



SCHOOL DISTRICT PALM BEACH COUNTY BUILDING DEPARTMENT CODE INTERPRETATION

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Subject Title: Door Closers on Fire Rated Doors
Applicable Code: FBC Section 715.3.7 and FFPC-NFPA Section 8.3.3 (2004 edition)
Date: August 20, 2004
Revised: April 16, 2007

Question:

Does the inactive door in a pair of doors to an electrical or mechanical room off the exit access corridor require a closer?

Answer:

After, researching the FBC, FFPC-NFPA 101, and 69A-58, the interpretation of this section is:

- Both doors are required to have self-closing devices and a positive latch. Where an astragal or projecting latch bolt prevents the inactive door from closing and latching before the active door closes and latches, a coordinating device is required. A coordinating device is not required where each door closes and latches independently of the other.
- As an alternate, the closer may be omitted from the inactive door, if the inactive door has a slide bolt top and bottom, and a sign stating "THIS DOOR TO REMAIN CLOSED AND LATCHED TOP AND BOTTOM, EXCEPT DURING THE TRANSFER OF EQUIPMENT. Sign shall have 1" high block letters and be permanently attached (Attached in way as to maintain the rating of the door) to the inactive door near the latch side 60" from finished floor to center of sign.

Comment:

Both the FBC and NFPA 101 refer to NFPA 80- for the requirements and installation of fire doors. Section 6.4.4.5 NFPA 80 allows the local AHJ to omit the closer on the inactive door of a pair of doors into a room where a pair of doors are required for movement of equipment.

Since the code is aimed toward the assumption that a fire door is normally used by general public, the allowed exception in NFPA 80 is a reasonable one. Based on the District's policy that requires authorized personnel lock the door(s) into the electrical or mechanical room when not in use, we have decided to allow the elimination of the closer on the in-active door and follow the above requirements. Just as the Fire Safety Inspectors check Fire doors into classrooms for wedges and other devices blocking the fire door in the open position, they check the doors into the mechanical room to see if they are unlocked.

Sections researched FBC 715.3 FFPC-NFPA 101 8.3, and NFPA 80 chapter 6.