



Fire Hose Cabinets on Stage

The International Building Code and The Life Safety Code both require a wet stand pipe with fire hose and cabinets on each side of every stage greater than 1,000 square feet. This equipment is intended for occupant use, not for use by the fire service, a distinction that is not clear and another code requirement that is unique to stages.

It's important to note that generally the fire service believes that occupants should evacuate, and never stay to fight a fire. There is little or no record of this feature being used in the event of a fire on stage. Based on the lack of use over the years, it would not be surprising if in the next ten years or so this requirement was deleted from the codes.

None the less hose cabinets are required now, and most high school stages are required to be equipped with them. They should be inspected and maintained as regularly as fire extinguishers. Staff that regularly supervises the stage should be trained in the use of the equipment.

We recommend the latest requirements, such as contained in the Life Safety Code, be used as a guide since the requirements have changed in recent years to coordinate with revisions to the standards for standpipes. For reference, the Life Safety Code states:

12.4.5.12.2 Hose connections shall be in accordance with NFPA 13, Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems, unless Class II or Class III standpipes in accordance with NFPA 14, Standard for the Installation of Standpipe and Hose Systems, are used.

The International Building Code states:

905.3.4 Stages. Stages greater than 1,000 square feet in area (93m²) shall be equipped with a Class III wet standpipe system with 1 1/2-inch and 2 1/2-inch (38 mm and 64 mm) hose connections on each side of the stage.

Exception: Where the building or area is equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system, a 1 1/2-inch (38 mm) hose connection shall be installed in accordance with NFPA 13 or in accordance with NFPA 14 for Class II or III standpipes.

905.3.4.1 Hose and cabinet. The 1 1/2-inch (38 mm) hose connections shall be equipped with sufficient lengths of 1 1/2-inch (38 mm) hose to provide fire protection for the stage area. Hose connections shall be equipped with an approved adjustable fog nozzle and be mounted in a cabinet or on a rack.

Where possible we recommend these hose cabinets be installed as recessed cabinets. Like everything else backstage, where space is at a premium, finding good locations that meet the requirements can be a challenge. Consider the locations of critical rigging equipment, curtains and other equipment when locating these cabinets. Often a space adjacent to a door is most likely to remain clear and unobstructed.

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