



References (s): 06-IFC/903.2; 91-101/11.2.1.2

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With space and building restrictions in many schools, administrators have relocated classrooms containing daycare, preschool, kindergarten, and first and second grade students to areas of the building not permitted for these uses due to fire and life safety restrictions. We must periodically remind school administrators of long-standing fire and life safety requirements regulating the location of these classrooms.

**Both the Uniform Building Code and the Life Safety Code prohibit classrooms containing kindergarten or first grade students to be located above the first story in new or existing buildings. Second grade classrooms cannot be located above the second story.**

International Building Code, 2006 Edition, does not have any restrictions on the placement of students within the building. However, the code does require these facilities to be fully sprinklered. Therefore, if your building was constructed prior to January 1, 2011 you will be required to keep 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders to the appropriate floors indicated by the Uniform Building Code and/or the National Fire Protection Association OR you may install a full sprinkler system.

Uniform Building Code requirements state: *"Special provisions. Rooms in Divisions 1 and 2 Occupancies used for kindergarten, first- or second-grade pupils... shall not be located above or below the first story, except for basements that have required exits at grade level. Exceptions: In buildings equipped with an automatic sprinkler system throughout, rooms used for kindergarten, first and second-grade children or for day-care purposes may be located on the second story, provided there are at least two exits directly to the exterior for the exclusive use of such occupancy."*

National Fire Protection Association requirements state: *"Rooms normally occupied by preschool, kindergarten, or first grade pupils shall not be located above or below the story of exit discharge. Rooms normally occupied by second-grade pupils shall not be located more than one story above the story of exit discharge."* Day Care Centers are permitted above the first story typically when the building is fully sprinklered.

Our policy on these classrooms in existing buildings is that they cannot be located more than five (5) vertical feet above or below the story of exit discharge. The story of exit discharge is defined as the story or stories from which the exits are primarily doors discharging directly outside at grade level or the story with the smallest elevation change needed to reach grade level.

## **OSFM RECOMMENDS**

The restrictions on the location of rooms used by preschool, kindergarten, first grade or secondgrade pupils were developed to avoid the danger of older (and larger) children overrunning the very young on stairs or ramps during a fire or other incidents requiring rapid evacuation of a building. The requirements also recognize that young children may need assistance traversing stairs or may have to be rescued because of their size and limited motor skills. For this reason, OSFM recommends that all facilities, new and existing, keep 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students to the lower levels regardless of any code allowances.

**FIRE FACT 030 – 1ST AND 2ND GRADE**