story. §509.4 requires that incidental uses listed in Table 509 shall be separated.

Rooms or areas with special hazards such as laboratories, vocational shops and other such areas not classified as Group H, located in Group E occupancies where hazardous materials in quantities not exceeding the maximum allowable quantity are used or stored must be separated from the remaining of the building by a 1 hour separation.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	December 16, 2014	Interpretation	14-012
Topic	Solar Photovoltaic Pathway Definitions		
Code Section(s)	2013 CFC 605.11.3.3.2 and 605.11.3.3.3		
Requested by	Sunistics, LLC Nicholas Mahalec, CEO		
Date Received	September 30, 2014		

Question: How should the use of “around” versus “bordering” in 2013 California Fire Code (CFC) §605.11.3.3.2 and §605.11.3.3.3 be interpreted? The code is clear in relation to skylights as it did not purposefully utilize the term “around” in this section of the code, but instead used “bordering.”

Answer: For the term “bordering” within CFC §6085.11.3.3.3(2.2), there must be a pathway that is on at least one side of the roof skylights or smoke and heat vents. The intent is to have the pathway to the skylights or smoke and heat vents for firefighter operations. The term “around” within §605.11.3.3.2.5, requires a clearance on all four sides of the rood access hatch.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	December 16, 2014	Interpretation	14-014
Topic	Solar PV AC Markings		
Code Section(s)	2013 CBC §3111.2, 3111.2.4, 3111.3; CRC R331.2, R331.2.4, R331.3; CFC 605.11.1, 605.11.1.4, 605.11.2;		
Requested by	Chula Vista Fire Department Justin Gipson, Deputy Chief / Fire Marshal		
Date Received	September 30, 2014		

Question:

1. Does California Fire Code §605.11.1, 605.11.1.4, and 605.11.2 apply to solar panels systems employing the use of micro-inverters at the solar panel module; thus making all conductors that lead away from panel modules of the alternating current (AC) type?
2. If yes to Question 1, would this also apply to the California Residential Code §R331.2, R331.2.4, and R331.3.

Answer:

California Building Code §3111.2, 3111.2.4, 3111.3; California Residential Code §R331.2, R331.2.4, R331.3; California Electric Code Article 690; and California Fire Code §605.11.1, 605.11.1.4, 605.11.2 do not require the markings of alternating current (AC) conduit, enclosures, raceways, cable assemblies, junction boxes, combiner boxes and disconnects, or set forth the requirements for AC conductor locations. The intent of the code is to provide emergency responders with appropriate visual warning and guidance with respect to working around and isolating the PV system. All AC components need to be able to be de-energized at the main disconnect, for PV systems that have micro-inverters at the solar panel module or PV systems that provide backup generation. If the AC components cannot be de-energized at the main disconnect, then DC marking and conductor location requirements should apply to the AC components.



California State Fire Marshal CODE INTERPRETATION

Date Issued	December 30, 2013	Interpretation	13-001
Topic	Backflow requirements for Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems under the 2013 California Residential Code		
Code Section(s)	2013 California Residential Code Section R313.3.5.3		
Requested by	National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA) Bruce Lecair, Regional Manager		
Date Received	December 16, 2013		

Question: Is it the intent of Section R313.3.5.3 of the 2013 California Residential Code (CRC) to require backflow protection to separate a stand-alone residential fire sprinkler system from a potable water source supplying the system?

Answer: The answer to this question is dependent on the specific installation. Stand-alone residential sprinkler systems that 1) Use piping materials that are suitable for potable water, 2) Do not contain antifreeze, and 3) Do not have a fire department connection, **are excluded from any backflow protection requirements** under CRC Section R313.3.1. CRC Section R313.3.1 is a “*specific*” code provision that applies to residential sprinkler systems meeting these criteria. Any stand-alone residential sprinkler system that does not meet the three criteria must be provided with backflow protection in accordance with CRC Section 313.3.5.3, which contains the “*general*” requirements for providing backflow protection for residential sprinkler systems.

CRC Section 1.1.7 indicates that, where a conflict exists between code sections, specific provisions prevail over general provisions, even if the specific provision is less restrictive. For reference, CRC 1.1.7 assigns the following as the general order of precedence and use of the California Residential Code (Item 2 applies in this case):

1. *Differences. In the event of any differences between these building standards and the standard reference documents, the text of these building standards shall govern.*
2. *Specific provisions. Where a specific provision varies from a general provision, the specific provision shall apply.*
3. *Conflicts. When the requirements of this code conflict with the requirements of any other part of the California Building Standards Code, Title 24, the most restrictive requirements shall prevail.*

As background, it is of interest to note that the provisions contained in CRC Section R313.3.5.3 were brought over from the 2012 International Residential Code (IRC) Section P2902.5.4 to correlate with the provisions of CRC Section R313. This action is due in part to the plumbing code chapters of the IRC not being adopted in California, California has adopted the 2012 Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) for the 2013 California Plumbing Code (CPC). Nevertheless, the above interpretation is consistent with how IRC Chapter 29 applies without the California amendments.

It is also of interest to note that this interpretation is consistent with California Health and Safety Code Section 13114.7 (also reprinted in Section 603.5.15 of the California Plumbing Code), which does not require backflow protection for residential fire sprinkler systems meeting the restrictions listed in CRC Section R313.3.1.

For reference, Health and Safety Code (California Statute not regulation):

(a) For the purposes of this section the following are definitions of class I and class II systems:

(1) American Water Works Association [A.W.W.A] Manual No. M-14 class 1 – Automatic fire sprinkler systems with direct connection from public water mains only; no pumps, tanks, or reservoirs; no physical connection from other water supplies; no antifreeze or additives of any kind; and all sprinkler drains discharging to the atmosphere or other safe outlets.

(2) American Water Works Association [A.W.W.A] Manual No. M-14 class 2 – Automatic fire sprinkler systems which are the same as class 1, except that booster pumps may be installed in the connections from the street mains.

(b) Automatic fire sprinkler systems described in subdivision (a) shall not require any backflow protection equipment at the service connection other than required by standards for those systems contained in the publication of the National Fire Protection Association entitled “Installation of Sprinkler Systems” [NFPA Pamphlet No. 13, 1980 edition]

Conclusion: Based upon code sections above, backflow prevention is not required in fire sprinkler systems that are constructed of materials that are approved for potable water.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	07/23/2012	Interpretation	12-001
Topic	Existing Building Fire Alarm Control Unit		
Code Section(s)	2010 CFC 907, NFPA 72		
Requested by	Thomas Harvey San Francisco Fire Department 698 Second Street San Francisco, CA 94116		

- 1. When replacing a fire alarm control unit in an existing building due to obsolescence or the addition of access required notification appliances, is the new control unit required to be only code compliant and listed compatible with other existing components such as smoke detectors, heat detectors, etc... ?**

Yes. It is the intent that only the replacement FACU, devices and appliances are required to comply with the current edition of the code and standard.

Note: However the existing fire alarm system shall conform to the codes and standards at the time the fire alarm system was originally installed.

The authority having jurisdiction shall be consulted prior to the replacement of any fire alarm control unit or system modification, every building is considered on a case by case basis. Complete documentation shall be provided in accordance with NFPA 72, California Fire Code and local requirements.

- 2. Are notification appliances to be made code compliant throughout as for new buildings?**

No. See note above.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	08/01/2012	Interpretation	12-002
Topic	Existing Building Fire Alarm Control Unit ADA required notification		
Code Section(s)	2010 CFC Section 907		
Requested by	Zari Consulting Group, Inc.		
Date Received	04/25/2012		

- 1. When replacing a fire alarm control unit in an existing building due to obsolescence or the addition of ADA required notification appliances, is the new control unit required to be only code compliant and listed compatible with other existing components such as smoke detectors, heat detectors, etc.?**

Yes. It is the intent that only the replacement FACU, devices and appliances are required to comply with the current edition of the code and standard.

Note: However the existing fire alarm system shall conform to the codes and standards at the time the fire alarm system was originally installed.

The authority having jurisdiction shall be consulted prior to the replacement of any fire alarm control unit or system modification, every building is considered on a case by case basis. Complete documentation shall be provided in accordance with NFPA 72, California Fire Code and local requirements.

- 2. Are notification appliances to be made code compliant throughout as for new buildings?**

No. See note above.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12/19/11	Interpretation	11-002
Topic	I occupancies "similar spaces"		
Code Section(s)	2010 CBC 107 and 407.2.1		
Requested by	Fire Safety Solutions Greg Granados 6125 Shenandoah Dr. Sacramento, CA 95841		

I am requesting a formal interpretation of the following questions and clarification of OSFM interpretation 09-003.

- 1. Is it the intent of the State Fire Marshal to allow the designer of record of the building official to classify the actual occupancy of an area and in doing so the requirement for the individual occupancy?**

There's no assignment of responsibility found within the 2010 CBC. Therefore, the design professional can "legally" determine a building's occupancy; and the code official, in accordance with his Section 107 duties, will either concur or not concur with the design professional's decision during plan review and/or inspections as a part of enforcing the provisions of the code.

- 2. Interpretation 09-003 Residential Care Facilities states in I-1 that areas for dining and activities greater the 750 sq. ft. are A-3 occupancies regardless of the percentage of the floor area. Does this section override the 407.2.1 which allows unlimited open areas in I-2 occupancies?**

No, 09-003 is in reference to I-1 occupancies only.

- 3. Question number 3 of interpretation 09-003 allows for only small spaces such as waiting rooms and similar spaces, would a dining area smaller than 750sq. ft. meet this intent?**

Yes, see code commentary.

4. **Are libraries, living areas and group activities areas also allowed to be open to the exit egress corridor so long as the 407.2.1 requirements are met?**

No, Libraries, living areas and group activity areas do not meet the intent of 407.2.1.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	8/18/2011	Interpretation	11-006 Re-Issue
Topic	Sprinklers in Concealed Spaces		
Code Section(s)	2007/2010 California Building Code Section 601		
Requested by	Division of State Architect David Casey 1102 Q Street, Suite 5100 Sacramento, CA 95811-6550		

Is it the intent of the California Building Code to require fire sprinkler protection in noncombustible or limited combustible interstitial spaces of Type IIA or IIIA or VA construction, such as voids between drop ceilings and floor/ceiling assemblies, attics, etc. where an automatic sprinkler system in compliance with NFPA 13 as an alternative one-hour-fire-resistance rated construction?

No, provided the interstitial spaces comply with the 2002 edition of NFPA 13 as amended or 2010 edition of NFPA 13 as amended for buildings constructed under the 2007 or 2010 California Building Code respectively.

State Fire Marshal Interpretation Comments

Code Interpretation Committee
Code Interpretation
Date
Summary

Division Chief Review
Code Interpretation
Date
Summary

DRAFT



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	8/18/2011	Interpretation	11-007
Topic	Strobes in Medical Exam Rooms/ B Occupancies		
Code Section(s)	2010 CBC (F) 907.5 Occupant notification systems; specifically (F) 908.5.2.3.1 Public and common use areas – CSFM Code Interpretation 09-056		
Requested by	David Sumaya, Fire Marshal Hanford Fire Department 350 W. Grangeville Blvd. Hanford, CA		

In Group B occupancies, where a fire alarm system is required, are strobes required inside medical exam rooms per last code cycle's Code Interpretation 09-056?

Yes. Code Interpretation 09-056 is applicable to the 2010 Code Edition. See the 2009 ICC Code Commentary Section 907.5.2.3.1



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12/19/11	Interpretation	11-010
Topic	M Occupancy 2007 California Fire Code		
Code Section(s)	907.2.7		
Requested by	Berry Greive, Code Compliance Representative, 50 South 10 th St. Suite 400, TP3-1012 Minneapolis, MN 55403		

Does the California Fire Code require an emergency voice/alarm communication system to be installed within an "M" occupancy?

No. California Fire Code (2010), Section 907.2.7 requires that only a manual fire alarm system be installed in Group M occupancies where the combined occupant load is 500 or more persons on the first floor or more than 100 persons above or below the lowest level of exit discharge. The code does allow a voice/alarm communication system to be installed as an option in lieu of a manual fire alarm system.

Where a voice/alarm communication system is installed in a Group M occupancy, CFC, Section 907.2.7.1 allows the alarm initiation to be silent (without automatic activation of notification appliances) when the fire alarm initiation signals are annunciated at a constantly attended location where evacuation instructions can be initiated over the voice/alarm communication system.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12/19/11	Interpretation	11-014
Topic	Reductions in Required Exiting Width for Indoor and outdoor arenas.		
Code Section(s)	2010 CBC, Section 1002, Section 1028.6.2		
Requested by	Kelly Eisenstein, RJA Operations Manager, 591 Camino de la Reina, Ste. 1025 San Diego, CA 92108 619-488-9810 keisenstein@rjagroup.com		

Are the provisions of Section 1028.6.2 for smoke-protected seating applicable for Group A occupancies that do not have permanent fixed seating, aisles, etc? Uses such as large ballrooms and exhibit halls would be ideal for the reduction in stair/aisle width per Table 1028.6.2 based upon smoke protection.

Yes. This section applies to all assemblies with smoke protected seating; it does not apply to open assembly areas such as exhibit halls and ballrooms. A life safety evaluation, complying with NFPA 101 as required by CBC 1028.6.2, shall be submitted to and approved by the authority having jurisdiction for a facility utilizing the reduced width requirements of CBC Table 1028.6.2. Fire modeling for each scenario where seating is not fixed shall be evaluated.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12/19/11	Interpretation	11-015
Topic	Fire Flow Requirements with Mixed Construction		
Code Section(s)	CFC 2010, Appendix B, BB		
Requested by	Thomas McKinnon, President Aegis Fire Systems, Inc. a subsidiary of AFPG 500 Boulder Court, Suite A Pleasanton, CA 94566 925-417-5550		

1. In buildings of mixed Type I and Type V construction types; is it the intent of the code to require the fire flow for the respective construction types be added together to establish the minimum required fire flow for the site?

Typically no, buildings with two types of construction may be calculated for each type of construction used within the effective area of the building. The values are then multiplied by their individual percentage of the total area and then added together. The Fire Flow without reductions pertinent to the entire building is the sum of these values. For examples of how to calculate fire flow for buildings with mixed construction types, the 2009 IFC Code and Commentary for Appendix B, Section B105 (published by the ICC) provides an explanation of the intent and examples. The following excerpts from the commentary have been reviewed and accepted by the OSFM and provide an acceptable means of compliance.

“Table B105.1 states the fire-flow and duration requirements based on the fire area, as defined by the definition in this appendix and Section B103, and the construction types defined in the IBC. As the construction type becomes more combustible, the fire-flow requirements will increase. Likewise, as the area of the building increases, the fire-flow requirements increase. The last column also specifies a minimum duration of fire flow. The duration of fire flow varies from a Minimum of 2 hours to 4 hours. Flow duration may be an issue that each jurisdiction may need to consider when assessing the capabilities of the department, the hazards presented and the realistic availability of water supply.

Applying this table, for example, a 50,000-square-foot (4546 m²) Type IV building would require a fire flow of 4,000 gpm (15 140 L/min) with a duration of 4 hours. If the building was sprinklered and the full 75-percent reduction was allowed, the required fire flow

would be 1,500 gpm (5678 L/min) [75-percent reduction would result in 1,000 gpm (3785 L/min), which is lower than the minimum of 1,500 gpm (5678 L/min)].

This table does not address use and occupancy classifications. A Type IA construction building housing a Group A occupancy would be treated the same as a Type IA construction building housing a Group H or Group F occupancy. Again, this table was formed based on the approaches presented by the ISO Guidelines which focus on construction types. It should be noted that Group R occupancies are specifically allowed a 25-percent reduction. This reflects the reduction allowed by the ISO Guidelines for residential occupancies.

