



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND FIRE DEPARTMENT
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TO: San Antonio Fire Department and Development Services Department Associates
FROM: Carl Wedige, Deputy Fire Chief – SAFD, Fire Marshal
DATE: June 3, 2015
FILE: Code Interpretation Manual

INTERPRETATION NUMBER: CI2015-002

TITLE: Fire Alarm Systems for “Portable” Classroom Buildings

CODE EDITION: 2015 International Fire Code (IFC) as adopted and amended by the City of San Antonio

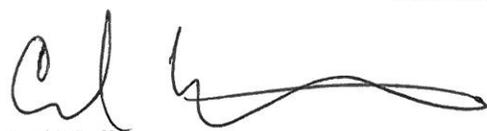
SECTION: 2015 IFC §907.2.3 GROUP E

PURPOSE: To clarify if any code compliant alternatives for required manual fire alarm systems could be applied to Group “E” portable classroom buildings.

QUESTION: As detached portable buildings are a common Group “E” educational occupancy, would the Fire Code Official approve a code alternative that would allow the increase in the occupant load threshold to require a fire alarm system?

ANSWER: Yes. While Group “E” occupancies generally require a manual fire alarm system that activates an occupant notification system to be installed when the occupant load reaches 50 occupants, detached portable classroom buildings are unique in that they are commonly relocated from campus to campus. To increase the occupant load threshold requirement for a manual fire alarm system from 50 to 60 occupants (59 occupants maximum), the following conditions apply as an acceptable code alternative:

1. Portable classroom buildings shall be equipped with single-station smoke alarms that receive their primary power from the building wiring and are equipped with battery backup. Portable classroom buildings commonly contain two or more classrooms, thus two or more smoke alarms. The required single-station smoke alarms shall be interconnected in such a manner that the activation of one alarm shall activate all of the alarms within the classroom building.
2. Portable classroom buildings shall be a minimum distance of 50 feet away from any main campus buildings and a minimum distance of 25 feet away from any other portable classroom building.
3. Portable classroom buildings shall be equipped with and maintain a wired two-way communication system (e.g. telephone system, intercom system) for emergency notification between the portable classroom building and the school administrative offices.


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