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Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections Code Bulletin – Interpretation

Applicable Code Section(s): 2009 IBC 3412.6.8	Interpretation#: IBC3412.6.8-08.28.2017
Subject: Automatic fire detection compliance	BCO: Erik Harless Date: August 28, 2017

Questions:

Are smoke alarms, that is single- and multiple- station smoke and heat alarms acceptable for compliance with IBC Section 3412.6.8 or IEBC 1301.6.8?

What is the extent of smoke detection required for compliance with category (e) of IBC Section 3412.6.8 or IEBC 1301.6.8?

Interpretation:

The term smoke detector is not interchangeable with the term smoke alarm, in accordance with International Building Code 2009 and NFPA 72. *Smoke alarms* are single- or multi- station devices that are tested and listed in accordance with UL 217. It is worth noting that single or multiple station smoke alarms are required in certain existing occupancies in accordance with the International Fire Code (IFC) and the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) regardless of work occurring or of the existence of a building's fire alarm system. Which is to say, that for certain occupancies, smoke alarms are not optional.

Smoke detectors, however, are specific initiating devices of a monitored fire alarm system.

IBC 3412.6.8 / IEBC 1301.6.8 refer to the installation of *smoke detectors*. As such, smoke alarms are not an acceptable substitute for smoke detectors – as components of a monitored fire alarm system – referenced under these Sections.

Extent of coverage:

Compliance with category (e) requires that smoke detectors be “installed throughout the floor area”.

It is the interpretation that compliance with category (e) requires smoke detector initiating devices of a monitored fire alarm system per NFPA 72 in all areas being assessed by the Compliance Alternative / Performance Methods (IBC 3412 IEBC Chapter 13). Total (complete) coverage is therefore required throughout, in compliance with NFPA 72 Section 5.5.2.1.