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| DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS CODE BULLETIN OF INFORMATION No. F-0102 | | CODE OF GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA <hr/> TITLE 4 — BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPANCY CODE |
| SUBJECT OF BULLETIN: EXISTING R-2 RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCIES, HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS, FIRE SUPPRESSION — ACCESSORY SPACES | | REFERENCE CODE SECTION(S): F-503.4(5) |
| ISSUED BY | | ISSUE DATE August 15, 2001 |
| NAME: David L. Wismer, P.E., C.B.O. | SIGNATURE: | |
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BACKGROUND:

In 1981, the first ordinance was passed in the City of Philadelphia that directly addressed the fire safety of high-rise buildings. This revision to the Fire Code contained the requirement to install automatic sprinklers in certain spaces in high-rise buildings. One set of spaces included non-residential occupancies below residential occupancies.

Under an official interpretation of the Department of Licenses and Inspections issued October 5, 1982, a residential occupancy was clarified to include spaces incidental to the residential use such as, laundry rooms, sitting rooms, lounges, and other such spaces serving the residential occupancy. "Other such spaces" was subsequently deemed to include, but not be limited to lobbies and exercise rooms serving the residential use only, and rental offices for the units in that building.

In 1991, a new high-rise ordinance was passed under the Fire Code. This ordinance required automatic sprinklers throughout all high-rise buildings with the exception of R-2 (multiple-family) occupancies. The 1982 interpretation remained in effect to define what should be included in the R-2 exception.

The *Building Construction and Occupancy Code* was subsequently written and became effective on September 15, 1997. The assumption was made that the issues regarding the location of sprinklers had all been resolved, since the compliance plan to comply with the 1991 high-rise requirements had to be submitted by December 1992 and the permit for the last phase of sprinklers had to be issued by December 1998. As a result, when the formal interpretations were updated or issued for the 1997 codes, the above referenced interpretations were not included.

ISSUE:

Recent inspections have revealed some outstanding sprinkler issues in high-rise residential buildings. A number of these involve spaces that are incidental to or serve the apartment or condominium use within the buildings.

DIRECTION:

Inspectors should continue to be guided by the former interpretations referenced above. Those spaces that are not listed in Item #5 of Fire Prevention Code Section F-503.4 and that serve the R-2 Occupancy exclusively, should be considered a part of the R-2 Occupancy and be exempted from the requirement to install sprinklers retroactively. To reiterate, these spaces must serve only the residential use within the subject building and include: laundry rooms, sitting rooms, lounges, exercise rooms, lobbies, rental offices, etc.