STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. 13-Sept01

CODE: 2012 International Fire Code

SECTION: IFC 903.2.3 Group E. Exception 1 & 2

QUESTION 1: IFC 903.2.3 Exception #1 allows an exception for fire sprinklers

for "clusters" of portable classrooms when the cluster is equal to or less than 5,000 square feet. Is it the intent of this code section to aggregate any portable classrooms that are not separated by the minimum separation requirements of the IBC,

and the resulting square footage be used to calculate whether

fire sprinklers are required?

ANSWER 1 Yes.

QUESTION 2: Is a cluster then defined as any combination of portable

classrooms that are not separated by the minimum separation

required by the IBC?

ANSWER 2: Yes.

QUESTION 3: Is the space between the portable classrooms included in the area calculation, or just the actual area of each portable classroom?

ANSWER 3: Exception 1 sets the maximum aggregate area of any

cluster of portables at 5000 square feet; the reference is to the floor area of the portable and does not include the

space between the portables.

QUESTION 4: Would any portable classroom (or cluster of classrooms) that is

provided with the minimum separation distance required in the IBC not be included in an aggregate calculation of square footage to determine whether fire sprinklers are required?

ANSWER 4: No, the 5000 square foot maximum threshold is calculated for any cluster of portables; any portable with the required separation would not be counted in the aggregate area.

QUESTION 5: A question has risen concerning the intent to include portable classrooms in the application of exception #2, and whether the occupant load is for the building or each classroom. Are portable classrooms with an occupant load of greater than 50 required to have fire sprinklers?

ANSWER 5: Yes.

QUESTION 6: Does exception #2 apply to portable classroom buildings?

ANSWER 6: No. Exception #1 is specific to portables and requires both that the occupant load (for each portable) is 50 or less, as in exception #2, and that a cluster of portables does not exceed 5000 square feet.

QUESTION 7: Is the occupant load of individual classrooms aggregated within one portable building?

ANSWER 7: For a situation in which more than one portable classroom is connected together, the separation of the resulting construction can be accomplished using fire barriers (as allowed per IFC 901.4.3) to reduce the occupant loads so that fire sprinklers are not required. It should be noted that this creates a "cluster" in itself so that the total of all of the area in one cluster cannot exceed 5,000 square feet with fire sprinklers being required.

SUPERSEDES: None

REQUESTED BY: Redmond Fire Department