

**CHAPTER 5
GENERAL BUILDING HEIGHTS AND AREAS**

**SECTION 507.2
IBC Interpretation No. 03-05
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507.2 Sprinklered, one story. The area of a one-story, Group B, F, M or S building or a one-story Group A-4 building of other than Type V construction shall not be limited when the building is provided with an automatic sprinkler system throughout in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1, and is surrounded and adjoined by public ways or yards not less than 60 feet (18 288 mm) in width.

Exceptions:

- 1. Buildings and structures of Type I and II construction for rack storage facilities which do not have access by the public shall not be limited in height provided that such buildings conform to the requirements of Section 507.1 and NFPA 231C.
- 2. The automatic sprinkler system shall not be required in areas occupied for indoor participant sports, such as tennis, skating, swimming and equestrian activities, in occupancies in Group A-4, provided that:
 - 2.1. Exit doors directly to the outside are provided for occupants of the participant sports areas, and
 - 2.2. The building is equipped with a fire alarm system with manual fire alarm boxes installed in accordance with Section 907.



Q: An unlimited area Group M building has an attached outdoor sales area. Customer services are provided in the outdoor sales area that are consistent with those provided inside the building. The sales area is not roofed, but is completely enclosed within a fence. The enclosed outdoor sales area is open to the public and is used for the storage and display of merchandise, both combustible and noncombustible.

Is the enclosed outdoor sales area permitted within the 60 feet open yard required by Section 507.2 for an unlimited area building?

A: No. The outdoor sales area, with or without the enclosing fence, functions as a Group M mercantile occupancy. The area is contiguous to and is an extension of the unlimited area Group M mercantile occupancy. The area is classified as a Group M mercantile occupancy because the use includes the display and sale of merchandise, and involves the stocks of goods, wares or merchandise incidental to the functions of the primary occupancy, and the public has access to the outdoor sales area. The outdoor sales area, as a Group M occupancy, must comply with all applicable provisions of the code.

An open yard is not normally occupied. The requirement for a public way or yard 60 feet in width is intended to maintain the space adjacent to the exterior walls of the building without any buildings, structures or outside storage.

The purpose of the 60 feet open yard or public way is to provide sufficient separation between the unlimited area building and adjacent properties to reduce the risk of fire to adjacent properties inherent with the increased fuel loads associated with unlimited area buildings.