A common question asked when applying this table is how to deal with a building that incorporates multiple construction types. Such scenarios would be better addressed through a percentage approach. For example, in a building that has two construction types, Types IA and VA, having areas of 25,000 square feet (2323 m²) and 10,000 square feet (929 m²), respectively, the fire flow would be calculated as follows:

Total building area

25,000 square feet (Type IA) + 10,000 square feet (Type VA) = 35,000 square feet (3252 m²)

Fire flow per construction type

Type IA at 35,000 square feet = 2,000 gpm (7370 L/min)

Type VA at 35,000 square feet = 3,250 gpm (12 112 L/min)

Percentage of building

IA = $25,000/35,000 \times 100 = 71.4$ percent

VA = $10,000/35,000 \times 100 = 28.6$ percent

Therefore

$0.714 (2,000 \text{ gpm}) + 0.286 (3,250 \text{ gpm}) = 2,357.5$

= Approximately 2,350 gpm (8894 L/min)"

- 2. If a structure fully conforms to CBC Section 509.2 would it be required to combine the fire flows for a structure containing a Type IA Private Parking Garage to a Type VA Residential Apartment Building built above the garage structure?**

No (see above) this scenario is addressed in the answer above.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	9/8/2011	Interpretation	11-016
Topic	Group R-2 Occupancies		
Code Section(s)	2010 CBC Section 1029.1 Exception 1		
Requested by	Douglas Pancake, AIA, President DOUGLAS PANCAKE ARCHITECTS, Inc. 1470 Jamboree Road, Second Floor Newport Beach, CA 92660 (949) 720-3850 FAX (949) 720-3843 DougP@pancakearchitects.com		

2010 CBC Section 1029.1

1029.1 General. In addition to the means of egress required by this chapter, provisions shall be made for emergency escape and rescue in Group R occupancies. Basements and sleeping rooms below the fourth story above grade plane shall have at least one exterior emergency escape and rescue opening in accordance with this section. Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, emergency escape and rescue openings shall be required in each sleeping room, but shall not be required in adjoining areas of the basement. Such openings shall open directly into a public way or to a yard or court that opens to a public way.

2010 CBC Section 1029.1, Exception 1.

In Groups R-1 and R-2 occupancies constructed of Type I, Type IIA, Type IIIA and Type IV construction equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1.

Does Exception 1 of 1029.1 apply to R-2.1 RCFE Occupancies, a sub classification to R-2?

Yes. Section 1029.1, Exception 1 applies to both Groups R-1 and R-2 occupancies... Group R-2 in general includes Group R-2.1 occupancies unless otherwise stated or excluded. The intent of the code, as amended by the SFM, is for Group R-2.1 occupancies to be constructed as a Group R-2 with additional restrictions or construction provisions as stipulated throughout the code (e.g. section 425).



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12/19/11	Interpretation	11-019
Topic	Flame Resistant Requirements for Canopies / Tents		
Code Section(s)	Title 19, California Code of Regulations, Section 310(a) 2010 California Fire Code, Chapter 24, Section 2402.1		
Requested by	Jill Femister, International E-Z UP Inc. 1601 Iowa Avenue Riverside, California 92507 Phone: (951) 779-2329 jillfemister@ezup.com		

1. **Are all canopies that are used in a place of assemblage required to be flame resistant, whether or not they are required to have a permit from the local authority?**

Yes, regardless of the requirement for a permit, canopies would meet the definition of a tent and therefore required to be flame retardant in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Section 310. This section was written to comply with Health and Safety Code Section 13115 for the required use and are made from a nonflammable material or are treated and maintained in a flame retardant condition in public assembly's of 10 or more persons.

2. **If all canopies, whether or not they are required to obtain a permit from the local authority, are required to be flame resistant, should the flame resistant requirements be per California Code of Regulations Title 19?**

Yes, canopies used for assembly purposes of 10 or more persons must be of nonflammable material or must be treated and maintained in a flame-retardant condition in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Chapter 8. For small tents of less than 10 persons, CPAI-84 is an acceptable test method (California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Section 332).

3. **If California Code of Regulations Title 19 is the applicable standard for canopies, what is the definition of a "Large" canopy and a "Small" canopy?**

California Code of Regulations, Title 19 does not specifically define small or large canopies. However, Health and Safety Code 13115(a) specifies that tents, awnings or other fabric enclosures used for assemblage of 10 or more persons must be made from a nonflammable material or treated and maintained in a flame retardant condition. Fabric enclosures would include canopies with a fabric covering. Health and Safety Code Section 13115 (b) is specific only to “tents” occupied by less than 10 persons.

4. **Would we be correct in saying that the determination of whether a tent (canopy) is considered “large” or “small” is dependant upon the number of people who have assembled under the tent (canopy) at that time?**

Yes (Health and Safety Code Section 13115)

5. **Would it be correct to say that as long as the occupancy under the tent (canopy) is maintained at less than 10 persons, the tent (canopy) will be considered a “small” tent (canopy).**

Yes.

Note: California Code of Regulations, Title 19 Articles 2 and 3 defines tents based upon occupant load, not use. Since California Code of Regulations, Title 19 is silent regarding use, the California Building Code 2010 edition, Section 1004 Table 1004.1.1 should be utilized to calculate the occupant load, based upon use. This table gives a maximum square footage for each person for a particular occupancy. It is NOT within the purview of the State Fire Marshal to mandate the occupant load of a particular tent, but rather, it is a requirement of the manufacture to set the occupant load and label it accordingly. State Fire Marshal regulations mandate the labeling requirements based upon the manufactures stated occupant load.

If the manufacturer chooses to only use the CPAI-84 label then the tent is limited to less than 10 people as the CPAI-84 label, by definition, specifies the occupancy load for a tent. It is up to the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) or Fire Code Official as far as the enforcement of the occupant loading based upon the label.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12/19/11	Interpretation	11-023
Topic	Access-controlled egress doors		
Code Section(s)	2010 CBC 1008.1.4.4 & CFC 1008.1.4.4		
Requested by	Steven Hoffman Building Knowledge, Founder, Lead Instructor 119 Verde Meas Dr. Danville, CA 94526 steve@IORED.com		

Does Section 1008.1.4.4 item # 6 apply only to entrance doors to buildings with occupancies A, B, I-2 or M and not to entrance doors to tenant spaces?

Yes



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	4/12/2010	Interpretation	010-004
Topic	Secondary means of Transmission via GSM for DACT		
Code Section(s)	2007 NFPA 72 (National Fire Protection Agency), Section 8.6.3.2.1.4		
Requested by	Greater Alarm Victor Balancio, Jr. 3750 Schaufele, Suite 200 Long Beach, CA 90808 Victor.Balancio@interfacesys.com		

I am writing for clarification on Section 8.6.3.2.1.4 (Transmission Channels) of the NFPA 72, 2007. Does the SFM allow an Internet base communication via the GSM (Global System for Mobil) network as a secondary means of transmission for a DACT?

Yes, if it complies with NFPA 72, (2007 edition) Section 8.6.4, Other Transmission Technologies.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	June 8, 2010	Interpretation	10-005
Topic	Photo-luminescent Exit signs		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 1011.4 and 1011.5.2		
Requested by	Scott Ventura, Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal City of Palm Springs Fire Department 300 N. El Cielo Road Palm Springs, CA 92262 760-323-8181 760-778-8430 FAX		

This is a formal request for an interpretation of the provisions found in the 2007 California Building Code, Volume 1, Chapter 10, Sections 1011.4 and 1011.5.2.

1. Are photo-luminescent exit signs utilized in the interior of occupancies as egress path markings subject to CBC 1011.4?
No, Exit signs are not pathway markings.

2. Shall fire inspectors utilize the listing and installation requirements contained in *UL 924, "Emergency Lighting and Power Equipment"* when conducting fire and life safety inspections of occupancies containing photo-luminescent exit signs?
N/A

3. Since photo-luminescent exit signs are dependant upon an external illumination source, are photo-luminescent exit signs subject to CBC 1011.5.2?
No. The external lighting source requirements for photo-luminescent exit signs shall be per manufacturer's instructions.

4. May photo-luminescent exit signs be used in rooms where the required external illumination lighting may be temporarily dimmed (below 5 foot-candles), or temporarily extinguished, while the room is occupied (i.e.,

a school multi-purpose room during a theater performance or movie presentation)?

No. Photo-luminescent exit signs may be used only in locations where a minimum 5 foot-candle external illumination source (as specified in the UL 924 listing and marked on the exit sign) is present on the sign face, is deemed reliable, is supplied by a circuit not controlled by automatic timers or sensors and the controls are accessible only to authorized personnel. The reliable external illumination source is to be energized at all times of building occupancy. Refer to manufactures Installation Instruction Manual for details. Note: Sign must be illuminated for a minimum of 90-minutes upon loss of power or building illumination.

5. *UL 924 states that "...the lighting controls (for external illumination) are accessible only to authorized personnel".*
- a) Would a typical "toggle-type" light switch that is accessible by the public, meet this requirement if that switch controlled the required external illumination source?
No
 - b) Would a "key-type" light switch, where only authorized personnel could operate the switch controlling the external illumination source meet this requirement?
Yes



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	4/12/2010	Interpretation	10-006
Topic	Security Shutters & Roll down doors		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code Section 1028.6		
Requested by	Scott Ventura, Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal City of Palm Springs Fire Department 300 N. El Cielo Road Palm Springs, CA 92262 760-323-8181 760-778-8430 FAX		

This is a formal request for an interpretation of the provisions found in the 2007 California Fire Code, Chapter 10, sections 1028.6.

1. Are metal “roll-down” type security shutters placed over required emergency escape openings subject to this code section?

Yes. If the product complies with “Releasing Systems for Security in Dwellings” (CCR, Title 24, Part 12 California Reference Standards Code, Standard 12-3)

2. Are electrically operated roll-down security shutters required to have a manual over-ride on the interior of each room?

Yes. If the product complies with “Releasing Systems for Security in Dwellings” (CCR, Title 24, Part 12 California Reference Standards Code, Standard 12-3)

3. Does a permanently attached, manual “hand-crank” over-ride device meet the “...without the use of a key, tool or force greater than that which is required for normal operation of the escape and rescue opening” requirement of this code section?

Yes. If the product complies with “Releasing Systems for Security in Dwellings” (CCR, Title 24, Part 12 California Reference Standards Code, Standard 12-3)

4. **If the normal operation of electrically operated roll-down shutters is conducted using a battery operated remote control device, would such a device be considered a “key” or “tool”?**

A remote controlled device would not be an approved emergency release mechanism as required by the standard.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	4/12/2010	Interpretation	10-007
Topic	Egress Courts		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 1024.5.1 & 1024.5.2		
Requested by	Jingbo Lou, Architect J Lou Architect 26 E. Colorado Blvd. Suite 1 Pasadena, CA 91105 626-395-9600 626-395-9601 Fax Jlou@jlouarchitect.com		

- 1. When the width of an egress court is greater than 10', are non-rated windows allowed on building walls on both sides of an egress court directly facing each other?**

Yes

- 2. Is a paved path required to cover the entire egress court?**

No, however the surface of the means of egress has to comply with CBC 1003.4 Floor surface - *“Walking surfaces of the means of egress shall have a slip-resistant surface and be securely attached”*.

- 3. Are landscape and planters allowed in an egress court?**

Yes, however the egress court path & width shall comply with 2007 CBC 1024.5.1.



California State Fire Marshal CODE INTERPRETATION

Date Issued		Interpretation	10-008 Revised
Topic	Group B Fire Alarm, application requirements during remodeling		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code Section 907.2		
Requested by	City of Sunnyvale Ali Fatapour-Building Official 456 W. Olive Ave. Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3707 (408) 730-7432 Office (408)730-7715 Fax afatapour@ci.sunnyvale.ca.us		
Date Received	01/14/2010		

Is a fire alarm system required to be installed in an existing Group B office building that has an occupant load of more than 100 on the 2nd floor and is undergoing remodeling?

If the building was originally permitted prior to the adoption of the 2007 California Building Standards Codes, the provisions of 907.2.2 would not apply as this is not a new building. However, if this building was originally permitted under the 2007 California Building Standards Codes the provisions of 907.2.2 would have been required.

The dilemma is where an existing building was constructed prior to the 2007 California Building Standards Codes and the building undergoes substantial alteration, the project must be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the enforcing agency.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	4/12/2010	Interpretation	10-009
Topic	Solid Wood door thickness requirements for wildfire protection		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code, Section 704A 3.2.3		
Requested by	Michael Lavalley Chief Building Official, Town of Truckee 10183 Truckee Airport Road Truckee, CA 96161 (530)582-2905 (530)5827889 Fax mlavalley@townoftruckee.com		

2007 CBC Section 704A.3.2.3 states in part that “Exterior door assemblies...shall be of...solid core wood having stiles and rails not less than 1-3/8 inches thick with interior field panel thickness no less than 1-1/4 inches thick...”

Do raised panel solid wood doors comply with 2007 California Building Code Chapter 7-A if the exterior perimeter of the raised field panel has a tapered tongue less than 1¼ inches thick?

Yes. This issue was explicitly addressed by OSFM and the 2005 Advisory Committee. It is the intent of the OSFM to permit the use of solid wood doors with raised panels as they are typically manufactured with a tapered tongue not less than 3/8 inches thick.

Note: Further code application guidance may be found in the 2010 California Building Code that is scheduled to become effective in 2011 where this issue was fully addressed. See Sections 701A & 710A on pages 48-55 of the SFM California Building Code “Final Express Terms” (**SFM 03/09** - California Building Code, Part 2, Title 24 (Final Express Terms, FET - [PDF](#)) on the Building Standards Commission website.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	4/12/2010	Interpretation	10-010
Topic	Group E Exterior Audible Alarms		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code Section 907.2.3.3		
Requested by	David M. Secoda Schirmer Engineering 1850 Gateway Blvd., Suite 1030 Concord, CA 94520 (925) 827-5858 x 127 (925) 827-8997 Fax David_Secoda@schirmereng.com		

Is it the intent of the California Fire Code, Section 907.2.3.3 to provide an audible alarm notification appliance on the exterior of every building facing a playground area on a multi-building campus, for example portable classrooms?

No. A single exterior audible notification appliance is required for each separate playground area to alert occupants in and around the playground area when the campus fire alarm system has been activated. In addition, where a classroom building fire alarm is not interconnected to the campus fire alarm system, these classrooms shall have an audible notification appliance on the exterior.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	4/12/2010	Interpretation	10-011
Topic	Manual Fire Alarm Box Height Exception		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code Section 907.4.2		
Requested by	David M. Secoda Schirmer Engineering 1850 Gateway Blvd., Suite 1030 Concord, CA 94520 (925) 827-5858 x 127 (925) 827-8997 Fax David_Secoda@schirmereng.com		

Is it the intent of California Fire Code, Section 907.4.2 Exception, to exempt the retroactive relocation of existing manual fire alarm boxes in only DSA regulated occupancies, such as public schools, or is the Exception applicable to other occupancy classifications such as I-2 and B?

No. It is not the intent to retroactively require the relocation of manual fire alarm boxes in any building, regardless of occupancy.

Is it the intent of California Fire Code, Section 907.4.2 to require retroactively, the relocation of existing manual fire alarm boxes (as prescribed) in existing buildings when no building renovations or changes are in progress?

No. It is not the intent to retroactively require the relocation of manual fire alarm boxes in any building, regardless of occupancy.



California State Fire Marshal CODE INTERPRETATION

Date Issued	4/12/2010	Interpretation	10-012
Topic	Application of wildfire protection requirements to agricultural buildings.		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Sections 701A & 704A5.1		
Requested by	Laurel Roberts, Equine Design 930 Junipero Way, Salinas, Calif. 93901 Solvang, Calif. 93464 (831) 682-1121 (Phone) (831) 753-1706 (Fax) www.laurelrobertsequinedesign.com		

2007 CBC Section 701A states that the wildfire protection provisions of Ch7A apply to “New buildings located in any Fire Hazard Severity Zone [as specified]...” and Section 704A.5.1 states “When required by the enforcing agency, ancillary buildings and structures and detached accessory structures shall comply with the provisions of this chapter.” Section 312 provides examples of “buildings and structures of an accessory character...” with further specification in Appendix C “Group U – Agricultural Buildings.”

Does California Building Code Chapter 7A apply to agriculture buildings such as horse barns, “open face” barns, and canopy “shed-row” barns?

No. Such structures are not required to comply with the provisions of CBC Chapter 7A unless they would pose a significant fire exposure risk to nearby primary buildings, and such structures are required to comply by the enforcing agency.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	4/12/2010	Interpretation	10-013
Topic	Exterior Windows & Glazed Doors in Wildfire Protection areas		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code, Section 704A3.2.2		
Requested by	AIM Associates George Beeler, NCARB 100 Fair Street Petaluma, CA 94952 (707)763-3300 (707)763-6489 fax george@aimgreen.com		

CBC Section 704A.3.2.2 states, in part, that exterior windows, window walls, glazed doors, and glazed openings within exterior doors shall be insulating-glass units with a minimum of one tempered pane, or glass block units, (etc.).

CBC Section 704A.3.2.3 states, in part, that exterior door assemblies ... shall be of approved noncombustible construction, or solid core wood ... (as specified).

Are there limitations on the material used for construction of window sash, stile, or frame?

No. Window sash, stile, and frames may be of wood, aluminum, vinyl, or fiberglass material. Window glazing shall comply with Section 704A3.2.2 such as insulating-glass units with a minimum of one tempered glass pane.

Are there limitations on the material used for construction of glazed doors frame?

