

DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS CODE BULLETIN OF INFORMATION No. F-9702 R1		CODE OF GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA <hr/> TITLE 4 — BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPANCY CODE
SUBJECT OF BULLETIN: MANUAL FIRE ALARM BOXES IN MULTIPLE-FAMILY DWELLINGS (R-2 USE GROUP)		REFERENCE CODE SECTION(S): F-4603.6 B-907.4.2
ISSUED BY		
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TITLES: Director of Planning and Code Development, Dept. of Licenses and Inspections Chief, Fire Code Unit, Fire Department		PAGE 1 OF 1

ISSUE:

There is a need to reaffirm several decisions that have been made in the past for the sake of uniformity and practicality in application of the *Philadelphia Fire Prevention Code* and the *Philadelphia Building Code* as they apply to the installation of manual fire alarm boxes (pull stations / break glass stations) in multiple-family dwellings. Note that these are not new decisions or changes, but a re-statement (and perhaps clarification) of previous direction.

The main rationale for these practical applications is the upgrade of the automatic fire alarm provisions in multiple-family dwellings required by the *Philadelphia Fire Prevention Code*, effective January 1, 1995. In the event that an occupant of an apartment of fire origin chooses to evacuate by other than the common exit (and therefor would not activate the manual fire alarm), the common exit is protected by the early warning of the common area smoke detection system. In fact, the other occupants in the building are no worse off than if the occupant in the apartment of fire origin were not at home and therefor not available to activate the fire alarm box in the first place. The life safety situation for all the occupants is significantly increased by the common area smoke detection system and the electrically powered single-station smoke detectors within the units.

DIRECTION:

The subject sections of the *Philadelphia Building Construction and Occupancy Code* shall be applied as follows:

1. Where ground floor apartments have a means of egress through the common stair and a separate, independent door to the outside, a fire alarm box will not be required at the independent door in the apartment. Boxes will only be required within the apartment where the apartment does not have access to the common exit.
2. Similarly, where ground floor apartments have patio doors to the outside (common to garden-type apartments), and have a means of egress to the common exit, fire alarm boxes will not be required at the patio doors in the apartments. Boxes will only be required within the apartment where the apartment does not have access to the common exit.
3. Where a building meets the criteria for a single exit (maximum three stories, with a maximum net occupiable floor area on the third floor of 1200 square feet), but has a fire escape, fire alarm boxes will not be required at the exit to the fire escape if such access is from inside the apartments. Boxes will only be required within the apartment where the apartment does not have access to the common exit.

