## HITF ITEMS ISSUED DECEMBER 2006

## HITF INTERPRETATION DECEMBER 2006 NO. 1

NFPA DOCUMENT NO: NFPA 101 2000 Edition

SUBJECT/BACKGROUND: Allowable gaps in certain corridor doors.

The following questions apply to requirements in the 2000 Life Safety Code for corridor doors other than those in required enclosures of vertical openings, exits, or hazardous areas, and other than those in smoke barriers.

**Question 1:** Does the Life Safety Code limit the gap between the edge of a corridor door and the door frame to 1/8-inch?

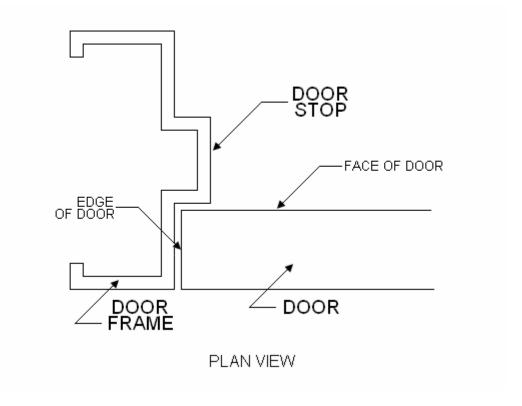
**Answer**: No. However, because the door stop functions as an astragal, the gap between the edge of a corridor door and the door frame shall not be greater than the depth of the door stop.

**Question 2:** Does the Life Safety Code limit the gap between the face of a corridor door and the door stop to 1/8-inch?

Answer: No. The Code does not specify a maximum gap dimension and specifically states that corridor doors are not required to comply with NFPA 80, Standard for Fire Doors and Fire Windows. The Code goes on to state that corridor doors should be relatively smoke tight. Due to the lack of specific dimensions for door gaps and the subjective language in the Code, the following guidance is deemed appropriate. In a smoke compartment that is not fully sprinklered, a gap not exceeding 1/4-inch between the face of a corridor door and the door stop should be permitted, provided that the door latch mechanism is functioning. In a smoke compartment that is fully sprinklered, a gap not exceeding ½-inch between the face of a corridor door and the door stop should be permitted, provided that the door latch mechanism is functioning. In a smoke compartment that is not fully sprinklered, to achieve a better fit the thickness of a 1¾-inch thick corridor door should be permitted to be reduced by removing not more than ¼-inch from the face of the door. In a smoke compartment that is fully sprinklered, the Code does not impose construction requirements on a corridor door, provided that it resists the passage of smoke.

**Question 3:** Does the Life Safety Code limit the gap between the meeting edges of the leaves of a two-leaf corridor door to 1/8-inch?

**Answer:** No. The gap is permitted to exceed 1/8-inch provided that the meeting edges of the leaves are equipped with an astragal, a rabbet, or a bevel.



## HITF INTERPRETATION DECEMBER 2006 NO. 2

NFPA DOCUMENT NO: NFPA 101 2000 Edition

SUBJECT/BACKGROUND: Smoking Policies.

Many nursing homes are establishing no smoking policies. This results in both staff and patients who want to smoke to smoke outside. Life safety surveyors are now requiring that the outside smoking areas comply with Sections 18 & 19.7.4 of the 2000 *Life Safety Code*. Specifically, the surveyors are requiring that the outside smoking areas be provided with noncombustible ashtrays of safe design and that metal containers with self closing covers be readily available to each outside smoking area.

**Question 1:** Do the requirements of Sections 18 & 19.7.4 apply to designated smoking areas outside the building?

Answer: YES.

**Question 2:** If the answer to Question #1 is yes, is there a distance away from the building in which the requirements of Sections 18 & 19.7.4 would not apply?

Answer: NO.

## **HITF INTERPRETATION DECEMBER 2006 NO. 3**

NFPA DOCUMENT NO: NFPA 101 2000 Edition

SUBJECT/BACKGROUND: Staff Drills.

Life safety surveyors are now requiring that every staff member of a nursing home participate in a minimum of 4 fire drills per year and provide written documentation to verify that each staff member has participated in 4 drills. Although this may sound like a simple and reasonable requirement, not all staff members are present when their shift has a drill. Staff members may be on vacation, sick, in training outside the facility, etc. It is not practical to conduct 2 to 3 drills per quarter per shift to insure that every staff member participates in 4 drills per year. The alternative is to have staff, which missed a drill on their shift, to participate in a drill on another shift. This would require paying overtime to these staff members. It is sometimes very difficult to get staff to come in during other shifts, particularly if they have second jobs or dependent children and I haven't even looked into the union issues it might create.

**Question:** Does the 2000 *Life Safety Code* require in Sections 18 & 19.7.1.2 that all staff members of a health care facility participate in 4 quarterly fire drills per year?

Answer: NO.