Yes. The frame of exterior glazed doors, and exterior doors with glazed openings, shall be noncombustible construction or other material in compliance with Section 704A.3.2.3.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	June 8, 2010	Interpretation	10-014
Topic	Sprinkler requirements for less than 24hr adult day care facility		
Code Section(s)	2007 CFC 903.2.5 & CBC 407.5		
Requested by	Patrick W. Conover 2555 Main St. #1035 Irvine, CA 92614 (949)278-5914 pconover@pcaarch.com		

This letter is to request an interpretation of both the 2007 CFC and 2007 CBC regarding an I-4 occupancy, that being for adult day care facilities.

CFC Section 903.2.5 requires that a Group I occupancy be sprinklered, but has an exception for based upon Section 407.5 of the 2007 CBC.

Section 407.5 of the CBC states that “Every facility as specified herein wherein more than six clients or patients are housed or cared for on the premises **on a 24-hour-per-day basis** shall have installed and maintained in an operable condition in every building or portion thereof where clients or patients are housed, an automatic sprinkler system of a type approved by the State Fire Marshal”.

Therefore, if the occupant is open less than 24 hours, doesn't the requirement for fire sprinklers disappear by simple default of the hours that they are open?

No, California Building Code (CBC) Section 407.5 applies to I-2 occupancies only. Buildings and structures occupied by persons of any

age who receive custodial care for less than 24 hours by individuals other than parents or guardians, relatives by blood, marriage or adoption and in a place other than the home of the person cared for are classified as I-4 occupancies. CBC Section 903.2.5 requires an automatic sprinkler system be provided throughout buildings with a Group I fire area.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	June 8, 2010	Interpretation	10-015
Topic	Requirements for pathway marking or low level exit signs		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Section 1011.6 & 1011.7		
Requested by	Active Safety Michael O'Connell 3957 Del Mar Surf San Diego, CA 92130 (858)254-8234 moconnell@activesafety.com		

The October 23, 2008 emergency supplement to the 2007 California Building Code includes several changes to Sections 1011.6 and 1011.7.

1. Both Sections 1011.6 and 1011.7 now have notes that state: “..this amendment applies to all newly constructed buildings or structures subject to this section for which a building permit is issued [or construction commenced ..] on or after January 1, 1989.

Does this note mean that the amended provisions of Sections 1011.6 and 1011.7 are retroactively applicable to buildings constructed after January 1, 1989?

No. Amendments to 1011.6 & 1011.7 were not meant to be retroactive.

2. Section 1011.6 now requires floor level exit signs in select areas of Groups A, I and Group R Div 1 hotels.

Section 1011.7 now states “When exit signs are required by Chapter 10, in addition to approved floor-level exit signs, approved path marking shall be installed.... In all interior rated exit corridors of unsprinklered Group A and Groups R-1 and R-2 occupancies”

Does this mean that that Group I corridors without smoke barriers need low level exit signs but do not need pathway marking?

Yes

Does this mean that Group R-2 (condos, apts, dorms, etc) occupancies now need pathway marking but do not need low level exit signs?

Yes. R-2 occupancies need pathway markings and are not required to have low level exit signs.

Note: Please refer to the 2008 Code Interpretation #08-027 Floor Level Exit Signs and Pathway marking.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	10/6/2010	Interpretation	10-017
Topic	Fire alarm systems definition		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code, Section 902.1		
Requested by	First Alarm Herb Decker (831)728-4929 phone/fax herbdecker@gmail.com		

Section 902.1 Defines a fire alarm system as “A system or portion of a combination system consisting of components, and circuits arranged to monitor and annunciate the status of fire alarm or supervisory signal-initiating devices and initiate the appropriate response to those signals.”

1. Is a sprinkler monitoring panel considered a “Fire Alarm System”?

No.

2. Is a sprinkler monitoring panel required to comply with CFC section 907.10 and notify every occupied space within the building with an audible alarm (section 907.10.2), and notify visibly in all public and common areas (section 907.10.1)?

No. Section 907.10 of the California Fire Code (CFC) applies to building fire alarm systems where building occupant notification is required.

3. If this is not considered a “fire alarm system”, and not required to comply with CFC section 907.10, can the AHJ require notification throughout the building?

If the local AHJ has a specific ordinance requiring notification throughout the building a fire alarm system may be required per CFC 907.10.



California State Fire Marshal CODE INTERPRETATION

Date Issued	June 8, 2010	Interpretation	10-019
Topic	Open flame devices in Assembly occupancies		
Code Section(s)	California Code of Regulations, Title 19; Section 3.25		
Requested by	County of Los Angeles Fire Department Captain John Hentsch 5823 Rickenbacker Rd Commerce, CA 90040-3027 (323)890-4226 (323)890-4169 fax jhentsch@fire.lacounty.gov		

Legally how are fire dancers allowed to handle (hand held) fire in A occupancies in light of the restriction of T-19, Division 1, Section 3.25 (b)?

§ 3.25. Open Flame Devices.

(a) Open flame devices shall be prohibited in every Group A, E, R-2.1 R-3.1 and R-4 Occupancy.

EXCEPTIONS:

(1) Fuel burning elements of approved appliances shall not be considered as open flame devices.

(2) Upon approval of the enforcing agency, open flame devices may be used under the following conditions.

(A) When necessary for ceremonial or theatrical purposes under such restrictions as may be deemed necessary to avoid danger of ignition of combustible materials or injury to occupants.

(B) In approved and stable candle holders on individual tables of dining establishments.

(b) Under no circumstances shall hand held open flame devices such as exposed candles be permitted for any purpose in any occupancy within the scope of these regulations.

The intent of this section is to prohibit the general public from hand held open flame devices such as exposed candles. The AHJ may issue permits for theatrical purposes in occupancies regulated by this section.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	June 8, 2010	Interpretation	10-020
Topic	Installation of smoke alarm in sleeping unit vs. living room		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code section 907.3.2 & 902.1; California Building Code section 907.2.10.1.1 & 907.2.8.3		
Requested by	The Hospital Security Consulting Group Thomas G. Daly, Principal 15040 Redmond Loop Reno, NV 89511 (800)880-4485		

The following is a request for a code interpretation for the following questions regarding the 2007 Editions of the California Fire Code Sections 907.3.2 and 902.1 (definition of sleeping unit) and the California Building Code Sections 907.2.10.1.1 and 907.2.8.3.

Background: Existing 3 story non-sprinklered Group R-1 (hotel) occupancies not undergoing renovations with typical all suite accommodations (living room and bedroom with an intervening door) with the living room having a sleeper sofa and the bedroom but not the living room equipped with a single station battery operated smoke alarm.

Question #1: Does the living room described above constitute a “*sleeping unit*” per the Code sections cited above?

Yes

Question #2: If the answer to Question 1 above is “Yes”, does the living room require the installation of a smoke alarm?

Yes

Question #3: If the answer to Question 2 above is “Yes”, must the new smoke alarm installed in the living room be electrically powered with a battery backup?

No, unless any renovations or construction has taken place requiring a permit, exceeding \$1000. See CFC code section 907.3.2.3 Exception and Health & Safety Code 13113.7

Question #4: If the answer to Question 3 above is “Yes”, must the bedroom smoke alarm be interconnected with the new living room smoke alarm?

n/a

Question #5: Would the smoke alarms described above need to be annunciated at a constantly monitored location?

No



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	June 8, 2010	Interpretation	10-021
Topic	Heat detectors in ceiling attic spaces		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building and Fire Codes section 907.2.6.2		
Requested by	Harry A. Yee & Associates, Inc. Tom Yu 4920 Freeport Blvd., Suite D Sacramento, CA 95822 (916)454-5319 (916)454-4117 fax tom@hyaengineers.com		

Please provide a code interpretation for the following:

1. 2007 CBC & CFC 907.2.6.2 Groups I-2 and I2.1, exception #1 allows heat detectors to be used in the mentioned spaces including “attics”. Is it the intent of this section to require automatic (heat) detectors in all above ceiling attic spaces?

NO

2. If the answer to #1 is “yes”, is it the intent to provide a “Total (Complete) Coverage” system per 2002 NFPA 72-5.5.2 “Detector Coverage”?

N/A



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	June 8, 2010	Interpretation	10-022
Topic	Power-limited Fire alarm cabling installation		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Electrical Code Articles 760.52(B)(1) & 760.61(A0, (B) & (C)		
Requested by	Interface Engineering Joseph Ripp 708 SW Third Avenue, Suite 400 Portland, OR 97204 (503)382-2266 (503)382-2262 fax joer@interfaceeng.com		

Is fire alarm cabling allowed to be installed exposed per Sections 760.52(B)(1) and 760.61(A), (B) and (C) of the 2007 CEC, provided a raceway system is not required by another code or standard, i.e., 2007 CFC Section 909.12.1 for smoke control system detection and control wiring?

Yes. Unless specifically required by other codes or standards.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	June 10, 2010	Interpretation	10-023
Topic	Means of Egress Illumination		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 1006 & 1006.1		
Requested by	Construction Inspection, Inc. David M. Benicki 4 Falcon Ridge Drive Pomona, CA 91766 (909)456-0357 (909)468-4046 dbenicki@ci2.us		

2007 California Building Code, Section 1006 Means of Egress Illumination, 1006.1 Illumination Required.

1. Please confirm that every occupied space, as part of the access portion of the means of egress, will require egress lighting when occupied regardless of the occupant load or the number of means of egress required.

Yes. All means of egress must be illuminated by artificial lighting during the entire time the building is occupied.

2. Would it be allowed for the primary lighting to provide the required means of egress illumination where the primary lighting is on at all times?

Yes. When the space served by the means of egress is occupied.

3. Is the required egress lighting allowed to be switched off?

Only when the building is not occupied

4. Does the phrase “any time the portion of the means of egress is occupied” allow the egress illumination to be turned off when that portion of the means of egress is unoccupied, as long as the minimum egress illumination is automatically restored when the space becomes occupied?

Yes

5. Is egress lighting allowed to be switched off providing total absence of light for the purpose of a film projector or other presentation in a classroom, large office or similar, while the space is occupied?

Where it complies with the Exception to CBC 1006.2



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	June 8, 2010	Interpretation	10-024
Topic	Berthing & Fuel dispensing at a Marina Dock		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code, Section 2210.3.1 & 2210.5.4		
Requested by	The Boyt Company John T. Boyt 210 Whaler's Walk, Berth #31 San Pedro, CA 907731 (310) 833-8700 (310) 521-9423 (fax)		

The phrase “shall be used exclusively for the dispensing...of petroleum products...” seems subject to interpretation as all facilities in the southern California are co-locate bait receivers, sewage pump-outs, beverage and snack sales, marine hardware and supply sales, fuel polishing and charter boat operations at the fuel docks on a routine basis.

What activities are considered appropriate, authorized, or incidental to, under the “exclusive use” language?

This section restricts the use of the area adjacent to the fuel-dispensing area to the exclusive use of transferring fuel with the exception of transferring essential ship stores. This provision is not intended to restrict the berthing or other uses on the pier or floating structure away from the fuel-transferring docking area. Fuel-dispensing hoses must not be stretched over one vessel to reach another; that is, one vessel cannot be docked parallel and alongside another vessel while taking on fuel.

(2006 International Fire Code; Code and Commentary Handbook)

The prohibition that “Vessels or craft shall not be made fast to fuel docks serving other vessels or craft occupying a berth at a marine fuel-dispensing facility.” is confusing.

Does the current code prevent a vessel from being berthed at a fuel dispensing facility?

The intent of this provision is to prevent two or more vessels from mooring alongside each other at a fuel dock. If an accident happens at a marine fuel-dispensing facility, the vessels should be able to cast off their docking lines and get underway without having to untie another vessel. The fuel-dispensing hose should never cross one vessel to get to another.

(2006 International Fire Code; Code and Commentary Handbook)



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	June 8, 2010	Interpretation	10-026
Topic	Increase in area if sprinklered		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code section 506.3		
Requested by	PK Architects Charles Gilliatt, Architect 1333 West Broadway Road, Suite #101 Tempe, AZ 85282 (602) 283-1620 (602) 283-1621 Fax charles@pkarchitects.net		

Please find below our interpretation request for section 506.3 of the 2007 California Building Code.

Section 506.3 states in short “the area limitation in Table 503 is permitted to be increased by an addition 200 percent ($I_s = 2$) for buildings with no more than one story above grade plane and an additional 300 percent ($I_s = 3$) for buildings with no more than one story above grade plane. *In other than high-rise buildings, Group A, E, H, I, L, and R occupancies or other applications listed in 111...* State Fire Marshal, these increases are permitted in addition to the height and story increases in accordance with Section 504.2”.

Does this statement mean that the sprinkler increase of 2 in a multi-story building and 3 in single story buildings is allowed in all buildings that are not defined as a high rise determined by 403?

No, the provisions contained in Section 506.3 allow area increases for all occupancies with an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with 903.3.1.1 except those that are specifically prohibited by the exceptions 1 through 4. However, for high-rise building or those specified

occupancies listed in 506.3 (*Group A, E, H, I, L, and R occupancies*) the area increases are not permitted where an automatic sprinkler system has been installed for height increases in accordance with 504.2.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	June 8, 2010	Interpretation	10-028
Topic	Elevator Lobbies in Group I-2 occupancies		
Code Section(s)	January 1, 2009 supplement to the 2007 California Building Code section 403.6 & 707.14.1		
Requested by	The Code Consortium Rick Thornberry, PE 2724 Elks Way Napa, CA 94558 (707) 253-2633 (707) 253-2639 (fax) THECODEINC@AOL.COM		

Where 1-hour fire-resistance rated enclosed elevator lobbies are required by Section 707.14.1 of the 2007 California Building Code including the January 1, 2009 Supplement, can Exceptions 3, 5, and 7 to that section be used in lieu of the 1-hour fire-resistance rated enclosed elevator lobbies in Group I-2 (hospital) occupancies having occupied floors located more than 75 feet above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access?

Yes



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	June 8, 2010	Interpretation	10-029
Topic	Elevators used as an Accessible means of egress		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code section 1003.7 & 1007.4		
Requested by	Ventura County Fire Department Larry Williams, Fire Prevention Supervisor 165 Durley Avenue Camarillo, CA 93010-8586 (805) 389-9710 (805) 388-4364 Larry.williams@ventura.org		

The Ventura County Fire Department is requesting an interpretation of CBC Section 1003.7, exception: "Elevators used as an accessible means of egress in accordance with Section 1007.4". Our questions are:

Is an elevator provided for accessible means of egress under exception to Section 1003.7 allowed to be considered as meeting the required number of exits for all occupants of a building, including non-disabled?

No. The accessible elevator is in addition to the required means of egress.

If an elevator can be used for the required number of exits for all occupants, what is the measurement for determining the size of the area of refuge required under 1007.4 and 1007.6?

N/A



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	1/11/2011	Interpretation	10-030
Topic	Fire Sprinklers in Permanent Portable Buildings for Group "E" Occupancies		
Code Section(s)	2007 CFC 903.2.2, 903.2.2.1.2		
Requested by	J. Charles Weber Deputy Fire Marshal/Fire Captain Lakeside Fire Protection District Fire Prevention Division 12365 Parkside Street Lakeside, Ca 92040 619-390-2350 ext 307 Office 619-443-1568 cweber@lakesidefire.com		

If an existing permanent portable building is being moved to another existing campus within a school district, is the portable building exempt from automatic fire sprinkler requirements.

The existing portable building has approximately 3000 square feet of fire area and has been on site for ten or more years. The portable building is of Type V construction; we have no documentation whether or not it is of one hour fire resistive construction. The portable building is used for classroom instruction, assembly purposes, and distribution of off-site prepared lunches. The building is equipped with a manual fire alarm system and does not have automatic fire sprinklers.

Section 903.2.2 of the 2007 California Fire Code requires installation of automatic fire sprinklers in all Educational occupancies if the fire area is greater than 20,000 square feet, exempting the building, in its current location, from the sprinkler requirement.

Section 903.2.2.1.2 of the 2007 California Fire Code, automatic fire sprinklers are required in permanent portable buildings on new public school campuses.

While researching the above matter, I found that OSFM Code Interpretation 06-118, issued May 16, 2007, appears to exempt fire alarm system requirements for new portable buildings on existing school campuses under certain circumstances.

Questions:

1. Would the requirements of Section 903.2.2.1.2 for automatic fire sprinklers retroactively apply to an existing permanent portable building moved between existing public school campuses for modernization purposes?

No. CBC 903.2.2.1.1 and 903.2.2.1.2 would require that each time a portable building is moved from one campus to another it becomes subject to the conditions of that campus with regard to the campus being “new” or “existing”. Existing buildings moved to a “new” campus would require the installation of a fire sprinkler system.

2. Would the logic of Code Interpretation (CI) #06-118 similarly apply to fire sprinklers in a portable building moved to an existing campus?

