



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

Public Safety Services




V. J. BELLA
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR.
GOVERNOR

INTERPRETIVE MEMORANDUM .2001 - 10

To: Licensed Architects
Licensed Engineers
Licensed Sprinkler Contractors
Licensed Fire Alarm Contractors
Licensed Fire Suppression Contractors
Felicia Cooper, Administrator - Inspections
Stephen Gogreve, Manager
Boyd Petty, Manager
Pat Day, Supervisor of Health Care Inspections
Plan Review Staff

From: Jean Carter, Architect Supervisor
Henry Reed, Architect Supervisor
Don Zeringue, Architect Supervisor
Fidel Fremin, Architect Supervisor

Approved: Mark Gates. 
Deputy Assistant Secretary/Chief Architect

Date: November 30, 2001

Re: Baptismal Fonts

Church baptismal fonts/full immersion baptismal tanks are not specifically exempt to NFPA 101:7.2 means of egress requirements.

This office observes that the baptismal ceremony is characterized by the following conditions:

1. Personal assistance given to users by attending minister or helpers.
2. Low occupant load in vicinity of baptismal area.
3. Many baptismal tanks are pre-fabricated units
4. Many full immersion tanks are elevated behind the altar/platform and accessed by stairs.
5. The congregation observes the baptism.

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These conditions lead this office to modify/clarify church baptismal space means of egress requirements in the following manner:

- A. This office will not cite means of egress requirements for entrances down into the water of full immersion baptismal tanks.
- B. The stairs leading to an elevated immersion tank shall comply with all NFPA 101:7.2 requirements applicable to mezzanine stairs. Landings will be required at the top and bottom of stairs leading to elevated baptismal tanks.
- C. Landing guards will not be required on the spectator side of elevated full immersion baptismal tanks.
- D. Stairs leading to small sculptural baptismal fonts shall comply with applicable stair dimensions. Guards and handrails will be required for stairs having three (3) or more risers.

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