

CHAPTER 9 FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

SECTION 907.2.7 IFC Interpretation No. 36-06 2003 Edition Issued: 07-25-06

907.2.7 Group M. A manual fire alarm system shall be installed in Group M occupancies, other than covered mall buildings complying with Section 402, having an occupant load of 500 or more persons or more than 100 persons 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 alarm notification appliances will activate upon sprinkler water flow.



Q: Is it the intent for the provisions of Section 907.2.7 of the *International Fire Code* to require a manual fire alarm system in a single-story Group M occupancy with an occupant load of less than 500 persons?

A: No. The provisions of Section 907.2.7 do not require a manual fire alarm system in a Group M occupancy where the first story is the lowest level of exit discharge and the occupants having access to exit and exit discharge without being required to travel up or down an exit stairway does not exceed 100 persons. A manual fire alarm system is required when a Group M occupancy has 500 or more occupants, regardless of where they are located within the building.

ICC Committee Interpretation 44-03, IFC Section 907.2.7, 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 M 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.”