Even though CI 06-118 applies to the 2001 code, the requirements are the same for the 2001 and 2007 codes.

Educational Buildings or portable buildings (newly built or existing and moved from another campus), built or placed on an “existing” public school campus are not required to have a fire sprinkler system per CBC 903.2.2.1.unless they are used as a vocational shop, laboratory, or as required by CBC 903 & other provisions of the code.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	1/13/2011	Interpretation	10-033
Topic	Combination Fire alarm/Burglar Alarm system requirements		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 901.2 & 907.1.1		
Requested by	North Coast Signal Inc. Tony Barlow, President/CEO P.O. Box 720 Fort Bragg, CA 95437 (707) 962-0333 tonyb@northcoastsignal.com		

My question deals with combination Fire/Burglar alarm systems in any type commercial occupancy where a “Fire Alarm” system is not required. Is it permissible to add fire detection devices to an existing burglar alarm system without meeting the requirements of California Fire Code paragraph 907.1.1?

No. The existing panel must be a SFM listed combination fire/burglar alarm control unit. Plans must be submitted to the local AHJ for review and approval.

Do all the connected devices, including the wire or cable connecting the devices need to be listed and approved?

Yes. All fire alarm systems and components must be SFM listed and approved. The wiring & cable shall comply with the applicable UL standards.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	10/12/2010	Interpretation	10-037
Topic	School ground gates and fences within path of the Exit Discharge		
Code Section(s)	2010 California Building Code, section 1027.6 2010 California Fire Code, Section 503.5.2		
Requested by	Division of State Architect Diana Licon, HQ Acting Lead Fire & Life Safety Officer 1102 Q Street, Suite 5100 Sacramento, CA 95811-6550 (916) 323-2324 (916) 327-3371 fax Diana.Licon@dgs.ca.gov		

2010 CFC 503.5.2 (SFM amendment) indicates that “school grounds” may be fenced and gates therein may be equipped with locks, provided that properly located and sized safe dispersal areas are provided within the fenced area.

2010 CBC 1027.6 Access to a public way requires that an exit discharge provide a direct and unobstructed access to the public way.

The exception to the 2010 CBC gives the parameters of the Safe Dispersal Area requirements when utilized in lieu of direct access to the public way. Item #4 states that the (area) shall be provided with a safe and unobstructed path of travel from the building.

1. If a K-12 school ground (campus) is fenced and the gates therein equipped with locks, per CFC 503.5.2, are the gates in any intermediary fencing that traverses the Exit Discharge path to the Safe Dispersal Area(s) required to have panic hardware to meet the provision for a direct and unobstructed access to these Safe Dispersal Area(s)?

Yes. 2010 California Building Code Section 1008.1.10 would apply.

2. Where Safe Dispersal Area is not provided, will the gates on the perimeter of the school ground be required to have panic hardware?

Yes. During normal school hours and during special events, panic hardware would be required at any door or gate along the egress pathway to a public way or safe-dispersal area.

3. Are Community Colleges exempt from these requirements?

No.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	10/6/2010	Interpretation	10-041
Topic	Automatic Dispensers for Alcohol Based Hand Sanitizers		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code Section 3405.5		
Requested by	City of Fresno Fire Department Kerri Donis Deputy Fire Chief/Fire Marshal 911 H Street Fresno, CA 93721 (559) 621-4181 (559) 498-4323 www.fresno.gov		

This is a formal request for an interpretation of the provisions found in the *2007 California Fire Code, Chapter 34, Section 3405.5*. The section lists seven specific criteria that have to be met in order to allow installation of alcohol based hand rub dispensers. Item number five states “Dispensers shall not release their contents except when the dispenser is manually activated”.

Does a sensor activated dispenser meet this criterion?

Yes. A dispenser that is sensor activated when a hand is placed under the sensor meets the criteria for “manually activated”.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	10/6/2010	Interpretation	10-044
Topic	Fire alarm boxes at horizontal exits		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code Section 907.4.1		
Requested by	Siemens Dale McGrath 25821 Industrial Blvd #300 Hayward, CA 94545 (510) 760-3283		

2007 CFC 907.4.1 Requires manual fire alarm boxes to be located within 5 feet from the entrance to each exit.

Is a Horizontal exit as described in 2007 CBC 1002.1 (a path of egress travel through or around a wall or partition to an area on approximately the same level in the same building, which affords safety from fire and smoke from the area of incidence and areas communicating therewith) considered an exit that requires a manual fire alarm box?

Yes. Manual fire alarm boxes are required at every exit, which includes horizontal exits.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	1/28/11	Interpretation	10-046
Topic	R-2 visible alarm notification capabilities		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code Section 907.10.1.4 (Group R-2)		
Requested by	Kevin M. Green President California Automatic Fire Alarm Association P. O. Box 2538 Huntington Beach, CA 92647 (888) 607-5959 INFO@CAFAA.COM		

The California Automatic Fire Alarm Association (CAFAA) is requesting a Code Interpretation of CFC Section 907.10.1.4.

Section 907.10.1.4 indicates “all dwelling units and sleeping units shall be provided with the capability to support visible notification appliances in accordance with NFPA 72.”

1. Is the intent to provide the immediate installation of the required power supplies, wiring, electrical boxes, circuits, and future device locations to provide visible notification devices when the fire alarm system is being installed, so that in the future when a hearing impaired occupant request visible notification devices to be provided immediately, the audible devices will be changed and added to provide visible/audible notification devices in the associated unit?

NO. (See answer to Question # 2)

2. Is the intent to provide a means (i.e. electrical raceways, boxes, and/or cable) to all dwelling units and bedrooms with the future capacity to provide visible notification devices and power supplies in the required dwelling units and bedrooms in the future?

Yes. It is the intent of the model code to have all dwelling units and sleeping units pre-wired to support future installation of visible notification appliances in all units. The wiring shall not be limited to fire alarm notification circuits and the associated junction boxes, and depending on the design may include signaling line or initiating circuits and/or 120VAC power. In lieu of actual pre-wiring, approved electrical conduit installed in all units with suitable junction boxes and direct termination at the fire alarm control unit location would be an acceptable alternative.

The fire alarm system designer shall provide complete plans, which shall include details showing how future visible appliance expansions are to be accomplished.

Visible appliances, connections to smoke alarms or system detectors and additional fire alarm equipment (NAC panels, power supplies, batteries, etc.) necessary for future expansion need not be installed until visible appliances are deemed necessary.

3. Is the intent to ensure that the system is capable of expansion in dwelling units and bedrooms in the future by any means possible (i.e. adding conduit, cable, power supplies, and devices); when required to do so in the future?

See answer to Question # 2



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	5/23/2011	Interpretation	10-048
Topic	Hydraulic Nameplate		
Code Section(s)	Title 19 CCR Section 901 and NFPA 25 2006 California Edition section 5.2.7		
Requested by	Matt Cetani matt@norcalfire.com Nor-Cal Fire Protection, Inc. 16840 Joleen Way Bldg A Morgan Hill, Ca 95037		

1. Is the absence of the hydraulic nameplate considered a deficiency?

Yes.

NOTE: Hydraulically calculated sprinkler systems designed and installed prior to the 1968 edition of NFPA 13 are not required to have a hydraulic nameplate to be installed. Also, pipe scheduled systems are not required to have a hydraulic nameplate installed.

2. Does the absence of the hydraulic nameplate change the operational effectiveness of the sprinkler system?

No, however, the information contained on the hydraulic nameplate is necessary to evaluate and verify the required minimum performance of the system.

3. If the hydraulic nameplate is missing when conducting the required Title 19 five year service, will this cause the system to fail certification?

Yes, except where nameplates are not required as noted in the answer to question number one.

4. Is it the intent of Title-19, CCR and NFPA-25, 2006 CA Edition to upgrade to current standards?

No, the intent is to cover automatic fire extinguishing systems as originally designed, installed, and approved by the Authority Having Jurisdiction. It is not, however, intended to require that such systems be upgraded to current adopted standards.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	7/25/2011	Interpretation	10-050
Topic	Separated occupancies versus non-separated occupancies.		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code		
Requested by	Armin Wolski, Associate Principal ,Arup 560 Mission St., Suite 700 San Francisco, CA 94105		

We are writing to request an interpretation to the 2007 California Building Code (CBC). The question relates to how the State Fire Marshal amendments throughout the code may differ from a building with separated occupancies versus non-separated occupancies.

1. If I have an assembly building (a cafeteria for example) in a low rise sprinklered B occupancy that is a million square feet, can I separate out the assembly occupancy with an occupancy separation such that only the assembly occupancy is regulated by the OSFM as per Section 111?

Yes, however other elements (e.g. means of egress) that are shared must comply with the provisions for the most restrictive occupancy.

2. Does the remainder of the building, being a low rise B occupancy, require enclosed elevator lobbies? Section 111 does not indicate that the entire building is regulated by the OSFM but only the A occupancy.

Yes, where Group B occupancy has a Group A occupancy on a floor served by an elevator.

3. The broader question is whether or not ANY other OSFM amendments apply to the remainder of the low rise B occupancy (other amendments that come to mind include allowable area/height calculation methods and fire proofing of the structural frame).

Each building and configuration of such having mixed occupancies with SFM regulated occupancies must be addressed individually. Area and height calculations are performed separately and then combined as described in CBC Chapter 5.

Where non-separated the most restrictive provisions shall apply.

However, the California Building Standards Codes are flexible in many ways and have methods of design that afford for reductions or allowances. Such reductions or allowances may limit the impact to the occupancies that are not specifically regulated by the SFM.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	7/25/2011	Interpretation	10-056
Topic	Fire Alarm System Requirements in a mixed use occupancy containing Group I-2.1 and Group B occupancy		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building and Fire Codes Sections 907.1.3 and 907.2.6.2		
Requested by	Cesar B. Fortuno, Pyro-Comm Systems, Inc (714) 902-8000 cfortuno@pyrocomm.com		

Where a Group I-2.1 Occupancy (Ambulatory Care Facility) is located within a fully sprinklered Group B Occupancy, is the entire building required to have an approved manual and automatic fire alarm system?

No, only the Group I-2.1 Occupancy portion and the subsequent shared egress would be required to have an approved manual and automatic fire alarm system.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	8/14/09	Interpretation	09-003
Topic	Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (I-1)		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 310.2		
Requested by	John Amanat Associate Principal Perkins Eastman Architects 468 19 th Street Oakland, CA 94612 (510) 601-5200 www.perkinseastman.com		

- 1. In licensed Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE) classified as an I-1 occupancy per Section 308.2 and defined in accordance with Section 310.2, are assembly areas such as dining/activity spaces greater than 750 square feet in area, but less than 10% of the overall floor area considered as a Group A or B occupancy or are these spaces to be classified as an I-1 occupancy?**

Classification would be a Group A occupancy. In accordance with 2007 CBC Section 303.1 exception 3 if the assembly area is 750 sf or more it is an A occupancy regardless of floor area percentage.

No, see 2007 CBC Sections 708.6, 715.1, Table 715.4 and 715.4.3.

- 2. If assembly areas such as dining/activity spaces greater than 750 square feet in area are classified as Group A or B occupancies, can these spaces be open to the corridor of the I-1 Occupancy without opening protection if the building is equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with NFPA 13?**

No, the overriding factor in this mixed use is the I-1 occupancy that requires the one-hour corridor. Thus any openings or penetrations from other occupancies must be protected. The 2007 CBC Sections 708.6 states that openings in a fire partition shall be protected in accordance with Section 715; See 2007 CBC Section 15.1, Table 715.4 and 715.4.3.

3. **Section 407.2.1 Spaces of unlimited area, for 1-2 occupancies, states that “waiting areas and similar spaces constructed as required for corridors shall be permitted to be open to a corridor...” We request your interpretation as to what types of spaces would be considered “similar spaces”.**

Small areas that is limited in use such as an entrance lobby, foyer, Reception area and check-in areas would be considered “similar spaces.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	5/11/09	Interpretation	09-005
Topic			
Code Section(s)	2007 CFC Section 9102.1,3505.1		
Requested by	Frank McBride, P.E. Power Engineering Services, Inc. 2703 Saturn Street Brea, CA 92821 (714) 524-9100 f.mcbride@pespower.com		

Occupant Type: R-1, Residential (Existing Structure)

Question(s):

1a. Are visual notification devices required in the bathrooms of apartment dwelling units?

No, they are not required in apartment dwelling units.

1b. Are visual notification devices to notify hearing impaired occupants required in the bathrooms apartments designated as ADA accessible?

No, however the capability to support visible notification appliances is required by 2007 CFC 907.10.1.4

1c. If no to both 1a and 1b above, then are they required if the apartment is provided with a Central Monitored Fire Alarm System?

No, the requirements for visual notification devices are not driven by the requirements for a monitored fire alarm system.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	8/14/09	Interpretation	09-011
Topic	Visual illumination in elevator cars		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Section 3006.5.5		
Requested by	Greg Walker Regional Sales Engineer Otis Elevator Company 711 East Ball Road, Suite 200 Anaheim, CA 92805 (714) 563-7123 greg.walker@otis.com		

The January 1, 2009, supplement to the California Building Code included new requirement, Section 3006.5.5. This Section states “Visual illumination shall be provided inside all elevator cars indicating that the automatic sprinklers, smoke detectors, or heat detectors in the elevator hoist way or elevator machine room have activated.” We have several questions relating to this requirement.

1. The ASME A17.1-2004 Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators, which is referenced by the State of California Elevator Safety Orders, 2.27.3.1.6(h), requires a visual signal to be installed on the elevator car operating panel. In addition, 2.27.3.2.3 requires the visual signal to illuminate intermittently when a machine room or hoist way fire alarm initiating device, or a machine room heat detector, is activated.

Will the intermittently illuminated visual signal required by ASME A17.1-2004 comply with the requirement of “visual illumination” inside the elevator cab if it continuously monitors and operates upon the activation of automatic sprinklers, smoke detectors, or heat detectors in the elevator hoist way and elevators machine room?

Yes.

- 2. If the answer to Question #1 is “NO”, what are the minimum design requirements for the “visual illumination” inside the elevator cab?**

N/A

- 3. The ASME A17.1-2004 Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators, which is referenced by the State of California Elevator Safety Orders, 2.8.2.3.2, requires the power to be removed from the elevator prior to the application of water from sprinklers located in the elevator machine room or elevator hoist way (aka: shunt trip disconnect device). This regulation also requires removal of all power to the elevator cab.**

If the shunt trip disconnect device has activated, and has removed all power from the elevator cab, will the “visual illumination” still be required to be activated inside the elevator cab?

No.

- 4. If the answer to Question #3 is “YES”, how can we resolve the direct conflict between this regulation and the State of California Elevator Safety Code?**

N/A



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	9/8/09	Interpretation	09-015
Topic	Group E's serving less than 100 for 2 ½ years or less in age		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Section 305.2, 308.5.2		
Requested by	Cheryl L. Domnitch, P.E. Hughes Associates, Inc. 2551 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Suite 209 San Ramon, CA 94583 (925) 314-7910 cdomnitch@haifire.com		

We are requesting an interpretation of the following:
California Building Code (CBC), Section 308.5.2, Exception, allows an E occupancy classification when serving less than 100 children 2 1/2 years or less in age when the rooms have direct exits to the exterior at the level of exit discharge. We are requesting confirmation that the exception within Section 308.5.2 may be applied, because it appears to conflict with the State Fire Marshal (SFM) amendment in Section 305.2, Exception.

No. There are no conflicts between those sections of the 2007 CBC; the 2007 CBC Section 308.5.2 establish that a child care facility (I-4) provides care for children 2 ½ years of age or less, while Section 305.2 establish that a day care facility (E occupancy) provide care for children 2 ½ years of age or older.

The intent of the exception to CBC Section 305.2 is intended to require day care facilities for more than 6 children that cannot comprehend and/or implement simple instructions to evacuate in an emergency situation without physical assistance from staff, to be classified as a Group I-4 Occupancy. This places children who are not physically or cognitively able to respond in an emergency situation into occupancies that provide a higher level of protection.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	8/14/09	Interpretation	09-017
Topic	Mixed Occupancies		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Section 304.1,308.3.2,508.3.3		
Requested by	Steven R. Winkel The Preview Group, Inc. 2765 Prince Street Berkeley, CA 94705 (510) 547-7748 Swinkel@preview-group.com		

If a portion of the building in question meets the criteria for classification as an 1-2.1 Occupancy does the entire building then have to be classified as an 1-2.1 Occupancy, or can there be mixed occupancies if they are appropriately separated?

