

Information Bulletin

Determination of Requirement for a Fire Alarm System

Reference: MBC Sentence 3.2.4.1.(5)

Sentence 3.2.4.1.(5) of the Manitoba Building Code reads:

5. A fire alarm system is not required in a *building* containing not more than 4 *dwelling units* and no other *occupancy*

Commentary/Relevant Facts:

It has been debated in the past whether this Manitoba amendment is intended to be an exception to the fire alarm system requirements of 3.2.4.1.(4) or a stand-alone requirement.

The code amendment was originally placed in the 1981 Manitoba Building Code as a result of the Provincial Inquiry into the Fairlane Fire. While the original intent of this amendment was to forego the fire alarm system requirement in a building with 4 dwelling units and no other occupancy, it was also intended that a building with 4 dwelling units and any other occupancy would require a FAS.

Application of findings:

The City of Winnipeg offers the following interpretation to the above Manitoba Building Code amendment based on its original intent:

1. In a building containing 4 dwelling units and NO other occupancy – fire alarm system NOT REQUIRED.
2. In a building containing less than 4 dwelling units and another occupancy – fire alarm system NOT REQUIRED provided the other occupancy does not require a fire alarm system.
3. In a building containing more than 4 dwelling units – fire alarm system REQUIRED unless separations are provided as noted in MBC Sentence 3.2.4.2.(4).
4. In a building containing 4 dwelling units and another occupancy – fire alarm system REQUIRED.