

## **Mixed Occupancy:**

One of the most critical decisions made by fire protection professionals is determining which occupancy classifications are applicable to the building. This determination is not only made during the original design and construction of the building but also several times during the lifetime of the building each and every time the building is sold, reopened or the occupancy changes.

This determination can be extremely complex especially in cases where there are multiple occupancies that cannot be separated. An auditorium in a school, a dormitory in a college, a childcare center in a hospital are examples.

When you have a mixed occupancy in a building, two options exist:

### **FIRE-RATED CONSTRUCTION**

Ideally these different occupancy classifications would be separated by some level of fire-rated construction that is relative to the associated risks. In these cases, each occupancy would be treated as it's own building and would be inspected separately with regards to the use.

### **NON-SEPARATED OCCUPANCY**

In most cases the fire-rated separation does not exist and fire protection professionals must determine which codes are going to be required. The following fire codes have slightly different requirements as to how these non-separated buildings will be inspected.

#### **2006 International Building Code (All occupancies, excluding federal healthcare)**

- Nonseparated occupancies shall be individually classified
- Code requirements shall apply to each portion, based on the occupancy of that space
- Most restrictive provisions for high-rise buildings shall apply throughout the building
- Most restrictive provisions for fire protection systems shall apply throughout the building

2006 Life Safety Code, NFPA 101 (Federal healthcare facilities)

- Requirements for all occupancies apply throughout the building
- Most restrictive provisions must be met

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Q.) I have a mixed occupancy building with proper fire-rated construction separating the two occupancies. The fire inspector inspected the entire building. Will I get 1 report or 2 reports?

A.) If you are inspected by a OSFM inspector you will get 2 separate reports. You must provide a plan of correction to both inspection reports individually.

Q.) I have a mixed occupancy building with proper fire-rated construction separating the two occupancies. The fire inspector only inspected the 1 portion of the building. Will the inspector return to inspect the other occupancy?

A.) This depends. Typically, the inspector will inspect all occupancies that are required to have an annual inspection while they are on site. However, there are instances where an inspector will be assigned an inspection for a specific occupancy, , such as a complaint inspection, and there would be no requirement or need for them to inspect the other occupancy.