



MIKE CAUSEY, INSURANCE COMMISSIONER & STATE FIRE MARSHAL
BRIAN TAYLOR, CHIEF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

June 8, 2020

Eric Williams, President /COO
Odyssey Fire Protection
210 Old Dairy Road, Unit A1
Wilmington, NC 28405

**RE: Sprinkler Requirement for Open-Ended Corridors and Breezeways
2018 NCFC, Section 1027.6, Exception 3 and 2013 NFPA 13R, Section 6.6.5**

Mr. Williams:

This letter is in response to your request for formal interpretation dated June 8, 2020 that was received in NCDOI by email on that same date. Your letter indicates a request for interpretation which is stated below in my words as well as a request for information which is stated below:

Interpretation:

When NFPA 13R and the 2018 NC Fire Code (NCFC) have conflicting requirements, which code supersedes the other?

Information:

We would also like to know which NFPA Code Editions and NC Fire Code Editions is currently in effect and adopted by NC D.O.I.?

Remarks:

All code section references are from the 2018 NCFC unless noted otherwise in this letter.

Code Analysis:

Section 102.7.1 – Conflicts states:

Where conflicts occur between provisions of this code and referenced standards, the provisions of this shall apply.

Section 903.3.1.2.2 – Open-Ended Corridors states:

Sprinkler protection shall be provided in open-ended corridors and associated exterior stairways and ramps as specified in Section 1027.6, Exception 3.

Section 1027.6 – Exterior Exit Stairway and Ramp Protection states:

Exterior exit stairways and ramps shall be separated from the interior of the building as required in Section 1023.2. Openings shall be limited to those necessary for egress from normally occupied spaces. Where a vertical plane projecting from the edge of an *exterior exit stairway or ramp* and landings is exposed by other parts of the building at an angle of less than 180 degrees (3.14 rad), the exterior wall shall be rated in accordance with Section 1023.7.

Exceptions:

1. Separation from the interior of the building is not required for occupancies, other than those in Group R-1 or R-2, in buildings that are not more than two stories above *grade plane* where a *level of exit discharge* serving such occupancies is the first story above *grade plane*.
2. Separation from the interior of the building is not required where the *exterior exit stairway* or *ramp* is served by an *exterior exit ramp* or balcony that connects two remote *exterior exit stairways* or other *approved exits* with a perimeter that is not less than 50 percent open. To be considered open, the opening shall be not less than 50 percent of the height of the enclosing wall, with the top of the openings not less than 7 feet (2134 mm) above the top of the balcony.
3. Separation from the open-ended *corridor* of the building is not required for *exterior exit stairways* or *ramps*, provided that Items 3.1 through 3.5 are met:
 - 3.1. The building, including open-ended *corridors*, and *stairways* and *ramps*, shall be equipped throughout with an *automatic sprinkler system* in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2.
 - 3.2. The open-ended *corridors* comply with Section 1020.
 - 3.3. The open-ended *corridors* are connected on each end to an *exterior exit stairway* or *ramp* complying with Section 1027.
 - 3.4. The *exterior walls* and openings adjacent to the *exterior exit stairway* or *ramp* comply with Section 1023.7.
 - 3.5. At any location in an open-ended *corridor* where a change of direction exceeding 45 degrees (0.79 rad) occurs, a clear opening of not less than 35 square feet (3.3 m²) or an *exterior stairway* or *ramp* shall be provided. Where clear openings are provided, they shall be located so as to minimize the accumulation of smoke or toxic gases.

NFPA 13R-13, Section 6.6.5 states:

Except as provided for in 6.6.5.1, sprinklers shall not be required in any porches, balconies, corridors, carports, porte cocheres, and stairs that are open and attached.

The charging paragraph for 1027.6, Exception 3 requires that all parts of the exception be met to allow egress stairs to be unseparated from corridors. 1027.6, Exception 3, particularly 3.1, requires sprinklers in open-ended corridors; however, NFPA 13R indicates that sprinklers are not required for open corridors.

Conclusions:

Section 102.7.1 will require that the provisions of the NCFC supersede NFPA 13R. If Section 1027.6, Exception 3 is used sprinklers are required in the open-ended corridor.