Yes, the code allows for mixed occupancies and must comply with 2007 CBC Section 508.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	8/14/09	Interpretation	09-021
Topic	Class I Standpipes for Smokeproof Enclosures		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Section 905.3.8, 905.4		
Requested by	Cheryl L. Domnitch, P.E. Hughes Associates, Inc. 2551 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Suite 209 San Ramon, CA 94583 (925) 314-7910 cdomnitch@haifire.com		

Subject: Class 1 Standpipes for smoke proof enclosures

Code Section: 2007 CBC, Sections 905.3.8 and 905.4
 (Reference to NFPA 14 and 2001 CBC, Sections 904.5.3 and 1005.3.3.7.1.5 is necessary for a complete review of this issue)

Background Information:

The 2001 CBC, Section 904.5.3, required Class 1 standpipe outlets to be located on the floor landing of each required stair enclosure. For smoke proof enclosures, the 2001 CBC clarified that the standpipe outlets should be located within the vestibules. The 2001 CBC was in conflict with NFPA 14 which requires that standpipe outlets be located on the intermediate landings. Generally, this issue was received by requesting the preference of the local responding fire agency.

1. The 2007 California Building Code, Section 905.4.1. Item 1 resolves the conflict with NFPA 14 by requiring the standpipe outlets on the intermediate landings. However, a State amendment in Sections 905.3.8 and 909.20.2.3 for smoke proof enclosures states that standpipe outlets shall be located at floor landings within the

vestibules. Based upon this amendment it can be interpreted that standpipe outlets in smoke proof enclosures are required at both floor landing vestibules and intermediate landings. Please clarify whether standpipe outlets in smoke proof enclosures are intended at both the floor level vestibules and the intermediate landings of stairway enclosures.

The 2007 California Building Code Section 909.20.2.3, requires standpipe outlets to be located within a vestibule pressurized stairway enclosure. The provisions of 909.20.2.3 are more specific and supersede the general provision of 905.4. (See Section 101.7.2) *The intent of 909.20.2.3 was not to require a second standpipe outlet at the intermediate landing.*



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	8/14/09	Interpretation	09-024
Topic	Decking and Under-floor Wildfire Protection		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 704A.4.1 & 704A.4.2		
Requested by	Terri Carver Live Oak Structural, Inc. 702 Harrison St., Suite B Berkeley, CA 94710 (510) 524-7101 terri@liveoakstructural.com		

I am writing to request a code interpretation for Chapter 7A “Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure, Section 704A.4.2 Underfloor and Appendages Protection”, California Building Code, 2007 ed.

- 1. Is section 704A.4.2 “Underfloor and Appendages Protection” applicable to exterior exposed decks?**

No. The requirements for decks are contained in “Section 704A.4.1 Decking.” 704A.4.2 only applies to floor projections and cantilevered appendages or unenclosed underfloor areas.

- 2. Does the current code permit the use of standard 2x pressure-treated fir material for deck framing in areas designated Wildland- Urban Interface Fire Areas?**

Yes. CBC Ch7A has no requirements that apply to deck support structure (joists, framing, posts, etc). “Section 704A.4.1 Decking” only applies to the specified surfaces (walking surfaces, stair treads, stair risers, and landings).



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	8/14/09	Interpretation	09-027
Topic	Definition of Noncombustible		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 202		
Requested by	Miguel Enguidanos, AIA TSAO Design Group 417 Montgomery Street, 8 th Floor San Francisco, CA 94104 415-398-5500		

I am writing for clarification on Section 202 Definitions “Noncombustible” of the 2007 California Building Code (CBC). Is the SFM going to repeal or modify this definition of noncombustible?

NO.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	8/14/09	Interpretation	09-028
Topic	Corridor vs. Room		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Section 1002 and 442.2.2		
Requested by	Donald Rice Architect, AIA, APEC, CSI NCARB, LEED AP Senior Associate WLC Architects, Inc. 8163 Rochester Avenue, Suite 100 Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730-0729		

Is a Corridor, as defined in the 2007 CBC Section 1002, to be considered as a Room under the provisions of the 2007 CBC, Section 442.2?

No. The 2007 CBC Section 1002 defines a corridor as an enclosed exit access component that defines and provides a path of egress travel to an exit. It is not considered a room.



California State Fire Marshal CODE INTERPRETATION

Date Issued	11/4/2009	Interpretation	09-032
Topic	Fire Extinguisher Access		
Code Section(s)	Title 19 Section 596.4 (1964) and 567.2 (current)		
Requested by	Moseley C. Collins, III Attorney at Law Moseley Collins, III Attorney at Law P.O. Box 5500 El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-5500 (916) 444-4444 (916) 444-0001 Fax		

1. **Does “readily accessible,” as used in Title 19, Section 567(j), mean a fire extinguisher cannot be in a locked cabinet?**

No, pursuant to Section 567 (j) fire extinguishers shall be readily accessible and immediately available in the event of a fire.

Locks may be permitted if the cabinet has emergency access and is approved by the authority having jurisdiction pursuant to the exception of this Section which states as follows: *“Where extinguishers are subject to malicious use, locked cabinets may be used provided they include a means of emergency access and are approved by the authority having jurisdiction.”*

2. **Does the 1964 edition of Title 19, Section 596.4 prohibit placing a fire extinguisher inside a locked cabinet with a glass front where there is no means of emergency access other than breaking the glass with your fist or hand?**

No, Title 19 Section 596.4 (1964) did not address fire extinguisher cabinets, therefore it would be left to the Authority Having Jurisdiction to determine the requirement, per Health and Safety Code section 13190.2. However, the current Title 19, Section 567.2 does address fire extinguisher cabinets.

3. **Prior to the enactment of Title 19, Section 567.2, did the California code of Regulations prohibit the locking of cabinets housing fire extinguishers?**

Title 19 did not specifically address fire extinguisher cabinets, however, Title 19 Section 563.2 required fire extinguishers in general to be readily accessible and visible.

4. **Does Title 19, Section 567.2 prohibit the locking of cabinets housing fire extinguishers after its enactment unless all the requirements of the exception are met?**

Yes.

5. **Does the manufacturer of a fire extinguisher cabinet determine what constitutes a “means of emergency access” as used in Title 19, Section 567.2?**

No. The exception to Title 19, Section 567.2 allows the Authority Having Jurisdiction to determine what an acceptable emergency access is.

6. **Does using a person’s fist to break the glass in a locked fire extinguisher cabinet constitute an acceptable “means of emergency access” as used in Title 19, Section 567.2?**

Possibly, it depends on the cabinet. The means of emergency access is a function of cabinet design and must ultimately be approved by the authority having jurisdiction.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	8/14/09	Interpretation	09-033
Topic	Fire Partitions in a Group I-1		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 716.5.4		
Requested by	Armin Wolski, P.E., Associate Principal ArupFire 560 Mission Street, Suite 700 San Francisco, CA 94105 (415) 957-9445 (415) 957-9096 Fax Armin.wolski@arup.com		

We are requesting an interpretation of 2007 California Building Code Section 716.5.4.

For new Group I occupancies equipped with automatic fire sprinkler systems throughout:

Is it the intent of the 2007 California Building Code Section 716.5.4 Fire Partitions, to disallow the use of IBC Exception 1, which permits the penetration of a fire partition wall, with ducted air transfer openings without fire dampers when the ducted penetration is in accordance with 712?

Yes.

SFM is currently developing a modification to resolve this issue in the current rulemaking cycle.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	8/14/09	Interpretation	09-042
Topic	Definition of Accessible Concealed Space		
Code Section(s)	NFPA 25, Chapter 2		
Requested by	John Robinson, Estimator American Automatic Fire Protection 2525 Q Street Rio Linda, CA 95673 916-921-9174 916-921-0108 FAX 916-997-6451 Cell		

In the form 'Inspection, Testing and Maintenance Fire Sprinkler System NFPA 25, Chapter 2 as amended by CCR, Title 19' you reference NFPA 25. Items #1.20 through 1.23 are unclear to me. Item 1.20 for example, references 5.2.3.3 which states, "Hangers and seismic braces installed in concealed spaces such as above suspended ceilings shall not require inspection." Annex A goes on to describe a couple of examples of inaccessible areas.

1. What would be an example of an accessible concealed space as referenced in the description?

NFPA 25 California Edition, Section A.5.2.1.1.4 states: Suspended ceilings are those ceilings utilizing ceiling tiles installed on a grid where the ceiling tiles can be removed. This includes ceiling tiles held in place with hold-down clips as in fire rated ceiling construction. This does not include a suspended gypsum wallboard ceiling which is not provided with an access opening.

Certain concealed spaces are required by the California Building Code to be provided with access openings. Such concealed spaces include attics, mansard spaces, under-floor spaces, under stages, under platforms or decks, and similar accessible spaces.

Accessible concealed spaces are provided with access openings for maintenance of mechanical and electrical services. Although the general

public or building occupants do not normally access these spaces, maintenance personnel and contractors do access these spaces. While servicing mechanical or electrical equipment these people may damage or create an obstruction to sprinklers. In addition, during the normal life of a building, roof insulating materials may fall and cover a sprinkler, thereby obstructing the sprinkler in terms of insulating the thermal response element of the sprinkler and in terms of obstructing the spray pattern.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	11/4/2009	Interpretation	09-045
Topic	Occupancy Classification of a High School Laboratory		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC, Laboratory Classrooms Section 304.1, 313.1, Section 443.2		
Requested by	Donald S. Rice Senior Associate WLC Architects, Inc. 8163 Rochester Avenue, Suite 100 Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730 (909) 987-0909 www.wlcarchitects.com		

This letter is sent as a formal request for an interpretation of the provisions of Title 24, Part 2, Volume 1, 2007 California Building Code, Chapter 3, Section 304.1, Section 313.1 and Chapter 4, Section 443.2 and subsequent Occupancy Separations of Table 508.2 and 508.3.3.

The interpretation requested is a two part question as listed below:

- 1. What is the proper occupancy classification of a high school science laboratory classroom (Grades 9 through 12) whose quantities of chemicals do not exceed the limits as listed in Table 307.1(1). Is it a B Occupancy according to Section 304.1 Laboratories: Testing, research and (SFM) instruction; an E Occupancy according to Section 305.1; or an L Occupancy according to Section 313.1 as defined in Section 443.2.**

The Occupancy classification for a high school science laboratory classroom Grades 9 thru 12 is a Group E. Where hazardous materials are used, the provisions of 414 would also apply. The Group E laboratory must be separated from other rooms by a one hour separation per Table 508.2. However, the Group L Occupancy provisions may be permitted as a design option.

- 2. Then, in consideration of what occupancy classification is determined for these spaces, what requirement should be followed for the occupancy separation of the classroom. Those listed in Table 508.2 or Table 508.3.3.**

Those listed in Table 508.2 should be followed for the occupancy separation of the classroom.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	11/4/2009	Interpretation	09-051
Topic	Locking Fire Extinguisher Cabinets		
Code Section(s)	California Code of Regulation Title 19 Section 567.2		
Requested by	Mike Stewart Fire Marshal Sacramento Metropolitan Fire Department		

Title 19 Section 567.2 California Code of Regulation prohibits the locking of fire extinguishers in a cabinet. The exception allows the locking of fire extinguishers where they are subject to malicious use and the cabinet has a means of emergency access and is approved by the authority having jurisdiction. My questions are as follows:

1. What constitutes “subject to malicious use”?

“An act done maliciously is one that is wrongful and performed willfully or intentionally, and without legal justification.” *West's Encyclopedia of American Law, edition 2. Copyright 2008 The Gale Group, Inc. All rights reserved*

2. What is considered an approved means of emergency access?

It depends on the particular cabinet. It would be determined by the manufacturer's instructions, the design of the cabinet, and the approval of the Authority Having Jurisdiction.

3. Does the fire extinguisher cabinet require a breaker bar to be attached to the locked cabinet in order to break the glass?

It depends on the particular cabinet. There are several different means of securing fire extinguisher cabinets;

Examples are;

A locking cabinet where the lock includes a yieldable latch on a conventional tumbler lock whereby as the door of the cabinet is pulled open the lock latch yields thereby allowing opening of the door.

A locking cabinet with tempered safety glass in the cabinet door with a non-removable handle eliminating the need for a hammer or breaker bar to open the cabinet.

A locking cabinet where you pull top of cover firmly the hinges snap off and the cover falls out of the way to provide access to the extinguisher.

A locking cabinet that has an etched plastic cover allowing easy breaking without requiring a hammer or breaker bar to get at the extinguisher.

3. Is a person's hand, feet, etc. an approved means of access to a break glass locked fire extinguisher cabinet?

See # 2.

4. Does Title 19, Section 567.2 apply to buildings constructed before the operative date of this section?

Yes, this section applies to new and existing buildings. However, locks may be permitted if the cabinet has emergency access and is approved by the authority having jurisdiction pursuant to the exception of this Section which states as follows: *"Where extinguishers are subject to malicious use, locked cabinets may be used provided they include a means of emergency access and are approved by the authority having jurisdiction."* Furthermore pursuant to Section 567 (j) fire extinguishers shall be readily accessible and immediately available in the event of a fire.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	11/4/2009	Interpretation	09-056
Topic	Strobes in Medical Exam Rooms/B Occupancies		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 907.9.1.1		
Requested by	Duane Funsch SET Sales Engineer Advanced Sound & Electronics 5854 Rosebud Lane Sacramento, CA 95841 (916) 334-0455 dfunsch@4ase.com		

Section 907 of CBC has been re-written twice since Code Interpretation 04-011 was written. The Office of the State Fire Marshal did add to the list of rooms requiring the installation of strobes, but they did not decide to add Medical Exam Rooms to the list.

Based upon Section 907.9.1.1 of 2007 CBC, will strobes be required in medical exam rooms of Group B occupancies if a fire alarm system is installed in the building?

Yes



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued		Interpretation	09-059
Topic	Smoke Fire Dampers		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code Section 909.16		
Requested by	Ellen Lesov F.W. Associates, Inc. 330 Franklin Street, Suite 400 Oakland, CA 94607 (510) 763-7475 elesov@fwa-inc.com		
Date Received	10/13/2009		

Is it the intent of California Fire Code Section 909.16.1 to require positive confirmation of the louver status (i.e. “OPEN” and “CLOSED”) of all smoke-fire dampers installed within the high rise building, or only smoke-fire dampers that are part of Smoke Control System and that are controlled from the Fire Fighters Smoke Control Panel Located in the Fire Command Center shall be monitored for “OPEN” and “CLOSED” position?

Yes. It is the intent of California Fire Code Section 909.16 to require positive confirmation of the louver status of all smoke-fire dampers utilized in smoke control systems within high rise buildings. However, there may be limited applications where smoke-fire dampers are used that are not part of the smoke control system or will not effect the operation of the smoke control system, these instances must be determined during design and approval stages.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	4/22/2010	Interpretation	09-063
Topic	Fire Sprinklers in Unenclosed Shade Structures		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code, section 903.2.1.2 & 903.2.2.1		
Requested by	WLC Architects, Inc. Donald Rice, Senior Associate 8163 Rochester Avenue, Suite 100 Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730 (909) 987-0909 (909) 980-9980 fax www.wlcarchitects.com		

A formal request for an interpretation of the provisions of Title 24, Part 2, Volume 1, 2007 California Building Code, Chapter 9, section 903.2.1.2 and section 903.2.2.1.

- 1. Is the intent of section 903.2.1.2 of the 2007 CBC to require fire sprinklers on detached, unenclosed shade structures, constructed of noncombustible materials and included as part of the modernization of an existing school campus.(?)**
- 2. Is the intent of section 903.2.2.1 of the 2007 CBC to require fire sprinklers on detached, unenclosed shade structures constructed on noncombustible materials and included as part of a new school campus. (?)**

No. Sections 903.2.1.2 or 903.2.2.1 are not intended to require that automatic fire sprinkler systems be provided to protect detached, unenclosed shade structures used only for students. However, to qualify for this sprinkler exception, these structures must be constructed of noncombustible materials and may not be used to store or house combustible items.



California State Fire Marshal CODE INTERPRETATION

Date Issued		Interpretation	09-064
Topic	Attic Ventilation		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code, section 704A.2 & 704A.2.1		
Requested by	DCI Products Jack Henderson, President 100 Mill Street Clifton Heights, PA 19018 jhenderson@dciproducts.com		
Date Received	11/04/2009		

Requesting a code interpretation of 2007 CBC, Jan. 1, 2009 Supplement, 704A.2 Attic Ventilation, Section 704A.2.1.

We understand the code states: “ all roof and attic vents shall resist the intrusion of flame and embers into the attic area of the structure, or shall be protected by corrosion-resistant, noncombustible wire mesh with openings 1/8” minimum to ¼” maximum or its equivalent. Further section 704A.2.2-Eave or cornice vents states....there shall be no vents in the eaves or cornices.”

