



Flagler County

Board of County Commissioners

Building Department



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February HBA Newsletter

CODE ALERT: The Florida Building Code section 903.6 states “Any building three stories or more in height shall be equipped with an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with Section 903.1. The word shall in the code section noted does not allow for options and is a mandatory requirement. Why would I begin this newsletter with this code citation? I recently attended a meeting that was not building code related however the issue of sprinkler systems came up as to when they are required. I was amazed by some of the responses. Some of those who spoke may be perceived as in the know and would be believed without question.

The previous code citation is very clear and leaves little to interpret. Hopefully by now I have your attention and some of you are questioning the application of the code section. While the code is clear in the statement made, left unexamined could be a cost and requirement applied to your project when it is truly not a requirement. There are exceptions that follow and the code must be read completely. It is to your advantage and may save you money. Further, you are required to construct and complete your projects to the minimum code requirements even if something is missed in the plan review process. It may be discovered during the inspection phase causing delays and additional unanticipated expenses. Flagler County does not take exception to challenges and questions, however the approach and your specific research goes a long way in resolving issues quickly. Just recently a design professional called and left a phone message related to a comment I had made during a plan review and gave me a specific code section for an exception that I had overlooked. Mistake made on my part, specific code quoted, problem solved-permit issued, the process worked.

If you want to find more information on the sprinkler requirements you should begin by looking in the Florida Building Code, specifically chapter nine but do not neglect looking at the Florida Statutes, particularly 553. During your research of this one area you will see how the type of construction and occupancy classification comes into play when reviewing plans and documents. You will also see that buildings do not have to be three stories in order to be required to be sprinklered depending upon the specific circumstances. You may find that knowledge of the code saves you money since Building Departments are not infallible. By the way-be sure to read the scopes of the codes to see where the proper application and which code to use and do not forget the revisions and supplements for each of the published codes. The residential code may be governing code for your project and not the building code.

Please do not forget the new requirement (Rule 69A-60.008) that went into effect for identifying commercial, industrial, and multi unit residential buildings of 3 units or more exclusive of townhouses on December 13, 2009. The identification is required to be located per the rule prior to the issuance of Certificate of Occupancies. Further, the rule is retroactive as related to existing buildings and required to be completed by March 13, 2010. This is a Fire Department requirement to enforce and any questions about this requirement should be directed to them. The Building Department is trying to be proactive in making known to you changes that will have an impact on your projects

CENSUS time is quickly approaching. Please complete the forms once received and return them without delay. There is not enough room to explain the importance and the confidentiality of the information provided, but if you want additional information or a presentation to any organization you are a part of please contact Melissa Sheets, Flagler County Special Projects Coordinator at (386) 313-4040.

Until next month

Gary Hiatt, CBO
Flagler County