

**MINNEAPOLIS FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU POLICY #7-5
OPENINGS in STAIRSHAFTS**

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ISSUE:

Existing dwelling unit doors, doors from corridors and other openings into stair enclosures.

CODE REQUIREMENTS:

The MSBC does not allow openings or doors, other than from corridors, to open into exit stair enclosures. The MSFC requires doors that open into stair shafts that connect three (3) or more floors to have one (1) hour fire resistive rating (FRR).

Exception: Stair enclosures in multi-dwelling unit residential buildings that are two stories plus basement may remain unprotected per MSFC 299F.011 Subd. 4b.

Doors that open into an exit corridor or exit stairway (which is not required to be in a one hour rated shaft) and which serves an occupant load of ten (10) or more are to be 20 minute FRR.

Exception: Buildings protected throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system.

PROBLEM:

Some multi-dwelling unit buildings do not have corridors, the dwelling unit doors open directly into stair enclosures. Many of those doors either do not have a FRR or are rated for 20 minutes.

ACCEPTABLE MEANS of COMPLIANCE:

1. Buildings protected throughout by an approved automatic sprinkler system. (MSFC)
2. Install one (1) hour FRR frames and doors. (MSFC)
3. Buildings that have dwelling units no higher than three (3) floors above the lowest level of exit discharge 20 minute FRR or equivalent (see MFD Policy #7-1) doors are acceptable when an approved fire detection and alarm system is installed throughout the building. The detection and alarm system is to consist of smoke detectors in exitways, including smoke detectors at each floor level landing in stairs penetrated by dwelling unit doors; heat detection in storage, furnace and similar rooms; manual pull stations in each dwelling unit located at each exit door and alarm horns throughout the building. (MFD Policy)
4. Buildings that have dwelling units no higher than five (5) floors above the lowest level of exit discharge and where each dwelling unit has access to a second exit which has a separate atmosphere from the primary exit stairs, 20 minute FRR or equivalent (see MFD policy # 7-1) are acceptable when a certified fire detection and alarm system (see MFD policy # 9-11) is installed throughout the building in the locations identified in item # 3 above. (MFD Policy)

Note: Any openings from areas that require an occupancy separation are to be protected by a door of at least one (1) hour FRR.