Question: “Will a corrugated plastic, roof top, under-shingle attic vent (such as a continuous roof top ridge vent or a continuous roof top under-shingle intake vent) that is protected with a metal, corrosion-resistant, non-combustible wire mesh having 1/8” (3.1mm) openings installed at the attic opening comply for use as an approved attic vent product according to section 704A.2.1 of the 2007 California Building Code?”

Answer: Yes. The code only states that the vent itself must be protected by the specified wire mesh. The code as written does not state that the entire vent be constructed of non-combustible material.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	2/22/08	Interpretation	08-001
Topic	Construction Type for Group I-1 Multi Story Facility		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Section 425.3.1 and 425.3.2		
Requested by	Robert C. Neal, C.B.O., P.E. Building and Safety Official City of Lancaster 44933 Fern Avenue Lancaster, CA 93534-2461 (661) 723-6000		

Section 425.3.1 of the 2007 California Building Code (CBC) requires Group I-1 occupancy licensed as a RCFE of one or two stories in height where more than six nonambulatory clients are housed to be of Type V-A construction. Section 425.3.2 of the 2007 CBC calls for Group I-1 occupancy licensed as a RCFE of three to five stories in height where more than six nonambulatory clients are housed above the first floor to be constructed of a minimum of Type I-B construction. Table 601 details Type V-A as primarily 1 hour fire resistive, and Type I-B as primarily 2 hour fire resistive.

1. Does this mean a Group I-1 occupancy can entirely house nonambulatory clients on the 2nd floor of a Type V-A building?

Yes. 2007 CBC Section 425.3.1 is for Group I-1 occupancies in a one or two story facility housing more than six non-ambulatory elderly clients.

2. If the licensing of a RCFE is only for the 1st and 2nd floors, does the building of a 3rd or 4th floor have to be of Type I-B construction?

Because the occupancy classification is not defined for the 3rd or 4th floors, please review 2007 CBC Section 508.3.3.2. The allowable area and height of a building shall be based on the most restrictive allowances of the occupancy groups under consideration.

Section 308.2 details a Group I-1 occupancy for supervised residential care and Section 308.3 details a Group I-2 for persons classified as nonambulatory.

The definition of nonambulatory is defined by the Department of Social Services Administration in section 310.2 of the same code on page 63. Since the definition is determined by the Department of Social Services Administration, does the State Fire Marshal also need to determine the type of construction appropriate to house nonambulatory clients above the 2nd floor?

The Health and Safety Code Section 13131.5 (c) (3) dictates the types of construction for facilities housing more than six non-ambulatory elderly clients.



California State Fire Marshal CODE INTERPRETATION

Date Issued	May 9, 2008	Interpretation	08-008
Topic	Define "Immediate area"		
Code Section(s)	2001 CBC Section 1007.6.3.2.2		
Requested by	SFM Residential Care Advisory Committee 1131 S St. Sacramento CA, 95811		

1007.6.3.2.2 In Divisions 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.3.1 Occupancies which are of non-rated construction, bedrooms used by non-ambulatory clients shall have access to at least one of the required exits which shall conform to one of the following:

- 1. Exits through a corridor/hallway or area and into a bedroom (in the immediate area) which has an exit directly to the exterior. Bedroom doors used as exits shall have exit signs complying with Section 1003.2.8.*
- 2. Through a corridor/hallway (serving the sleeping area which exits directly to the exterior).*
- 3. Direct exit from the bedroom to the exterior.*
- 4. Exit through an adjoining bedroom which exits to the exterior.*

Please define, explain or clarify what is meant by "in the immediate area" as used in 1007.6.3.2.2.

California Building Code Chapter 201.4 – Where the CBC does not provide a definition, "Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged" shall be considered as providing ordinary accepted meanings. The definition of "immediate" is direct, close at hand, or near.

For purposes of defining R2.1.1 and R.2.2.1 built and/or licensed prior to January 1, 2008, the intent of the wording 'into a bedroom (in the immediate area)' is the exiting through a bedroom which uses a corridor/hallway common with the bedroom being exited from.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	7/11/08	Interpretation	08-010
Topic	Voluntary Recall of Sprinklers		
Code Section(s)	Title 19, Article 4, Section 904.1		
Requested by	Marilyn J. Nelson, Project Director Department of General Services Real Estate Services Division Project Management Branch Marilyn.Nelson@dgs.ca.gov		

On July 25, 2001 SFM issued an Information Bulletin regarding "the voluntary replacement program for O-ring sprinklers that had been announced jointly by the Central Sprinkler Company and the US Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC)." The SFM "encouraged" owners of buildings to participate in the program and in this IB recognized that the "risk of a complete failure of a sprinkler is relatively low". It further states that in the five year certification "sprinkler systems should not fail solely because they contain the affected O-ring sprinklers. SFM will accept a building owner's participation in the Central Sprinkler Company's voluntary replacement program"

The term "voluntary" is commonly accepted as

1. Done or undertaken of one's own free will:
2. Acting or done willingly and without constraint or expectation of reward:
3. Normally controlled by or subject to individual volition:
4. Capable of making choices; having the faculty of will.
5. **Law**
 - a. **Without legal obligation or consideration:**

The term voluntary could then be considered as an option to replace or not to replace.

However, section 904.1 (c) states: The owner or occupant shall promptly correct or repair deficiencies, damaged parts or impairments found while performing the inspection, test and maintenance requirements of this standard. *Recalled products shall be replaced or remedied. Such replacement or remedial product shall be installed in accordance with the listing requirements, the manufacturer's instructions and the appropriate NFPA installation standards. A recalled product is a product subject to a statute or administrative regulation specifically requiring the manufacturer, importer, distributor, wholesaler, or retailer of a product, or any combination of such entities, to recall the product, or a product voluntarily recalled by a combination of such entities.*

Central Sprinkler Company maintains that their legal obligation to replace these products expired on August 7 2007 and that they are no longer subject to replacement liabilities for the "voluntary recall"

Does the term voluntary mean can or must be replaced?

According to the term of the voluntary recall, the sprinklers must be replaced.

Does the CPSC recall deadline of August 7, 2007 apply?

No. Title 19 Section 904.1(c) and 904.2 (d), require the sprinklers to be replaced or remedied. The system shall not be labeled until the recalled sprinklers are either replaced or remedied per Section 906 (i).

Does this code mean that the State code supersedes the CPSC recall and that the company must still replace the defective heads?

Yes, CCR Title 19 supersedes the CPSC recall. However, it is the responsibility of the building owner to replace the defective sprinklers if not a participant of the CPSC voluntary replacement program.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	May 9, 2008	Interpretation	08-012
Topic	Allowable Area Increases		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC 506.3		
Requested by	Bob Whaley Christopher McFadden Architect 72-925 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 204 Palm Desert, CA 92260		

2007 California Building Code (based on 2006 International Building Code) Chapter 5, Section 5063 – Automatic sprinkler system increase. This section has been amended as follows: *“In other than high rise buildings, Group A, E, H, I, L and R occupancies or other applications listed in Section 111 regulated by the Office of the State Fire Marshal, these increases are permitted in addition to the height and story increases in accordance with Section 504.2.”*

- 1. Does this mean that any one of the 7 specific items listed (i.e., a high-rise, a Group A, a Group E, a Group H, a Group I, a Group L, and a Group R occupancy) may not use the 200% or 300% increase?**

Yes. Groups A, E, H, I, L, R and High Rises, or other applications listed in CBC Section 111 regulated by the Office of the State Fire Marshal, are not allowed to use both the height and area increases for sprinklers.

- 2. Or does it mean that the (6) Groups located within a high-rise may not use the area increases?**

No. Refer to answer 1



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	7/11/08	Interpretation	08-018
Topic	Fire damper requirements in high-rise and state regulated occupancies		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 716.5.4		
Requested by	Lance McCasland, Chief Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting County of Sacramento Sacramento International Airport 6900 Airport Blvd. Sacramento, CA 95837 916-874-0719 916-874-0636		

We are requesting an interpretation of Section 716.5.4 in the 2007 edition of the California Building Code regarding the requirement for fire dampers in a R-1 high-rise.

The 2001 California Building Code (CBC) Sections 713.10 and 713.11 do not require smoke or fire dampers at ducts penetrating the walls separating the guest rooms in a residential occupancy. The 2006 International Building Code (IBC) Section 716.5.4, allows eliminating fire dampers at the ducts penetrating the fire partitions separating guest rooms when the ducts meet the requirements related to duct dimensions, installation of duct and sleeves, duct openings communicating with corridors, and duct termination that are outlined in Section 716.5.4 Exception 3. The 2007 CBC, which is based on the 2006 IBC, has not adopted Section 716.5.4 Exception 3 for high-rise buildings and therefore mandates fire dampers for the fire partitions separating the guestrooms. This is more conservative than the 2001 CBC and likely with no additional life safety advantage. The addition of these fire dampers will have a significant cost implication in construction. Following construction, the maintenance of these dampers could involve additional cost and staff resources. The residential occupancies will be fully sprinkler protected. The automatic fire sprinkler activation temperature is generally 165° F. Therefore, the automatic fire

sprinklers should control the fire prior to activation of these fire dampers, rendering the dampers useless.

- 1. Was it the specific intent of the 2007 CBC to require the fire smoke dampers or was it an oversight? Thank you, in advance for your prompt response to this issue.**

Yes. It was the intent of the 2007 CBC to require fire smoke dampers in high-rise buildings and in occupancies other than Group A, E, H, I and R and other applications listed in Section 111 regulated by the Office of the State Fire Marshal.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	7/11/08	Interpretation	08-019
Topic	Elevator Lobbies in High Rise Buildings		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 403.9, 711.4, 707.14.1		
Requested by	Barbara A. Schultheis, Fire Marshal San Francisco Fire Department 698 2 nd Street San Francisco, CA 94107 Barbara.schultheis@sfgov.org		

In high-rise buildings, is it the intent of Section 403.9 of the 2007 CBC allow Exceptions 3, 5, 6, or 7 to be used in lieu of the elevator lobby enclosure required to be constructed as a 1-hour fire partition with openings protected as required for corridors?

No. It is the intent of Section 403.9 of the 2007 CBC to require 1-hour elevator lobby enclosures in all high-rise buildings. However, this is not intended to prohibit the use of exceptions 3, 5, 6, and 7 as an alternate means of protection in accordance with Section 111.2.4.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	May 9, 2008	Interpretation	08-021
Topic	New classification of an R6.1.1		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code 310 and 907.2.10.3		
Requested by	Gregory Lake, Supervising Inspector Code Development and Enforcement Sacramento Metro Fire		

1. What is the new classification of an R-6.1.1?

CBC 310, R-3.1 Occupancies are for facilities with 6 or fewer clients, but the section does not mention Social Rehab as one of the possible uses. (CBC 310 indicates that R-4 Occupancies are for more than 6 clients, but specifically indicates Social Rehab facilities such as: halfway houses as a possible use.)

Under the 2007 CBC an R-6.11 would be classified as an R-3.1.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	May 9, 2008	Interpretation	08-022
Topic	Do existing R-4's have to meet current code because of a required biannual license renewal		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Section 111.1		
Requested by	C. Edward Dilkes, Attorney at Law 2443 Park Oak Drive Hollywood, CA 90068		

Does Section 111.5.1 of the 2007 California Building Code prohibit enforcement of newly created provisions of the Building Code and Fire Code in situations where the structure in question is: (1) either an I-1 or R occupancy Group, (2) the structure was occupied and used as an I-1 or R occupancy prior to the effective date of the 2007 amendments to the Code, (3) no change in occupancy will occur, and (4) there have been no structural alterations.

Yes, existing Group I-1 and R occupancies shall be inspected under the code in effect at time of licensing.

Reference: CBC Section 111.5.1 Existing Group I-1 or Group R Occupancies. *Licensed 24-hour care in a Group I-1 or Group R occupancy in existence and originally classified under previously adopted state codes shall be reinspected under the appropriate previous code, provided there is no change in the use or character which would place the facility in a different occupancy group.*



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	May 13, 2008	Interpretation	08-025
Topic	Wireless interconnected smoke alarms for Group R occupancies		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code 907.2.10.4		
Requested by	Gregory Lake, Supervising Inspector Code Development and Enforcement Sacramento Metro Fire		

1. Can SFM-listed smoke alarms that are AC hardwired but have radio transmitted interconnection be used to satisfy CBC 907.2.10.3?

Yes. This can be applied to an R3.1

2. Does 907.2.10.4 prohibit their use since testing the interconnecting wires is part of the acceptance test?

No



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12/19/08	Interpretation	08-027
Topic	Floor Level Exit Signs and Pathway Marking		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC and CFC Sections 1011.6 and 1011.7		
Requested by	Rick Rodewald Assistant Fire Chief, DCFM UC Santa Cruz Fire Department 1156 High Street Santa Cruz, CA 95064 (831) 459-2343		

In general, under the exceptions for both sections, it appears that in those specific occupancies requiring Floor-Level Exit Signs, the code allows either the use of Floor-Level Exit Signage or the use of Path Marking but does not require both.

No. The floor-level exit signage and the use of Path Marking are two distinct requirements.

Note: Please refer to the 2007 California Fire Code Sections 1011.6 and 1011.7 for the correct verbiage. The 2007 California Building Code Sections 1011.6 and 1011.7 were printed incorrectly and are currently in the process of being revised to reflect the language in the 2007 CFC.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12/19/08	Interpretation	08-028
Topic	Group B vs. Group L Occupancy		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Section 304.1, 443.1		
Requested by	Greg Bunton Greg Bunton Architecture 13370 Skyline Blvd. Woodside, CA 94062 gbuntonarch@comcast.net		

In the 2007 CBC, it appears that there are 2 options for classifying the use of a laboratory with exempt amounts of hazardous materials. Section 304.1 lists “Laboratories: testing and research”, and Section 443.1 lists “Group L Laboratories”.

If the laboratory use has exempt amounts of hazardous materials per tables 307.1(1) and 307.1(2), which classification applies?

Laboratories having quantities of materials not in excess of those listed in Tables 307.1(1) and 307.1(2) may be constructed as Group B. For Group L occupancies use Tables 443.1(1) and 443.1(2).



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12/19/08	Interpretation	08-029
Topic	Fire Sprinkler System		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Sections 705.1.2 with Section 903.2.2		
Requested by	Christina Conwell Osborn Architects 320 East Harvard Street Glendale, CA 91205 (818) 246-3112 Ext. 108 cconwell@osborn320.com		

We are writing to request a Code Interpretation of Section 705.1.2 as it relates to Section 903.2.2.; Section 903.2.2 requires that an automatic sprinkler system be provided in the modernization of Group E occupancy rooms or areas where special hazards such as laboratories exist.

Considering we have provided one hour separation of the labs per Table 508.2, would section 705.1.2 then require sprinklering the building as a whole because of 903.2.2's laboratory sprinklering?

No. 2007 CBC Section 705.1.2 is a general requirement, whereas Section 903.2.2 requires fire sprinklers to be installed in the laboratory classroom. This is a specific requirement to "E" occupancies.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12/19/08	Interpretation	08-034
Topic	Visible Notification Appliances		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC 907.2.12, 907.9.1.1 2007 CFC 907.2.12, 907.10.1.1		
Requested by	Ernie Power Power Communication Systems, Inc. 4643-A Mission Gorge Place San Diego, CA 92120-4133 (619) 583-7400		

Are Visible Notification Appliances required in S-2 occupancy, enclosed parking areas of High-Rise Buildings?

Yes. All public use and common areas of a high-rise building which includes parking garages require audible and visible notification appliances installed in accordance with CFC and NFPA 72.



California State Fire Marshal

Date Issued	5/11/09	Interpretation	08-044 REVISED
Topic	Access-controlled Egress Doors		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Section 1008.1.3.4		
Requested by	Cory S. Hill President Nova Security 10744 Rockville Street, #104 Santee, CA 92071 (619) 448-3007 chillnova@cox.net		

1. **Section 1008.1.3.4 opening paragraph states “That are equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1”**

I believe my understanding on this section is clear. The code is requiring an Automatic Sprinkler System throughout the building regardless of whether a Sprinkler System is required otherwise. Am I correct?

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is working with the Building Standards Commission to remove the amendments to 1008.1.3.4 of the California Building Code as it was not the intent for this requirement to be applicable to access controlled egress doors.

2. **Section 1008.1.3.4 opening paragraph states: “and approved Automatic Smoke Detection System installed in accordance with Section 907”.**

Is this sentence requiring an Automatic Smoke Detection System throughout the building or only as required per occupancy as indicated in Section 907?

