

**CHANGE TYPE:** Modification

**CHANGE SUMMARY:** Smoke control is now required in atriums in Group I-2 occupancies, as well as those in Group I-1 occupancies classified as Condition 2, that connect two stories.

**2015 CODE: 404.5 Smoke Control.** A smoke control system shall be installed in accordance with Section 909.

**Exception:** In other than Group I-2, and Group I-1, Condition 2, smoke control is not required for atriums that connect only two stories.

**CHANGE SIGNIFICANCE:** A major component of the life-safety system for an atrium is the required smoke control system. The control of any smoke that may be present in the atrium is important in maintaining a tenable environment for those occupants who may enter the atrium during means-of-egress travel. An exception had previously eliminated the requirement for smoke control in those atriums that connect only two stories. The exception has now been modified in a manner where it no longer applies to atriums in Group I-2 occupancies, as well as those Group I-1 occupancies classified as Condition 2.

Although the concept of omitting smoke control protection for two-story atriums is consistent with other provisions throughout the code that provide allowances for two-story conditions, it has now been deemed as unacceptable in specific healthcare applications. The exposure of care recipients who are incapable of self-preservation to a large unprotected vertical opening condition is seen as an unacceptable risk. The restriction also provides consistency with federal requirements that would not allow such an opening without either smoke control or passive separation. The exception is applicable to Group I-1, Condition 2 occupancies, as well as those uses classified as Group I-2. Persons in buildings classified in one of these groups are expected to need some degree of assistance from others in order to respond effectively to an emergency situation. This need for assistance often results in delayed relocation or evacuation for the care recipients, justifying the requirement for smoke control where two-story atriums occur in these two types of institutional occupancies.

## 404.5, Exception

### Atrium Smoke Control in Group I Occupancies



Group I-2, Condition 2 hospital

© International Code Council



This excerpt is taken from *Significant Changes to the International Building Code®*, 2015 Edition.

Significant Changes publications take you directly to the most important changes that impact projects. Key changes are identified then followed by in-depth discussion of how the change affects real-world application. Photos, tables and illustrations are included to further clarify application. Available for the IBC, IRC, IFC and IPC/IMC/IFGC, the Significant Changes publications are very useful training and review tools for transitioning to a new code edition.