Information:

The current edition of the NCFC is the 2018 edition. See NCFC, Chapter 80 for a list of referenced NFPA Editions. A free online “read only” edition of the NCFC can be found at: [https://codes.iccsafe.org/category/North%20Carolina?year\[\]=Current+Adoption&page=1](https://codes.iccsafe.org/category/North%20Carolina?year[]=Current+Adoption&page=1). Also, a point of information; NC D.O.I. does not adopt codes. NC D.O.I. is the State arm of code enforcement. The NC Building Code Council, which is appointed by the Governor, is the code adoption agency for the State as designated by NC General Statute 143-138.

Compliance with 2018 NC Administrative Code and Policies (NCAC), Section 202.9.2 and related subsections is required for appeal of a formal interpretation to the NC Building Code Council. Per NCAC, Section 202.9.2.2 an appeal of this interpretation can be made to the NC Building Code Council within 30 days of the date of this letter. As a matter of reference, a copy of your letter of request for formal interpretation and associated exhibit (Attachment A below) are included with this letter.

Please call if you have comments or questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carl Martin".

Carl Martin, RA
Chief Code Consultant

cc: File
Robbie Davis, Chairman – BCC
Wayne Hamilton, Chairman Fire Prevention Standing Committee – BCC
Cliff Isaac, Deputy Commissioner of Engineering – NCDOI
Charlie Johnson – Chief Fire Code Consultant - NCDOI

ATTACHEMNT A



**APPENDIX E
APPEALS
NORTH CAROLINA
BUILDING CODE COUNCIL**

325 North Salisbury Street, Room 5_44
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603
(919) 647-0009

APPEAL TO NCDOI/NCBCC Hearing Date _____ / _____ / _____

GS 153A-374, GS 160A-434 GS 143-140, GS 143-141
Formal Interpretation by NCDOI YES _____ Appeal of Local Decision to NCBCC _____
Appeal of Local Decision to NCDOI _____ Appeal of NCDOI Decision to NCBCC _____

APPELANT Eric W. Williams _____ PHONE: (910) 392 - 6400 x
REPRESENTING: Odyssey Fire Protection _____
ADDRESS: 210 Old Dairy Road UNIT A1 _____
CITY: Wilmington _____ STATE: NC _____ ZIP: 28405 _____
E-MAIL: eric.williams@odysseyfire.com _____ FAX: (910) 392 - 6401 _____

North Carolina State Building Code, Volume - Section 903.3.1.2.2 Section 1027.6 Exception 3 _____

REQUEST ONE: Formal Interpretation by NCDOI Appeal of Local Decision to NCBCC
 Appeal of Local Decision to NCDOI Appeal of NCDOI Decision to NCBCC

Type or print. Include all background information as required by the referenced General Statutes and the attached policies. Attach additional supporting information.

Request for Formal Interpretation

- With Type V Residential Construction, 2013 Edition NFPA-13R Section 6.6.5 states sprinkler protection can be omitted from exterior open corridors and breezeways.

-Section 903.3.1.2.2 and Section 1027.6 Exception 3 of the 2018 NC Fire Code states sprinkler protection shall be provided on open-ended corridors and associated stairways and ramps.

1. Which code requirement supersedes?
2. Can you please tell me which NFPA code editions and NC Fire Code editions has been currently adopted by NC DOI ?

REASON:

Signature:  Date: 6/8/20 _____

APPEAL TO NCDOI/NCBCC
FORM 3/14/17



June 8, 2020

Mr. Carl Martin
Chief Code Consultant

N.C. Department of Insurance
Office of the State Fire Marshal
1202 Mall Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1202

RE: Odyssey Fire Protection – Formal Interpretation Request

Dear Mr. Martin,

Odyssey Fire Protection would like to request a formal interpretation on the requirements for Automatic Sprinkler protection in open ended, exterior corridors and breezeways of Apartment Buildings with Type V Residential construction. The 2013 edition NFPA-13R Section 6.6.5 states sprinkler protection can be omitted from exterior open corridors and breezeways. Section 903.3.1.2.2 and Section 1027.6 exception #3 of the 2018 NC Fire Code states sprinkler protection shall be provided in open-ended corridors and associated stairways and ramps. We would like to know which code requirement supersedes. We would also like to know which NFPA Code Editions and NC Fire Code Editions is currently in effect and adopted by NC D.O.I.?

Thank you for your help with these clarifications. If you would like to speak with me, I can be reached at (910)392-6400.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric W. Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Eric Williams
President / COO
Odyssey Fire Protection, Inc