



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

Public Safety Services



KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO  
GOVERNOR

STATE FIRE MARSHAL

## INTERPRETIVE MEMORANDUM 2005 - 06

To: Licensed Architects  
Licensed Engineers  
All State, Local, and Parish Detention and Correctional Facilities  
Felicia Cooper, Deputy State Fire Marshal Administrator  
Richard Stalder, Secretary, Department of Public Safety and Corrections

From: Henry H. Fry  
State Fire Marshal (Acting)

**RE: DETENTION FACILITIES EVACUATED DURING HURRICANE KATRINA**

Date: September 20, 2005

In the wake of destruction left by Hurricane Katrina across southeastern Louisiana, several detention facilities sustained major building damage and many were forced to close. Those detention facilities that were evacuated due to Hurricane Katrina are the subject of this document. Much rebuilding and many repairs will be necessary in order to resume any measure of normalcy in the hurricane stricken area.

This office realizes the importance of recovery after such a catastrophic disaster and also realizes the effects that bureaucracy may have on such recovery. At the same time, it is important for this office to ensure that a minimal and reasonable level of life safety is provided for resuming occupancy in the Orleans, Plaquemines, and St. Bernard Parish areas, where most devastation from the hurricane occurred.

### **FACILITY ASSESSMENT**

An assessment of field conditions shall be performed by this office prior to occupying any portion of a detention facility that was evacuated during the hurricane. Each assessment will be performed by inspection to verify and document that a reasonable level of life safety is provided. Major building and operational features of concern to be assessed will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Emergency power systems (generators, fuel, etc.)
- Fire protection systems (fire alarm, sprinkler, cooking suppression, etc.)
- Mechanical and Electrical items (HVAC, boilers, door operators, lighting, etc.)
- Egress systems (room arrangement, doors, corridors, exits, ramps, stairs, etc.)
- Fire Safety Plan (revised/modified evacuation and relocation plan, staff responsibilities, etc.)

Evacuated facilities which are placed into operation without the aforementioned assessment by this office may be unsuitable for inmate occupancy due to potential non code compliance.

"Is Yours Working"??

Smoke Detectors Save Lives!!

OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL, CODE ENFORCEMENT, AND BUILDING SAFETY  
8181 INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD, BATON ROUGE, LA 70806  
(225) 925-4911 1-800-256-5452

September 20, 2005

Please note that this office will make every effort to perform the required assessments as quickly as possible.

**REPAIR REQUESTS**

Due to unusual conditions presented during this time of crisis, minor repairs and superficial alterations may be completed at the Owner's risk, provided a written request is granted by this office. The request shall be signed by the Administrator of the facility and shall include the name and address of the facility, a description of field conditions and the proposed scope of work to be performed. Requests may be submitted by facsimile to Steve Gogreve at (225)925-3813 or Don Zeringue at (225)925-4414.

NOTE: The "scope of work" shall NOT include the installation of new walls, the relocation of existing walls, the reconfiguration of interior spaces, or any other construction, such as repairs to fire barriers, smoke barriers, fire protection systems/devices, fire rated assemblies, etc., that could adversely affect life safety, unless minimum code compliance is adequately explained and determined to be acceptable by this office.

**"OPERATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION"**

Changes in floor plan arrangements are required to be reviewed and inspected for conformance with minimum standards. In order to expedite the review process, an "Operational Plan of Action" describing the subject field conditions and the proposed scope of work shall be submitted to this office for expedited cursory review and subsequent inspection. Full compliance with the provisions of the Life Safety Code shall be required and will be expected by this office. The "Operational Plan of Action" shall include a request for "FACILITY ASSESSMENT" as described above and shall also include a complete history of all previous special requests and/or assessments associated with the damage done by Hurricane Katrina. A full formal review will be required at a later date as determined by inspection.

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**CAUTION:**

**This document shall in no way relieve the facility from compliance with minimum standards, and is not intended to circumvent state law or any regulations enforced by other authorities having jurisdiction.**  
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