

## CHAPTER 9 FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

### SECTION 907.2.4 IFC Interpretation No. 35-06 2003 Edition Issued: 07-25-06

**907.2.4 Group F.** A manual fire alarm system shall be installed in Group F occupancies that are two or more stories in height and have an occupant load of 500 or more above or below the lowest level of exit discharge.

**Exception:** Manual fire alarm boxes are not required if the building is equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system and the notification appliances will activate upon sprinkler water flow.



**Q:** Is it the intent for the provisions of Section 907.2.4 of the *International Fire Code* to require a manual fire alarm system in a Group F occupancy where the occupant load of the first story of a multi-story building is 500 or more, and the first story is located at the lowest level of exit discharge?

**A:** No. The provisions of Section 907.2.4 do not require a manual fire alarm system in a Group F occupancy where the first story is the lowest level of exit discharge and the occupants have access to exit and exit discharge without being required to travel up or down an exit stairway. The provisions of Section 907.2.4 only apply to buildings two or more stories in height; they do not apply to a single-story building. A manual fire alarm system is required only when 500 or more occupants must travel up or down an exit stairway for no less than one story.

ICC Committee Interpretation 25-03, IFC Section 907.2.4, issued May 11, 2004 addresses how to identify the location of stories relative to the level of exit discharge, and is not intended to address or clarify the specific scoping requirements for manual fire alarm systems in Group F occupancies.

This provision for a manual fire alarm system has its origin in the *Standard Building Code*, and used the term “above or below the street floor level,” which was not defined. When the provision for a manual fire alarm system was brought forward into the working draft of the *2000 International Building Code* the term “above or below the level of exit discharge” was adopted; the original term “above or below the street floor level,” used in the *Standard Building Code* was dropped. It was not the intent of the provisions in the *Standard Building Code* to require a manual fire alarm system when the minimum occupant load is located at or on the street floor level or on the “level of exit discharge.”

In addition, “level of exit discharge” became a defined term in the *International Building Code* and no correlation was made to address the difference in the meaning and use of the two terms. As defined in the *International Building Code*, the “level of exit discharge” is: “The horizontal plane located at the point at which an exit terminates and an exit discharge begins.”

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