MAINTAINING EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS IN CLASSROOMS AND CORRIDORS, INCLUDING THE DISPLAY OF STUDENTS' WORK

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2007 California Fire Code Section 807.4.3.2

Over the years the Office of the State Fire Marshal has received questions for interpretation of California Fire Code, Section 807.4.3.2 regarding 'artwork" in Group E Occupancies. This section gives specific requirements as to the requirements for *"corridors"*; however, the code is silent concerning artwork in *"classrooms"*. The purpose of this bulletin is to provide artwork guidelines for both corridors and classrooms of Group E occupancies.

Corridors

Section 807.4.3.2 of the 2007 California Fire Code (CFC) is adopted by the State Fire Marshal and states: Artwork and teaching materials shall be limited on the wall of *"corridors"* to not more than 20 percent of the wall area. Educational occupancies tend to display various artwork and related educational materials on the wall of classrooms and corridors. This section limits the potential combustibility levels of artwork in critical areas of the means of egress system; therefore, decorations or artwork can cover no more than 20 percent of the "corridor" walls. The requirement applies only to corridors and not artwork within classrooms. (Ref. 2006 International Code Commentary)

Classrooms

Although the above section is silent concerning "artwork" such as paper, teaching materials, learning points and the like mounted to the wall in classrooms, the following sections may be used:

A. Title 19, California Code of Regulations, Section 1.09 states, when regulations do not specifically cover any matter pertaining to fire and life safety, recognized fire prevention engineering practices shall be employed including but not limited to the National Fire Codes and the Fire Protection Handbook published by the National Fire Protection Association. Therefore, NFPA 101, *Life Safety Code*, 2006 Edition Chapter 14 New Educational Occupancies, Section 14.7.4.3 and Chapter 15 Existing Educational Occupancies, Section 15.7.4.3 may be utilized as follows:

1. Artwork and teaching materials shall be permitted to be attached directly to the walls in accordance with the following:
   a. The artwork and teaching materials shall not exceed 20 percent of the wall area in a building that *is not* protected throughout by an approved automatic sprinkler system.

b. The artwork and teaching materials shall not exceed 50 percent of the wall area in a building that *is* protected throughout by an approved automatic sprinkler system.

Combustible Decorative Materials

Additionally, when classrooms contain combustible "decorative" materials, the provisions contained in Title 19, Division 1, Section 3.08 are to be utilized. Decorative materials are all drapes, hangings, curtains, drops and all other decorative material, including Christmas trees that would tend to increase the fire and panic hazard. These materials may also include natural and artificial decorative vegetation. These materials shall be made from a nonflammable material, or shall be treated and maintained in a flame-retardant condition by means of a flame-retardant solution or process approved by the State Fire Marshal.

Title 19 does not limit the amount of "decorative" materials; however CFC, Section 807.1.2 is specific and shall be utilized to limit the percentage of combustible decorative materials to 10 percent of the aggregate area of walls and ceilings.

For more information regarding this bulletin please contact Chief Vickie Sakamoto at (916) 445-8337 or Chief Ernie Paez at (626) 305-1908.

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