



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

Public Safety Services



H. BUTCH BROWNING
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

INTERPRETIVE MEMORANDUM 2010-01

To: Louisiana Nursing Home Association
LA Licensed Architects
LA Licensed Engineers
Felicia Cooper, Deputy Asst Secretary/Plan Review, OSFM
Chief Dan Wallis, Deputy Asst Fire Marshal Enforcement/Emergency Services, OSFM
Stephen Gogreve, Manager, OSFM
Pat Aronstein, Manager, OSFM
Traci Roberts, Supervisor of Health Care Inspections, OSFM
Plan Review Staff, OSFM

From: Don Zeringue, Chief Architect/Plan Review, OSFM

Approved by: Chief Butch Browning, State Fire Marshal

Date: January 7, 2010

RE: Suspended Acoustical Ceilings Provided to Resist the Passage of Smoke
(NOTE: This Memorandum voids and replaces IM 2006-05 and IM 2007-03)

The NFPA 101 Life Safety Code prescribes smoke resisting corridor wall construction to protect building inhabitants in buildings housing certain types of occupants or having detention rooms or a security section. The requirement for a smoke resisting corridor is intended to provide a safe transitional environment for relocating and evacuating occupants from one smoke compartment or area of refuge/safety to another during times of fire emergency.

Traditionally, this office deemed corridor wall continuity through concealed spaces as imperative for life safety. The NFPA 101 Life Safety Code permits required smoke resisting corridor walls to terminate at ceilings constructed to also resist the passage of smoke. Suspended acoustical ceilings were typically not acceptable for this purpose as they were often loose fitting in their mounting tracks, susceptible to being broken or removed for maintenance purposes, and often not replaced in a timely manner. Maintenance of a continuous smoke resisting ceiling membrane has become the key factor for providing safe exit access where corridor walls are not continuous through concealed interstitial spaces.

An editorial commentary provided in the NFPA 101 Life Safety Code regarding corridor wall construction states that corridor walls need not be fire-rated but must be constructed to resist the passage of smoke. Where suspended ceilings are provided, partitions may be terminated at the suspended ceiling without any additional special protection if the suspended ceiling will resist the passage of smoke. In these cases, the ability of the suspended ceiling to resist the passage of smoke is PARAMOUNT and must be meticulously and methodically maintained.

This office hereby deems that suspended acoustical tile ceilings shall be acceptable for terminating smoke resisting corridor walls at facilities employing a MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE to insure frequent periodic inspection and maintenance of the smoke resisting characteristics required for corridor protection.

DZ/FLF

Is Yours Working"??
Smoke Detectors Save Lives!!
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
8181 INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD, BATON ROUGE, LA 70806
(225) 925-4911 1-800-256-5452