

**CHANGE TYPE:** Addition

**CHANGE SUMMARY:** Where small Group A fire areas share a common means of egress, the occupant load of the spaces must now be added together to determine if a sprinkler system is required.

**2015 CODE:** **903.2.1.7 Multiple Fire Areas.** An automatic sprinkler system shall be provided where multiple fire areas of Group A-1, A-2, A-3 or A-4 occupancies share exit or exit access components and the combined occupant load of these fire areas is 300 or more.

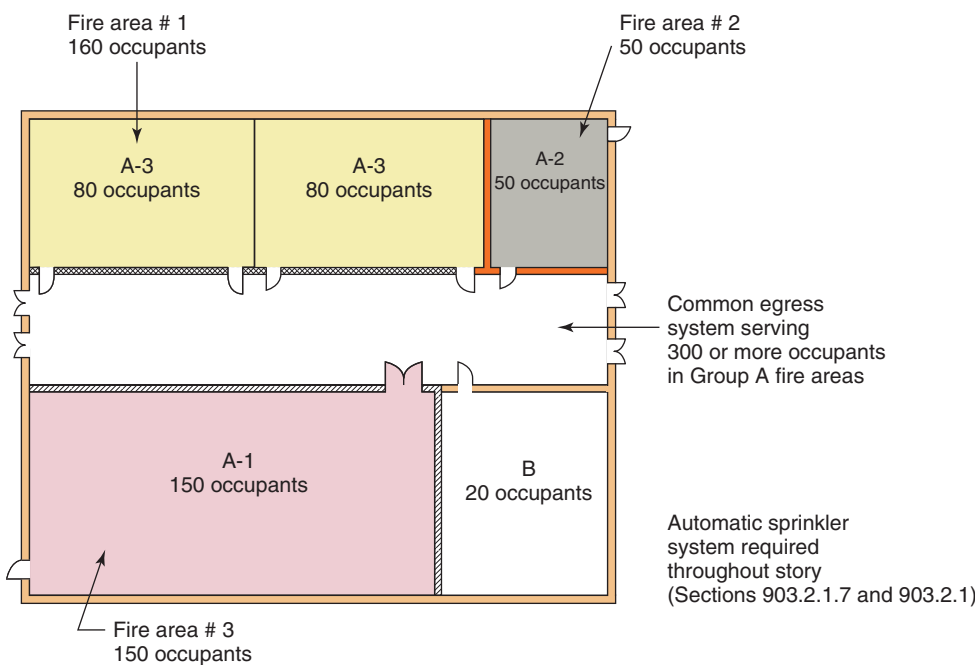
**CHANGE SIGNIFICANCE:** Through the creation of limited-size fire areas, it has historically been possible to eliminate the requirement for sprinklers in Group A occupancies. However, where the fire areas do not have individual egress systems but rather require the occupants to travel through a common or shared egress system serving 300 or more persons, the code now requires the building to be sprinklered in accordance with Section 903.2.1.

The option of compartmentalizing Group A occupancies into separate fire areas simply to avoid the sprinkler requirement is no longer available if the fire areas share a common egress system and the combined occupant load of the fire areas meets or exceeds the limitations typically found in the subsections of Section 903.2.1 for the individual Group A occupancies. It is important that code users notice all three of the triggers for this requirement, which are (1) multiple fire areas of Group A-1, A-2, A-3 or A-4 occupancies; (2) the fire areas share exit or exit access components; and (3) the combined occupant load of the fire areas is 300 or more. If any one of these conditions does not occur, then Section 903.2.1.7 is not applicable. For example, the new provision is not applicable (a) if there is only a

**903.2.1.7 continues**

# 903.2.1.7

## Multiple Fire Areas



© International Code Council

Group A fire areas with shared egress components

**903.2.1.7** *continued*

single Group A fire area and the other fire areas are of different occupancy groups, or (b) if the Group A fire areas have separate or independent egress systems, or (c) if the aggregate occupant load of the assembly fire areas is less than 300. The concern is that any fire event near or within the common egress system has the same hazard potential whether the egress system serves 300 occupants from one fire area or from three separate fire areas having 100 occupants each.