



City of Atlanta  
Office of Buildings

CODE INTERPRETATIONS

INTERPRETATION # 2016-IBC-0001

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 21, 2016

REVISION DATE: March 11, 2018

PAGE # 1 of 3 AUTHOR: Doug Maples, CBO, MSM

REVISION #: 001

## CODE INTERPRETATION: Lower Occupant Load Assembly Occupancies

### 1. SCOPE / PURPOSE

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- 1.1. The purpose of the Code Interpretation is to reconcile the conflict between the 2012 Life Safety Code and the 2012 International Building Code for Assembly occupancies with a design occupant load of less than 50 (fifty) persons.
- 1.2. In addition, the Code Interpretation is meant to provide consistency between the City of Atlanta Office of Building staff and the registered design professionals that provide construction documents to the City of Atlanta.

### 2. ADOPTED CODE

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- 2.1. **2012 Life Safety Code Section 3.3.188.2 Assembly Occupancy.** An occupancy (1) used for a gathering of 50 or more persons for deliberation, worship, entertainment, eating, drinking, amusement, awaiting transportation, or similar uses; or (2) used as a special amusement building, regardless of occupant load.
- 2.2. **2012 International Building Code Section 303.1.1 Small buildings and tenant spaces.** A building or tenant space used for assembly purposes with an *occupant load* of less than 50 persons shall be classified as a Group B occupancy.

### 3. BACKGROUND

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- 3.1. The State of Georgia has adopted the 2012 Life Safety Code as the primary code for determining occupancy types, with the 2012 International Building Code as an approved supplemental code for providing additional clarification pursuant to Georgia State Fire Marshal Rules and Regulations 120-3-3.04 (3)(a)(10) Table 102.13. (2012 International Building Code – State of Georgia Amendments: Revised January 1, 2014)
- 3.2. Occupancies with a design occupant load of 50 (fifty) or more for the purposes of deliberation, worship, entertainment, eating, drinking, amusement, awaiting transportation, or similar uses of are classified as an Assembly occupancy within the 2012 Life Safety Code Section 3.3.188.2.
- 3.3. 2012 International Building Code Section 303.1.1 recognizes that assembly occupancies with a lower design occupant load of less than 50 (fifty) pose a reduced life safety hazard to the occupants and classifies these buildings or tenant spaces as Group B occupancies.
- 3.4. Based on 2012 Life Safety Code Section A3.3.188.2, which in part states:  
*Restaurants and drinking establishments with an occupant load of fewer than 50 persons should be classified as mercantile occupancies.*

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**3.5.** 2012 Life Safety Code Section A3.3.188.2 is found within Annex A. The preface to this section of the Life Safety Code reads as follows:

*This annex contains explanatory material, numbered to correspond with the applicable text paragraphs.*

However, the annex is meant to help aid in understanding the intent of the Life Safety Code. This provides professionals and code officials in sight into the thought process of the author of LSC Section 3.3.188.2. In addition, the Georgia State Fire Marshal Rules and Regulations 120-3-3 reference sections from the Annex in the Rules frequently.

**3.6.** Registered design professionals preparing construction documents for the City of Atlanta are normally aware of the conflicts between the 2012 Life Safety Code and the 2012 International Building Code. The Georgia State Fire Marshal Rules and Regulations 120-3-3.04(3)(a)(10) Table 102.13 stipulates the occupancy type states the LSC is primary and the IBC is supplemental.

*2012 International Plumbing Code 403.2 Separate facilities. Where plumbing fixtures are required, separate facilities shall be provided for each sex.*

*Exceptions:*

- 1. Separate facilities shall not be required for dwelling units and sleeping units.*
- 2. Separate facilities shall not be required in structures or tenant spaces with a total occupant load, including both employees and customers, of 15 or fewer.*
- 3. Separate facilities shall not be required in mercantile occupancies in which the maximum occupant load is 100 or fewer.*

#### **4. INTREPRETATION / CLARIFICATION**

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**4.1.** The plumbing fixtures in a suite/unit/space with limited space less than 750 square feet is likely to have minimal space for the equipment in occupancy types such as worship, entertainment, eating, drinking, amusement, awaiting transportation as indicated in the Life Safety Code Section 3.3.188.2. 2012 Life Safety Code is the primary for determining occupancy types with a design occupant load of less than 50 (fifty).

**4.2.** Based on the use of the 2012 Life Safety Code as the primary adopted code for determining occupancy types, with the 2012 International Building Code as the State of Georgia recognized supplemental code. It is determined that Assembly occupancies with a design occupant load of less than 50 (fifty) persons met the requirements of a Group M occupancy, as allowed in the intent of the 2012 Life Safety Code.

**4.3.** The Assembly occupancies with a design occupant load of less than 50 (fifty) persons shall meet the requirements of the adopted codes for a Group M occupancy.



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**5. *SUMMATION***

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- 5.1** Assembly occupancies with a design occupant load of less than 50 (fifty) persons, as determined by 2012 Life Safety Code Section 7.3.1.2 shall be classified as Group M occupancies per 2012 Life Safety Code.
- 5.2** This Group M occupancy determination shall extend to all adopted code that rely on occupancy type for the application of additional requirements.