



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

Public Safety Services




M. J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR.
GOVERNOR

V. J. BELLA
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

INTERPRETIVE MEMORANDUM 2002 - 18

To: Licensed Architects
Licensed Engineers
Felicia Cooper, Administrator - Inspections
Stephen Gogreve, Manager of Inspections/Arson
Pat Day, Supervisor of Health Care Inspections
Boyd Petty, Manager
Plan Review Staff

From: Don Zeringue, Chief Architect
Jean Carter, Architect Supervisor
Fidel Fremin, Architect Supervisor
Cynthia Obier, Architect Supervisor

Approved: Mark Gates, 
Deputy Assistant Secretary

Date: November 14, 2002

Re: **Smoke Partition Penetrations**

NFPA 101:8.4.1.2 states that, in new construction, where protection is provided with automatic extinguishing systems without fire-resistive separation, the space protected shall be enclosed with smoke partitions in accordance with 8.2.4.

The code commentary for this section explains that, "the concept of limiting the transfer of smoke from one side of a smoke partition to the other is different from the concept of preventing any and all smoke from transferring to the other side of a partition. A smoke partition should be thought of as a barrier that reasonably limits, but does not prevent smoke transfer."

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(504) 925-4911 1-800-256-5452

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NFPA 101:8.2.4.4.4 provides questionable guidance when addressing "penetrations and miscellaneous openings in smoke partitions" by stating that the penetrating item's or sleeve's annular space shall meet one of the following conditions:

- a. It shall be filled with a material that is capable of limiting the transfer of smoke.
- b. It shall be protected by an approved device that is designed for the specific purpose.

Other than a listed fire barrier through penetration system this office is not aware of an "approved device," specifically for smoke partition penetrations and miscellaneous openings.

Taking guidance from the commentary this office will consider various sealants or caulking as being acceptable for smoke partition penetrations based on the following criteria:

1. The sealant shall be capable of adhering to both the penetrating item and the wall material.
2. The sealant shall be relatively flexible to accommodate movement.
3. The sealant shall be applied in a manner that will "limit the transfer of smoke."
4. Non shrink caulking may be used on wall penetrating items not subject to movement.

DZ/md