

**NC Department of Insurance  
Office of the State Fire Marshal - Engineering Division  
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**Location of Facilities for Churches**

**Code:** 2012 NC Plumbing Code  
**Section:** 403.1, footnote (e)

**Date:** November 18, 2013

**Question:**

A church is adding square footage to their fellowship hall. According to Table 403.1 they would need to add fixtures. Can they utilize the facilities in the sanctuary (separate building within 25 feet) instead of adding fixtures to accommodate additional people load per Table 403.1 footnote j, assuming sanctuary can accommodate additional load?

**Answer:**

Under footnote j, plumbing fixtures will have to be increased when rearrangement of a space or area results in an increased occupant load and refers to urinals. Footnote (e) provides some special conditions for religious facilities.

Under the adhoc committee meeting minutes on our website, footnote e for table 403.1 reads

*“e. The number of fixtures provided shall be based on either the capacity of the church sanctuary or the church educational building (including fellowship halls and multiple purpose rooms), whichever is larger and within 300 feet (91.44 m).”*

This means that the educational building or fellowship hall could be a separate building with the required number of toilet fixtures within 300 feet based on the larger of the occupancies.

The plumbing fixtures are required to be available any time the buildings are in use. If the church decides to use the plumbing fixtures in the main building to satisfy the fixture count for the fellowship hall, or vice versa, an authorized church representative should provide a signed letter for file documentation to the code official stating that the required facilities will always be available and accessible to occupants when the building is in use.

**Keywords:**