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is working with the Building Standards Commission to remove the amendments to 1008.1.3.4 of the California Building Code as it was not the intent for this requirement to be applicable to access controlled egress doors.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	5/11/09	Interpretation	08-045
Topic	Who Can Perform Inspections on Automatic Sprinkler Systems		
Code Section(s)	2002 NFPA 25 Section 4.1.2.3		
Requested by	Matthew Ernau Fire Marsal City of San Marcos 1 Civic Center Drive San Marcos, CA 92069-2918 (760) 744-1050 Ext. 3404 mernau@ci.san-marcos.ca.us		

I am requesting an interpretation of Section 4.1.2.3. of the 2006 California Edition of NFPA 25.

Does “These task shall be performed by personnel who have developed competence through training and experience” mean that the owner or someone they designate may perform the required quarterly and annual inspection, testing and maintenance of water-based fire protection system without having a C-16 license?

Yes. The owner or the owner’s qualified representative may conduct inspection indentified in CCR Title 19 (NFPA 25) Table 5.1 “Summary of Sprinkler System Inspection, Testing and Maintenance”. However, Testing and Maintenance must be conducted a qualified State of California Contractors State Licensing Board Licensed Fire Protection Contractor (C-16) or a State Fire Marshal Licensed A (Type 1) concerns.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	2/2/2009	Interpretation	08-047
Topic	R3.1 Clarifications of Sprinklers and Exiting		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 425		
Requested by	Gregory Lake, Supervising Inspector Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District 3012 Gold Canal Dr. Rancho Cordova, CA 95670 (916) 942-3300 (916) 942-3400 FAX		

R-3.1 Occupancies

1. **Where residential fire sprinklers have been installed throughout a single family dwelling per NFPA 13D:**
 - a. **CBC 425.3.4 - Can residential fire sprinklers be used for substitution of 1-hour fire-resistance-rated construction required in this section?**
 No. Per 2007 CBC Chapter 6 Table 601 Footnote e.
 - b. **CBC 425.8.2.1 – Minimum of 2 exits – Can residential fire sprinklers be used to mitigate this section where a second means of egress leads to an enclosed back yard with no access to the public way or a safe area?**
 No. The 2007 CBC does not have provisions for this allowance.
 - c. **CBC 425.8.3.2 – Do fire sprinklers mitigate the need for non-ambulatory exiting in this section?**
 No. The 2007 CBC does not have provisions for this allowance.
 - d. **CBC 425.8.3.2 and CBC 903.2.7 – Can fire sprinklers be used to mitigate the required 2nd exit from second floors housing non-ambulatory clients?**

No. The 2007 CBC requires fire sprinklers on the second floor; therefore, there are no provisions for this allowance.

e. CBC 425.8.3.3 – Do fire sprinklers mitigate the need for bedridden exiting for all bedrooms with “a” bedridden client?

2007 CBC 425.8.3.3 does not apply where there is more than one bedridden client.

2. CBC 425.8.3.2 - Are bathroom doors and closet doors in the egress hallways of R-3.1 occupancies required to be solid core doors as required for the door at the mouth of the hallway because these areas are “common area” separation doors?

No. 2007 CBC Section 425.8.3.2 addresses the hallway door separating the bedrooms from the common areas.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	9/18/08	Interpretation	08-050
Topic	Residential Care Facility I-1		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 308.2		
Requested by	SFM Residential Care Advisory Committee		

For I-1 occupancies section 308.2 states “this occupancy may contain more than six non-ambulatory and/or bedridden clients”.

Was it the intent of the code due to the use of the word MAY to allow the AHJ the ability to deny an 850 fire clearance request for bedridden?

No. The intent of this section was not directed at the fire service. It was the intent of the code to allow the licensee the option of retaining non-ambulatory and/or bedridden in the facility as long as all the required fire & life safety requirements were met. If the code were to use the term “shall” in the sentence each facility would be required to retain bedridden clients in their facility.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12/19/08	Interpretation	08-056
Topic	Fire Extinguisher Requirements on Amusement Rides		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code Section 906.1		
Requested by	Edward M. Fonseca President P. O. Box 4010 Manteca, CA 95337 (209) 239-0122 www.funandgamerentals.com		

The specific code that we are requesting an interpretation on is:

Section 906.1 Portable Fire Extinguishers

“In new and existing Group A, B, E, F, H, I, M, R-1, R-2, R-4 and S and occupancies.”

Under group A-5: Assembly uses intended for participation in or viewing outdoor activities including, but not limited to: Amusement Structures, Bleachers, Grandstands, Stadiums.

Definitions: Special Amusement Building:

A building that is temporary, permanent or mobile that contains a device or system that conveys passengers or provides a walkway along, around or over a course in any direction as a form of amusement arranged so that the egress path is not readily apparent due to visual or audio distractions and intentionally confounded egress path or is not readily available because of the mode of conveyance through the building.

The purpose and circumstances for requesting the code interpretation is that while we do supply portable fire extinguishers in all our amusement

structures, such as our enclosed game trailers, generators, ticket booths and within 75 feet of any mechanical ride, we are being required to provide fire extinguishers at every mechanical ride.

Yes. Health and Safety Code Section 13190.2 and CCR Title 19, Section 567 (a) allows the local AHJ to mandate the placement of portable fire extinguishers.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	2/2/2009	Interpretation	08-057
Topic	Mixed Occupancy Separations		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Section 425.3.1; Section 506.4.1; 508.3.3		
Requested by	Wolfgang J. Hack Executive Vice President Director Health Care Division Hill Partnership, Inc. 115 22 nd Street, Newport Beach, CA 92663 (949) 675-4543		

Building Height and Construction Type for Group I-1 Assisted Living and Group R-2: apartments mixed occupancy in same multi-story building.

Section 425.3.1 allows a Group I-1 occupancy licensed as RCFE to be housed in buildings one or two stories in height of V-A (1-hour rated) construction.

Is it permissible to house a Group I-1 occupancy on the first and second floor of a 4-story building of Type V.A. construction, with the third and fourth floor occupied by Group R-2 (apartments)?

Table 503 allows 3-stories of Type V.A. construction for Group R-2 outright, with increases of the number of stories and building areas allowed if and when a code compliant fire sprinkler system is installed.

Assuming the building is sprinklered throughout we are increasing the 3-story limit for Group R-2 occupancies to four stories.

Table 503.3.3 requires Group I-1 and R-2 occupancies to be separated by a horizontal 2-hour rated assembly, e.g. concrete slab between the 2nd and 3rd floor. Under these assumptions, is the scenario with the 1 story and 2nd

floor occupied by Group I-1 and 3rd and 4th floor occupied by Group R-2 permissible in a Type V.A structure?

If a 4-story building occupied as described above is not permissible, is it possible to house the Group I-1 occupancy on the 1st and 2nd floor of a 3-story Type V.A structure, with the 3rd floor occupied by R-2 (apartments), with the same horizontal 2-hour rated separation between 2nd and 3rd floor and fire sprinkler system throughout?

No, Health and Safety Code Section 13131.5 uses the language “The entire building”...Therefore regardless of the use of a horizontal fire assembly 3, 4 & 5 story buildings shall be Type II FR.

Note: Health and Safety Code Section 13131.5:

c) All of the following building standards shall apply to any multistory building housing nonambulatory persons on the third, fourth, or fifth floor, which is operated as a residential care facility for the elderly and licensed to care for more than six persons:

3) The entire building shall be of Type II fire resistive construction, as described in Chapter 2-19 of Part 2 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	10/1/08	Interpretation	08-060
Topic	Existing R-2.1.1 or R-2.2.1 Occupancies (6 or less)		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code, Section 111.5.1		
Requested by	State Fire Marshal Residential Care Advisory Committee		

Is a Residential Care Facility licensed for 6 or fewer clients prior to January 1, 2008 required to meet the 2007 California Building Code if the client capacity is changed to increase the number of non-ambulatory or bedridden beds?

Yes. The following statements apply to your question and clarify the intent of Section 111.5.1, 2007 CBC as it relates to residential care facilities housing six or less clients.

1. All existing facilities can remain under the 2001 CBC as long as there are no changes to their license relative to non-ambulatory or bedridden.
2. All existing facilities adding non-ambulatory and/or bedridden shall meet the requirements of the 2007 California Building Code.

Note: Effective as to date of issuance above



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	2/2/2009	Interpretation	08-064
Topic	Occupancy Separation Between an I and F-1		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 508.3.3		
Requested by	Jake T. Tomlin Fire Marshal Bureau of Fire Prevention City of Tracy 835 Central Avenue Tracy, CA 95376 (209) 831-6707 jake.tomlim@ci.tracy.ca.us		

The following is a formal request for Code Interpretation regarding occupancy separation requirement between 1-2.1 occupancy and a B Occupancy. The building in question is Type II-A construction, two stories, 25,000 square feet, and fully sprinkler protected. The proposed use of the first floor is as a mixed use occupancy 1-2.1/B, and the entire second floor is proposed as a B occupancy.

The pertinent code section (s) are California Building Code, Section 508.3.3 (Separated Occupancies), and Table 508.3.3 (Required Separation of Occupancies). In accordance with Table 508.3.3 the base separation requirement is 2-hours between an I Occupancy and B Occupancy. However, the 2-hour requirement is amended by footnote (f.) an SFM amendment, which states the following:

- f.[SFM] For Group I and F-I occupancies shall have a 3-hour separation.

Is the intent of footnote (f.) to require a 3-hour occupancy separation between an I-2.1 and B Occupancies, or is the intent of footnote (f.) to only require a 3-hour separation between a Group I and F-1 Occupancy?

No. The 2007 CBC Table 508.3.3, footnote *f*. applies only to the occupancy separation between a Group I and F-1 Occupancies.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	2/2/2009	Interpretation	08-065
Topic	Automatic Shutoffs for Multiple Units		
Code Section(s)	2007 CMC Section 609.0		
Requested by	Scott Karpinen Sr. Mechanical Engineer Frank Booth Design Build Company 4220 Douglas Boulevard Roseville, CA 95746 (916) 878-3827 ScottK@fmbdc.com		

CMC 609.0 Automatic Shutoffs

Please define “Air-moving Systems” and “enclosed spaces”, as we are finding multiple definitions, depending on the jurisdiction. In addition, the following are examples that may clarify the intent:

1. Two 1,500 CFM rooftop package units serve a single large room. Is automatic shutoff required for each package unit?

Yes. CMC, Section 609 requires automatic shutoff upon smoke detection for “air moving systems” supplying air in excess of 2000 CFM to enclosed spaces within buildings. Where multiple fan units (including packaged HVAC units) supply a combined CFM in excess of 2000 CFM to an enclosed room or area, then all of the fan units would be required to have automatic shutoff upon smoke detection.

2. Two 1,500 CFM rooftop package units serve different areas of a small building and area separated by wall. Is automatic shutoff required for each package unit?

Automatic shutoff upon smoke detection would not be required for these 1,500 CFM HVAC fan units where the rooms or areas are completely separated by full height walls with doors, and where the HVAC fan units do not utilize common ducting or plenum.

3. Two 1,500 CFM rooftop units serve different areas of a small building. However, assume that one space is common to the two (a corridor for example). Is automatic shutoff required for each package unit?

Yes. Where a room or area (including corridors) is served by multiple HVAC fan units supplying a combined CFM in excess of 2000 CFM, then all of the HVAC fan units would be required to have automatic shutoff upon smoke detection.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	2/2/2009	Interpretation	08-068
Topic	Manual Fire Alarm Box Height for Wheelchair Access		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC Section 1118B.6, 907.3.2, NFPA Section 5.12.4		
Requested by	David Secoda Schirmer Engineering Corporation 1850 Gateway Blvd., Suite 1030 Concord, CA 94520 (925) 827-5858 x 127 david_secoda@schirmereng.com		

Background

Section 5.12.4 of NFPA 72 indicates that; the operable part of each manual fire alarm box shall be not more than 54 inches above floor level.

Section 5.12.4 of NFPA 72 as amended indicates that; the operable part of each manual fire alarm box shall not be more than 48 inches above the floor.

The general reach range described in Section 1118B.6 of the California Building Code indicates that; if the clear floor space allows parallel approach by a person in a wheelchair, the maximum high side reach allowed shall be 54 inches above the floor.

Section 907.3.2 of the 2006 International Building Code Commentary indicates that the 48-inch measurement corresponds to the maximum unobstructed side reach height by a person in a wheelchair.

Question

Is it permitted to install a manual fire alarm box in an area that allows parallel approach by a person in a wheelchair such that the operable part is a maximum high side reach of 54 inches?

No. Maximum height for manual fire alarm boxes is 48 inches.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	3/10/09	Interpretation	08-071
Topic	Automatic Sprinkler System Increase		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 504.2		
Requested by	Chris Texter, AIA Principal KTG Y Group, Inc. 17992 Mitchell South Irvine, CA 92614 (949) 851- 2133 ctexter@ktgy.com		

2007 CBC Section 504.2 Automatic Sprinkler System Increase

Part 1 – “Where a building is equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1, the value specified in Table 503 for maximum height and area is increased by 20 feet and the maximum number of stories is increased by one. Increases are permitted in addition to area increase in accordance with Section 506.2.”

- 1. May any occupancy of any type of construction be increased by one story and have area increases allowed with frontages per 506.2 with NFPA 13 sprinklers?**

Yes, section 504.2 allows a height increase due to the installation of automatic sprinkler system in accordance with 903.1.1 in addition to area increases in accordance with section 506.2.

2007 CBC Section 504.2

Part 2 “in other than high rise buildings, Group A, E, H, I, L and R occupancies and other applications listed in Section 111 regulated by the office of the State Fire Marshal, these increases are permitted in addition to the area increase in accordance with Section 506.3”

- 2A. High Rise buildings and these six occupancies may not have area increases per 506.3 (sprinklers), but, per Part 1 above, these may still have a story increase and area increase per frontages per 506.2?**

No, occupancies regulated by OSFM (high-rise buildings, Group A, E, H, I, L and R occupancies and other applications listed in Section 111) are prohibited from utilizing both height and area increases together due to automatic sprinkler installation.

- 2B. May High Rise buildings and these six occupancies have area increases per 506.3 and area increases with frontage per 506.2 but can not have story increases?**

Yes.

Code Section 504.2

Part 3 – “For Group R-2 buildings of Type VA construction equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1, the value specified in Table 503 for maximum, height is increased by 20 feet and the maximum number of stories is increased by one, but shall not exceed 60 feet or four stories, respectively. These increases are permitted in addition to the area increase in accordance with Section 506.3.”

- 3. May R-2, type VA buildings have a story increase and area increase for frontage in accordance with Section 506.2 and area increase for sprinklers in accordance with Section 506.3?**

No, section 506.2 does not provide for height increases only area. Section 506.2 and 506.3 may be utilized together for area increases only.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12/19/08	Interpretation	08-073
Topic	RCFE Exiting Requirements		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 425.8.3.3		
Requested by	Matt Sather Owner Shield Fire Protection 27052 Lost Colt Dr. Laguna Hills, CA 92653 (949) 388-6556 matt@shieldfireprotection.com		

When a facility with 6 non-ambulatory clients adds a residential fire sprinkler system to meet the requirements for 6 bedridden, are the CBC 2007 Section 425.8.3.3 requirements for a single bedridden client also required to be installed in each of the six bedridden rooms?

No. However, keep in mind that two exits are required and at least one of the exits must conform to the four exiting criteria set forth in 2007 California Building Code Section 425.8.3.2.



California State Fire Marshal CODE INTERPRETATION

Date Issued	REVISED 4/13/09	Interpretation	08-075
Topic	Stairs Serving an Assembly Occupancy		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 1025		
Requested by	Tom DeMasi, E.I.T. Project Consultant Schirmer Engineering 21221 S. Western Ave., Suite 100 Torrance, CA 90501 (310) 782-0850 thomas-james_demasi@schirmereng.com		

The California State Fire Marshal (CSFM) has amended Section 1025.6.1 of the 2007 California Building Code (CBC) to include a minimum of 0.20-inches exit width per occupant for occupant loads in excess of 300, which is similar to the width factor in the amended Sections 1025.2 and 1025.3.

Is it the intention of the CSFM for the Section 1025.6.1 (item #1) requirement of 0.30-inches of exit width per person to be applied to vertical exit enclosures serving assembly spaces or is this egress width factor intended only to apply to stairs serving seating or aisles within the assembly space (prior to reaching the exit enclosure)? The assembly space in question is a level dining area with greater than 300 persons.

Yes. The 2007 California Building Code Section 1025.6.1 was intended to apply to all stairs serving an assembly occupancy. The exception listed under CBC 1005.1 and footnote 'b' of Table 1005.1 directs the user to Section 1025 for egress width in assembly occupancies, thus having the intended effect of requiring a minimum egress width for each assembly occupant served of 0.3 for stairways and 0.2 for other egress components as depicted in Table 1005.1 regardless if the building is protected with an automatic sprinkler system throughout or not.

