



NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Division of Code Enforcement and Administration

Phone : (518) 474-4073

www.dos.state.ny.us

Fax : (518) 486-4487

E-mail: info@dos.state.ny.us

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

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Topic: Reductions of fire-resistance ratings; height/story and area increases based upon installation of an “automatic sprinkler system” BCNYS sections 302.3.3, 504.2, 506.3 & 903.3.1.1

This document provides guidance regarding reductions for fire-resistance ratings and area increases based upon installation of an “automatic sprinkler system,” in accordance with the above sections of the *Building Code of New York State*.

Section 302.3.3 exception 1 allows for a reduction by one-hour of fire-resistance rated assemblies due to the installation of a sprinkler system in most use groups. A NFPA 13R sprinkler system in a residential occupancy is adequate and in this case provides the same level of protection that NFPA 13 would provide. Specifically, NFPA 13R sends the designer back to NFPA 13 (Section 2-5.2) for areas outside the dwelling unit. Areas outside the dwelling unit, i.e. corridors, horizontal exits, stairs, is where fire-resistance rated construction occurs and is protected the same under either reference standard.

It is important to make a distinction between the area increase and height/story increase. Section 504.2 of the code allows for NFPA 13R to increase the height/story to a maximum of four stories and 60 feet. The reason for this; the main difference between NFPA 13 and NFPA 13R is the protection of the attic space. An increase in height/story changes little, if any, the area not covered by sprinkler protection. However, an area increase using NFPA 13R would create a much larger area that is not covered by sprinkler protection.

Section 506.3 allows an area increase where an “automatic sprinkler system” is installed in accordance with section 903.3.1.1. Although section 903.3.1.1 refers to sections 903.3.1.1.1, 903.3.1.2 (NFPA 13R) and 903.3.1.3 (NFPA13D), the intention of the code is to only allow for the use of NFPA 13 for the area increase. The exempt locations in section 903.3.1.1.1 are allowed, because that section is a subsection of 903.3.1.1.

Ronald E. Piester, R.A., Director
Division of Code Enforcement and Administration