

**Typical Issues Associated with Converting
Older Houses to Commercial Occupancies
Florida Fire Prevention Code – Fifth Edition**

Floor Separation – With very few exceptions, floors separating stories in a building must be constructed as a smoke barrier (NFPA 101-8.6.1). This requires the barrier to prevent the passage of smoke between floors and requires that any penetrations (doors, stairs, ducts, pipes, etc.) be protected to maintain integrity of barrier.

Number of Exits – With few exceptions, two separate means of egress (exits) are required from each story, mezzanine, balcony, or portion thereof (NFPA 101-7.4.1.1). A single means of egress may be permitted in certain circumstances, generally on a single story, based on arrangement and total travel distance. Generally, at least one of the two required exits must lead directly to the building exterior without requiring travel through another story.

Protection of Stairs - With very few exceptions, stairs serving as an exit or exit component must be enclosed to protect them from smoke, heat and flame (NFPA 101-7.2.2.5.1.1). Barriers, walls, doors, windows and other penetrations must generally maintain a minimum 1-hour fire resistance rating.

Fire Sprinkler System – The installation of an Automatic Fire Sprinkler System is not generally required except in assembly and residential occupancies or in large buildings. The installation of a Fire Sprinkler System may, however, provide some relief or adjustment of other above-referenced requirements.

Fire Alarm System - The installation of a Fire Alarm System is not generally required except in assembly or residential occupancies or large buildings.

Door Lock and Latches – Locks cannot require a key, tool or special knowledge to open from egress side (NFPA 101-7.2.1.5.3). The releasing mechanism must open a door leaf with no more than one releasing operation (NFPA 101-7.2.1.5.10.2).

EXIT Signs and Emergency Lighting – Lighted EXIT signs with emergency backup are usually required to clearly direct occupants to exits. Emergency Lighting is not generally required except in assembly and residential occupancies or in large buildings.

Fire Extinguishers – A minimum of one 2A10BC Fire Extinguisher, validated by a state licensed Fire Extinguisher Contractor and mounted per NFPA 10, is required on each story, for each 3,000 square feet of floor area, and within 75 feet of travel from all areas.

Address Marking – Address must be posted with minimum six inch (6”) numerals on contrasting background, visible day or night from street on which building is addressed.