NOTE (advisory comment): During the recent ICC code development process, Code Change E-19 (07-08) was approved and will have the same effect for assembly occupancies and other occupancies when the 2009 IBC is published as well as for future California adoption.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	2/2/2009	Interpretation	08-076
Topic	Pyrotechnic Operators employing unlicensed assistants		
Code Section(s)	Title 19 Section 981.5(b) and 992.6(b)		
Requested by	Matt Sweeney President Alliance of Special Effects & Pyrotechnic Operators (ASEPO) 12522 Moorpark Street, suite 111 Studio City, CA 91604 (818) 506-8173		

We are asking your office for an official interpretation on Title 19 CCR § 981, exceptions 1 and 2, specifically regarding the role of the pyrotechnic operator in charge in determining her or his unlicensed assistants.

It is our understanding that, given the responsibilities placed upon the pyrotechnic operator pursuant to Title 19 CCR §981.5(b) and §992.6(b), he or she may employ unlicensed assistants.

May licensed pyrotechnic operators employ unlicensed assistants?

Yes. The unlicensed assistant may be employed by the pyrotechnic operator at his/her sole discretion. The unlicensed assistants shall perform only when under the direct, immediate and constant supervision of the licensee when handling fireworks and pyrotechnic compositions.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	2/2/2009	Interpretation	08-077
Topic	Exiting Requirements for a Large Family Daycare		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code Section 1015.7		
Requested by	William Betts Fire Safety Specialist Colton Fire Department 303 East "E" Street Colton, CA 92324 (909) 370-5100 wbetts@confire.org		

Section 1015.7

California Fire Code states that: "Every story or basement of a large-family day-care home shall be provided with two exits which are remotely located from each other."

Is it the intent of the code to prohibit large-family day-cares in residential homes where the second story does not have two exits – even though day-care activities are limited to the first story?

No. If the daycare function is restricted to the first floor, then two exterior exits from the second floor are not required.



California State Fire Marshal CODE INTERPRETATION

Date Issued	5/11/09	Interpretation	08-079
Topic	Manual Fire Alarm Boxes for Fire Sprinkler Monitoring		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code 903.4.1 Signals 2007 California Fire Code 907.15 Monitoring		
Requested by	David Deutsch Bill's Sound & Security Costa Mesa, CA T: 714 540-9800 F: 714 540-1516 david@billssound.com		

1. Does section 907.2 require that a fire alarm box (manual pull station) be installed when there are no requirements for the installation of a fire alarm system under 2007 CBC section 907 and/or 2007 CFC sections 907 and a fire alarm control unit / panel is being installed for the purpose of monitoring the fire sprinkler system and/or elevator recall control?

No. A manual fire alarm box is not required where a fire alarm control unit is installed for the sole purpose of monitoring the fire sprinkler system, supervisory service or elevator recall control.

2. Is a jurisdiction permitted to require a fire alarm box be installed for all / every fire sprinkler monitoring system in their jurisdiction, where a fire alarm system is not otherwise required by other sections of the CBC and/or CFC, without first filing with the California Building Standards Commission for approval to modify the CBC and/or CFC requiring a fire alarm box be installed even on fire sprinkler monitoring, elevator recall control and/or supervisory service systems?

No. Health and Safety Code Sections 13869.7, 17950 and 18938 (b) requires that all local amendments to the California Building Standards Code be filed. Furthermore, prior to filing, the city, county, or fire protection district must declare that the more restrictive building standard is reasonably necessary for the

protection of the public health, safety and welfare based on of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	5/11/09	Interpretation	08-081
Topic	Monitoring Stations and Standby Power		
Code Section(s)	2007 CA Fire Code 903.4.1 Signals 2007 CA Fire Code 907.15 Monitoring		
Requested by	David Deutsch Bill's Sound & Security Costa Mesa, CA T: 714 540-9800 F: 714 540-1516 david@billssound.com		

1. What is intended when the Fire Code requires monitoring as defined by NFPA 72?

The 2007 California Fire Code requires that the fire alarm off premise monitoring to be one of the following types: Central Station Service, Remote Supervising Station or Proprietary Supervising Station as defined by Chapter 8, NFPA 72 (2002 edition).

2. If the supervising monitoring station is UL Listed must the AHJ accept Remote Supervising Station when Remote Supervising Station requested?

Yes, except where there is a local ordinance prohibiting a UL listed remote supervising stations and requires central station service. However, the local AHJ cannot be more restrictive for public Group E's, Group I1's, Group R3.1's, R4's, and state occupied buildings.

Under Central Station Service, section 8.2.7.1.2.(2) states that the central station shall dispatch a runner or technician to the protected premises to arrive within 2 hours after receipt of a signal if equipment needs to be manually reset by the prime contractor.

3. Can the AHJ require more than the 24 hours standby power required under NFPA 72 section 4.4.1.5.3? Is so, under what circumstances?

No, except where the AHJ has adopted a local ordinance requiring more than 24 hours standby power; However, the local AHJ cannot be more restrictive for public Group E's, Group I1's, Group R3.1's, R4's, and state occupied buildings.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	2/2/2009	Interpretation	08-082
Topic	Vestibule widths in Group I-2 occupancies		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Sections 909.20.1, 1005.1, and 1017.2		
Requested by	Gary Dunger Chief Fire & Life Safety Officer Office of Statewide Health Planning & Development 700 N. Alameda Street, Suite 2-500 Los Angeles, CA 90012 (213) 897-3111 (213) 897-1608 fax GDunger@oshpd.ca.gov		

In a Group I-2 hospital serving nonambulatory patients where smokeproof enclosures are required, what is the minimum dimension of the vestibules? Is the minimum dimension the calculated width as determined in Section 1005.1 (44" by 72") or the specified width in Section 1017.2 (96" by 96")?

Vestibule width pursuant to 909.20.1 is not determined by 1017.2. OSFM has determined that the minimum width would be determined by section 1005.1. Section 1005.1 determines the minimum egress width of the corridor even though 1017.2 may require more. Section 1017.2 requirements are intended for a different purpose (movement and passing side by side of beds); whereas vestibules are not intended for such purpose. The minimum depth for vestibules of 72" is not affected by 1005.1 or 1017.2



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	2/2/2009	Interpretation	08-083
Topic	Corridor ratings in Group I-2 occupancy suites		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 1014.2.2, 1017.1		
Requested by	Gary Dunger Chief Fire & Life Safety Officer Office of Statewide Health Planning & Development 700 N. Alameda Street, Suite 2-500 Los Angeles, CA 90012 (213) 897-3111 (213) 897-1608 fax GDunger@oshpd.ca.gov		

In a Group I-2 occupancy health care suites, are corridors inside the suite required to be 1-hour fire-resistive construction in accordance with Section 1017.1?

No, rated corridors are not required in suites where the design complies with section 1014.2.2.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	2/2/2009	Interpretation REVISED	08-084
Topic	Corridor penetrations in SFM regulated occupancies		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Building Code Section 716.5.4 and 716.5.4.1		
Requested by	Gary Dunger Chief Fire & Life Safety Officer Office of Statewide Health Planning & Development 700 N. Alameda Street, Suite 2-500 Los Angeles, CA 90012 (213) 897-3111 (213) 897-1608 fax GDunger@oshpd.ca.gov		

Are fire dampers and smoke dampers or combination fire/smoke dampers required in duct penetrations of corridor walls?

Fire dampers and smoke dampers or combination fire/smoke dampers are required; use both Sections 716.5.4 and 716.5.4.1 together for corridor penetrations. The provisions of Section 716.5.4 are general requirements for fire partitions; Section 716.5.4.1 is a subsection to Section 716.5.4 and is in addition to the provisions of Section 716.5.4 when corridors are constructed with duct penetrations.

However, where exception #2 of Section 716.5.4.1 is utilized smoke dampers may be omitted. Additionally, as currently written, Section 716.5.4 would still require fire dampers in this condition, although it was not the intent to require fire dampers in corridor walls where the fire partition wall complies with exception #3 of Section 716.5.4 and is not used for the following:

1. Walls separating dwelling units in the same building.
2. Walls separating sleeping units in occupancies in Group R-1 hotel, R-2 and I-1 occupancies.

3. Walls separating tenant spaces in covered mall buildings as required by Section 402.7.2.
4. Elevator lobby separation as required by Section 707.14.1.
5. Residential aircraft hangars.

SFM is currently developing a modification to resolve this issue in the current rulemaking cycle.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	3/10/09	Interpretation	08-085
Topic	Automatic Smoke Detection Requirements for Group E Day Care Facilities		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code Section 907.2.3, 907.2.3.2		
Requested by	Cesar Fortuno Pyro-Comm Systems, Inc. 15531 Container Lane Huntington Beach, CA 92649-1530 (714) 902-8000 cfortuno@pyrocomm.com		

Is it the intent of the code to provide smoke detectors in every room and area of the building or in the classrooms and rooms used for day care purpose, to comply with automatic fire alarm system requirement for a new private elementary and high school?

Yes. Every new Group E/I-4 Day Care facility shall be provided with an automatic smoke detection system interconnected to the building fire alarm system.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	5/11/09	Interpretation	08-090
Topic	Annual Inspection Requirements of Multi Family Dwellings		
Code Section(s)	Health and Safety Code §13146.2		
Requested by	Richard Gallagher, Fire Marshal Culver City Fire Department 9770 Culver Boulevard Culver City, CA 90232 (310) 253-5925		

My request for interpretation is in reference to §13146.2 and §17921 as printed in the Health and Safety Code.

The direction of §13146.2. “All buildings and structures are to be inspected annually per §17921. (b) which excludes single-family dwellings.”

Section 310 of the 2007 California Building Code states in part “R-3 Residential Occupancies where the occupants are primarily permanent in nature and not classified as Group R-1, R-2, R-3.1, R-4 or I, including:

Buildings other than townhouses that do not contain more than two dwelling units.

Townhouses not more than three stories above grade in height with separate means of egress.”

The 2007 CA Fire Code Chapter 2, Definitions, “Townhouse, A single-family dwelling unit constructed in a group of three or more attached units in which each units extends from the foundation to the roof and with open space on at least two sides.”

Many complexes carry the description of different multi-family living units such as condominiums, townhomes or townhouses regardless of the actual occupancy classification. Our community has apartment buildings

that have been converted into condos which means they have become private (dwelling) units owned by separate individuals (single-family dwellings).

1. Are these single family dwellings exempt? If not, why?

Yes. Only where these buildings are classified as Group R-3 occupancies by the Code Official, than an annual fire inspection is not required. 2007 CBC Section 310 only permits townhouses as Group R-3 occupancies. The 2007 CBC does not allow the construction of townhouses in other occupancy groups.

2. Is the building exempt? If not, Why?

No. Apartment buildings that have been converted into condominiums are not exempt from annual inspections unless reclassified by the Code Official as a Group R-3 occupancies.

3. Are we required to inspect ANY multi-family building that does not comply under the definition of "TOWNHOUSE"?

Yes. The 2007 CBC Section 310 only permits townhouses as Group R-3 occupancies.

4. What is the definition of a multi-family residential occupancy that is required to be inspected? R-1's, R-2's only?

Yes. Fire safety inspections are required in all hotels, motels, lodging houses, apartment houses, condominiums, townhomes and townhouses not otherwise classified as a Group R-3 occupancy.

5. Do we include R-3's which are multi-family buildings?

No.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	5/11/09	Interpretation	08-092
Topic	Vapor Recovery Systems		
Code Section(s)	2007 California Fire Code /2003 NFPA 30A		
Requested by	John Puumala JP Petroleum Service 2874 Teresa Lane West Sacramento, CA 95691		

1) Is the Veeder-Root Carbon Canister Vapor Polisher considered a vapor processor?

Yes; this unit is certified by the Air Resources Board (ARB) as a Vapor Processor and meets the following definition:

Per title 17 CCR § 94010, D-200 DEFINITIONS FOR VAPOR RECOVERY PROCEDURES, Amended May 25, 2006,

Processor:

A vapor processor, either destructive or non-destructive, that operates to manage the pressure of the vapor in the gasoline storage tank within specified limits.

NFPA 30A, 2003 edition as Adopted in the 2007 California Fire Code (CFC)
Section:

3.3.17 Vapor Processing System. A system designed to capture and process vapors displaced during transfer or filling operations by use of mechanical or chemical means. Examples are systems using blower-assist for capturing vapors and refrigeration, absorption, and combustion systems for processing vapors.

NFPA 30A 2008 edition
Section:

3.3.17 Vapor Processing System. A system designed to capture and process vapors displaced during transfer or filling operations by use of mechanical or chemical means.

A.3.3.17 Vapor Processing System. Examples are systems using blower-assist for capturing vapors and refrigeration, absorption, and combustion systems for processing vapors.”

2) If the Veeder-Root Carbon Canister Vapor Polisher is considered a vapor processor and is mounted on vent risers at a minimum height of 12 feet to the outlet, does it need to meet the 10 foot set back from a building or buildable property line. (Many existing vent risers are either mounted to the side of a building or do not meet the current 10’ set back from a property line.)

The Veeder-Root Vapor Polisher, State Fire Marshal Certification number 005:071:001, is required to be installed in accordance with the California Fire Code, manufacturer's installation instructions and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards 30 and 30A.

3) What labeling or decals would be required on the Veeder-Root Carbon Canister Vapor Polisher?

Labeling shall be in accordance with the following:

California Code of Regulation Title §1918.22. Labels.

(a) Every gasoline vapor recovery system or component which is certified by the State Fire Marshal shall bear a label conforming to the provisions of this section. Labels shall be placed in a conspicuous location and shall be attached by the manufacturer during production or fabrication.

Exceptions:

- (1) Systems or components which bear the label of an approved testing organization provided such organization conducts factory inspections of the material and workmanship during fabrication and assembly.
- (2) Upon written request, the State Fire Marshal may exempt specified systems or components from the labeling requirement provided he finds such labeling impractical or impossible. In such cases however sufficient evidence shall be furnished indicating the means by which said systems or components may be reasonably identified.



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	5/11/09	Interpretation	08-093
Topic	Eaves and Soffit Protection		
Code Section(s)	2007 CBC 704A.2.3		
Requested by	Joe Zicherman, Ph.D., Fire Cause Analysis 935 Pardee Street Berkeley, CA 94710-2623 Joe@fcafire.com		

1. Must eaves and soffits (of any design or all designs) be tested and pass test standard SFM 21-7A-3 to comply with CBC Section 704A.2.3 which requires eave protection from wildfire exposure?

No. Having an eave and/or soffit design successfully pass SFM 21-7A-3 is only one way to comply with CBC Section 704A.2.3. Full compliance with the code shall also be satisfied when the exposed underside of the eave and/or soffit material is either "ignition resistant material" (e.g. Fire-Retardant-Treated wood per Section 702A definition) or non-combustible material (such as fiber cement products having passed ASTM E-136).

In addition, alternate designs and methods of construction per 701A.3.1 may be approved by the enforcing agency which complies with the code (e.g. see OSFM CBC Ch7A Compliance Policy "Alternate Eave Protection Compliance" and Section 111.2.4)



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	5/11/09	Interpretation	08-094
Topic	Fire Extinguisher Servicing		
Code Section(s)	CCR Title 19 Section 575.4 (a) (1)		
Requested by	Darrell Hefley CALSAFE 2691 S. East Ave Fresno, CA 3706 (559) 355-8082 dhefley@jorgensenco.com		

Section 575.4(a) (1) states "Every 6 years stored pressure dry chemical and dry powder fire extinguishers that require a 12 year hydrostatic test shall be discharged, emptied and subjected to the applicable maintenance procedures as specified by the manufacturer's requirements." In reviewing the owners or maintenance manuals of the following manufacturers, Ansul, Amerex, Badger, Buckeye, Flag and Kidde it states that maintenance shall be performed as specified in NFPA10 or in some cases that NFPA10 is incorporated into their individual manual. NFPA 10 2007 edition now states in 4.4.1 "Dry Chemical stored pressure extinguishers manufactured prior to October 1984 shall be removed from service at the next 6-year maintenance interval or the next hydro test interval, whichever comes first"

Question:

Are the Dry Chemical stored pressure extinguishers manufactured prior to October 1984 of any of manufacturers who require service as specified in NFPA10 to be removed from service as mandated in NFPA10 2007 4.4.1?

The California State Fire Marshal's Office does not adopt NFPA 10, therefore the requirements for removing dry chemical stored pressure extinguishers manufactured prior to October 1984 does not apply in California.

However, **CCR Title 19 Section 575 Servicing, General** states: servicing which includes maintenance, recharging and hydrostatic testing shall be done in

accordance with the appropriate manufacturer's service manual(s) and the requirements of this chapter.