

## Code Update: CORRIDOR CONTINUITY

One of the most missed and misunderstood code sections is that of Section 1018.6 CORRIDOR CONTINUITY. (Reference 2012 IBC). *In short, this section requires smoke protection at the elevator hoistway openings for all “R & I1” occupancies, even if not a high rise construction.* Okay, I now hear a collective howl in the audience....“Wait! What? We have been designing hotels, condos, dormitories and assisted living facilities for years that are under 75ft elevation with no smoke protection at the elevators and we thought the elevator lobby provision only applied to high rise construction. Are you telling me this is now a requirement?” No. What I’m telling you is that it has always been a requirement since the adoption of the 2012 IBC and often missed because of the indirect way the code is often written. I quote excerpts from the 2012 INTERNATIONAL CODE COMMENTARY (Ref MEANS OF EGRESS 10-127);

*“Another consideration is corridor continuity at an elevator opening. When an elevator opens into a corridor that is required to be of fire-resistance-rated construction, the opening between the elevator shaft and the corridor must be protected to meet not only the shaft’s fire protection rating but also the additional smoke and draft protection requirements necessary to limit the spread of smoke into the corridor.”...“The provisions in Section 713.14 waiving the requirements for an elevator lobby do not waive the corridor opening protection requirements....”*

The commentary continues with prescriptive solutions and diagrams of how to accomplish the corridor protection such as adding a lobby design or an additional door meeting a UL-1784 smoke rating directly in front of the elevator hoistway opening.

Frankly, it was an easy section to miss not only by designers and by the local AHJ. The ICC was asked for clarification a number of times for the 2012 and 2015 code cycle and responded that the code was clear enough and an additional interpretation was not required. However, this code requirement was continued to be misinterpreted or completely missed. Finally in 2018 the ICC added the code change, which was really a further clarification, and included a new section under the elevator section 3006.2.1 that states: **3006.2.1 Rated Corridors. Where rated corridors are required to be fire resistance rated in accordance with Section 1020.1, elevator hoistway openings shall be protected in accordance with Section 3006.3.** and in the “Reasoning Section” of the code change it was written; **...it is within the intent to require protection of elevator hoistway openings based in the requirement for rated corridor construction. Therefore, this requirement needs to be specifically clarified within section 3006 to avoid the requirement being missed. A new section 3006.2.1 has been written to clarify that intent. Also, to further clarify this intent a Section 1020.1.1 has been provided as a pointer to these specific lobby requirements.**

As further clarification the code specifically calls out Occupancy Types requirements for sprinklered buildings;

**TABLE 1018.1  
CORRIDOR FIRE-RESISTANCE RATING**

OCCUPANCY	OCCUPANT LOAD SERVED BY CORRIDOR	REQUIRED FIRE-RESISTANCE RATING (hours)	
		Without sprinkler system	With sprinkler system <sup>c</sup>
H-1, H-2, H-3	All	Not Permitted	1
H-4, H-5	Greater than 30	Not Permitted	1
A, B, E, F, M, S, U	Greater than 30	1	0
<b>R</b>	<b>Greater than 10</b>	<b>Not Permitted</b>	<b>0.5</b>
I-2 <sup>a</sup> , I-4	All	Not Permitted	0
<b>I-1, I-3</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Not Permitted</b>	<b>1<sup>b</sup></b>

Why is this so important to the ICC that they added additional clarifications and pointers so it is not missed any longer? The code has always required a higher level of protection for “R & I1” occupancies because the occupants are at a higher level of risk. An R and I1 occupancy has occupants of all ages and generally sleep or spend the night resulting in a higher level of vulnerability and thus the higher level protection required above most other occupancy types.

Hopefully this provides you with an interesting code update and you can rest better at night in your hotel or condo or a parent in an assisted living facility knowing that your means of egress, corridor continuity, is protecting you and your designs as you sleep. For a 1 hr HSW learning unit and deeper discovery into codes and code changes including CORRIDOR CONTINUITY please contact the author at [gmays@mmmstlkc.com](mailto:gmays@mmmstlkc.com)

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