



National Fire Protection Association

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Mr. Philip C. Favro
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Sending via fax to: (916) 962-1859

Dear Phil:

This replies to your September 1, 1998 facsimile transmittal requesting a clarification of provisions of the NFPA 101-1994 *Life Safety Code*® applicable to the use of horizontal sliding doors in a mercantile occupancy. You described a situation where a mercantile occupancy storage area will be separated from the exit access corridor of the mercantile occupancy. There are two exit accesses from the storage area and the exit accesses are remote from each other as required by Code. Both exit accesses involve traveling through horizontal sliding doors complying with the requirements of 5-2.1.14.

The doors in question might have taken various forms. For example, the doors might be:

- Horizontal sliding or vertical rolling security grilles or doors meeting the requirements of Exception No. 4 to 5-2.1.4.1 given that 24-2.2.2.6 specifically permits such security grilles or doors. Note that if Chapter 24 had not given specific permission to use a security grille, such use would have been prohibited because Exception No. 4 to 5-2.1.4.1 includes the conditional wording "where permitted by Chapters 8 through 29."
- Horizontal sliding doors if complying with the requirements of 5-2.1.14 as permitted by Exception No. 5 to 5-2.1.4.1. Note that no special permission from the occupancy chapter is required for such horizontal sliding doors; Chapter 5 simply permits horizontal sliding doors for all occupancies if the special provisions of 5-2.1.14 are met. This is because the requirements of 5-2.1.14 are stringent enough, on their own, to provide for safety. The 5-2.1.14-type of horizontal sliding door is not your ordinary sliding door. It definitely is not the door addressed by the security grille/door Exception No. 4 to 5-2.1.4.1.

The two forms of doors that are illustrated via the above bulleted items are meant to be treated independent of each other. For example, if a horizontal sliding or vertical rolling security grille/door is used, it does not need to meet the special provisions applicable to horizontal sliding doors as detailed in 5-2.1.14. Also, if a horizontal sliding door that meets the requirements of 5-2.1.14 is used, it does not need to meet any of the additional provisions that would have applied to a horizontal sliding or vertical rolling security grille/door.

In summary, the above discussion should lead one to the understanding that all exit accesses and means of egress from a space are permitted to involve the use of horizontal sliding doors if such horizontal sliding doors meet the provisions of 5-2.1.14.

Sincerely,

Ron Coté, P.E.
Principal Life Safety Engineer

RC/lc

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