



Government of the District of Columbia
Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

Interpretation of Regulations Document

Elevator Recall for Firefighter Service

2018-001

References:

- NFPA 72 National Fire Alarm Code 2002; Section 6.15.3 and Section 21.3
- Changes to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 72) National Fire Alarm Code, 2002 Edition, Section 6.15.3 Elevator Recall for Fire Fighters' Service, effective during the prior code year, has produced, for the current code year, the NFPA 72, 2010 Edition Section 21.3.
- 2002 NFPA 72 Sect.6.15.3.3 – Unless otherwise required by the authority having jurisdiction, only the elevator lobby, elevator hoistway, and the elevator machine room smoke detectors or other automatic fire detection as permitted by 6.15.3.7 shall be used to recall elevator for fire fighters' service.
- 2002 NFPA 72 Sect. 6.15.3.7 – If ambient conditions prohibit installation of automatic smoke detection, other automatic fire detection shall be permitted.
- 2010 NFPA 72 Sect. 21.3.3 - Unless otherwise required by the authority having jurisdiction, only the elevator lobby, elevator hoistway, and the elevator machine room smoke detectors or other automatic fire detection as permitted by 21.3.7, **and initiating devices used to initiate shutdown of elevator power in accordance with Section 21.4**, shall be used to recall elevator for fire fighters' service.
- 2010 NFPA 72 Sect. 21.3.7 - If ambient conditions prohibit installation of automatic smoke detection, other automatic fire detection shall be permitted.
- 2010 NFPA 72 Sect. 21.4 – Elevator Shutdown

The 2010 NFPA 72 Section 21.3.3 has introduced the requirement for heat detectors used to initiate shutdown of elevator power, to also recall elevators for fire fighters' service. This change is inherently technically challenging and impractical. The controlling variables are so numerous that a design could fail to operate as intended due to minute changes to sprinkler water pressure, ambient temperature, time, fire growth rate and physical state of the elevator and sensitivities of the system. The difficulty envisaged to execute this code change makes it appear to be a mistaken change. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the 2013 NFPA 72, about to be adopted by the DC Construction Codes, has removed this requirement. On the basis of the facts presented above, it will be permitted to approve a code modification to the 2010 NFPA 72 Sect 21.3.3 to omit the need for initiating devices used to shut down elevator power, to also be used to recall elevator for fire fighters' service.

In cases where Elevator Inspectors are conducting elevator inspections related to fire fighters' service, the inspection shall not include the need for power shutdown heat detectors to recall elevators. Inspectors shall conduct the inspections and advise the applicants of the need for the code modification, if one is not presented. This will be adequate until the new edition of NFPA 72 is adopted by reference in future adopted codes for D.C. In the end, if the inspections are otherwise successful, conditional approvals are to be granted, with the condition lifted with proof of the approval of the code modification.

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