

Minnesota State Department of Public Safety



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State Fire Marshal Division

444 Cedar Street, Suite 145, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-5145
Phone: 651/215-0500 FAX: 651/215-0525 TTY: 651/282/6555
Internet: <http://www.fire.state.mn.us>.

Interpretation – Classification of Sunday School – Fire Marshal Code Advisory Panel # 03-018-I:

An interpretation request was presented to the August, 2003 meeting of the Fire Marshal Code Advisory Panel (FMCAP) concerning the occupancy classification for Sunday school use. The FMCAP reviewed the code definitions from the past and present state fire code. They also discussed the e-mail interpretation that had been received from the State Building Codes and Standards Division indicating their interpretation of Sunday school as a Group E occupancy.

The FMCAP determined that most Sunday school use was incidental to the main assembly use of most churches. The Minnesota State Fire Code (MSFC) definition states that Group E occupancies must be used a minimum of four hours in any day or 12 hours in the week. The FMCAP did not feel that most churches operated their Sunday school programs in excess of these hours.

The FMCAP recognize that this issue and major implications for enforcement throughout the state. If Sunday school use were classified as a Group E occupancy, there would be requirements for a fire alarm system and level of exit discharge egress for younger occupants.