

INTERPRETIVE MEMORANDUM 2002 - 06

To: Plan Review Staff
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From: Don Zeringue, Chief Architect
Jean Carter, Architect Supervisor
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Approved: Mark Gates,
Deputy Assistant Secretary

Date: April 18, 2002

Re: Fire Alarm Systems at Educational Facilities

It has come to the attention of this office that there has been inconsistent enforcement of the fire alarm requirements at educational facilities. The inconsistencies occur where "T-buildings" used for a non educational purposes are placed less than 50 feet from an existing educational building. The following establishes Fire Marshal policy applicable to all educational facilities.

The NFPA 101 Life Safety Code requires that all new educational occupancies provide a fire alarm system in accordance with NFPA 101:9.6. The exception to NFPA 101:14.3.4.1 states that the requirement to provide a fire alarm system shall not apply to buildings with an area less than 1000 sq. ft. that contain a single classroom and are located not less than 50 feet from another building. The apparent code intent is to mandate an emergency notification for educational **facilities** exposed to a serious fire hazard within 50 feet proximity.

This office will typically take guidance from the Standard Building Code and require a minimum 10-foot separation between combustible building overhangs as recognition of

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a “separate, stand alone building status.” This separation also satisfies protection of hazard requirements where varying degrees of hazard may be present that would require a one-hour fire-resistive barrier as specified in NFPA 101:14.3.2.1.

NFPA 101:14.3.4.1 and its exception shall be interpreted by this office to mean that a fire alarm system is required for **all** buildings located within 50 feet of educational occupancies.

On a case by case basis, some buildings other than educational occupancies not having a fire alarm system may be located closer than 50 feet from an educational occupancy upon evaluation and consultation with your immediate supervisor. Such building evaluations shall consider a fire’s potential effect on the educational occupancy’s life safety characteristic using factors such as degree of hazard, fire loads, frequency of use, etc.

DZ:HR:tm

cc: Licensed Architects
Licensed Engineers
Licensed Sprinkler Contractors
Licensed Fire Alarm Contractors
Licensed Fire Suppression Contractors

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