

**NC Department of Insurance
Office of the State Fire Marshal - Engineering Division
1202 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1202
919-647-0000**

Emergency Escape and Rescue Opening Requirements for Church Classrooms

Code: 2018 Building and Fire Code
Section: 1030.1

Date: September 13, 2018
Rev: July 1, 2021

Question:

For a church classroom of children 12th grade and under, which would be Group E except that it qualifies as occupancy classification A-3 by Sections 303.1.4 and 305.1.1, do the emergency escape and rescue opening requirements of Section 1030 apply?

Answer:

Not if the classroom is classified as Group A-3 under Sections 303.1.4 and 305.1.1. If a designer or owner chooses to classify the classrooms as Group E for any reason, Section 1030.1 will apply to those rooms.

Previously DOI had indicated in this interpretation that emergency escape and rescue openings would apply because “Although the occupancy classification has changed from Group E to Group A-3, the hazard and ‘use’ remain the same”, but the wording of 1030.1 specifically calls out “Group E” classrooms. DOI has since determined that the code considers the relatively short period of time that such rooms are used during a week does not warrant the protection that is provided for Group E classrooms where students are likely to be present in the room for several hours a day 5 days a week. DOI has therefore revised the interpretation as indicated above.

Keywords:

School, religious, mosque, temple