



One of the most frequently asked questions during the inspection process is “Why can’t we prop open the corridor doors?”

The simple answer is this; The corridor is typically designed to have a fire or smoke rated separation. The intent of the separation is to limit or control the spread of smoke and fire; thus aiding in evacuation or allowing for limited sheltering while waiting for rescue. The rating is compromised by any kind of unprotected opening, such as propping a door open.

However, the answer is not always so simple. Facilities must review and be familiar with the design and construction of the building. Just because a code has allowances for non-rated corridors, does not mean that the building was built and designed to have non-rated corridors.

For example: Schools / Group E Occupancies

International Building Code Requirements:

Corridor Rating is 1hr (Non-sprinklered building)

Corridor Rating is none required (With sprinkler system)

Meaning: If the building has a full sprinkler system throughout, then the corridor is not required to have a rating. A door in a non-rated corridor wall is not required to have an automatic door closure. Removal of the automatic door closure would allow the door to remain in an open position.

The above is an example of the requirements for an educational occupancy built according to the International Building Code, to view more detailed information or information regarding the other occupancy types, you will need to view the appropriate building code that was adopted during its construction.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Rated Corridor = No Wedges or kickdowns

If the corridor is required by code or code footprint to have a fire-rated separation, then the corridor doors cannot be held-open by a wedge, kick down, trash can, or other similar object. Only approved devices arranged to automatically release the door upon activation of the fire alarm would be acceptable. This is applicable regardless of the fire-rating of the corridor (i.e 2-hr, 1-hr, or ½-hr)

Hazardous Rooms = Fire-rated separation.

The doors must be protected the same as a rated corridor. Doors are a rated assembly and are designed to remain closed unless in use.

Healthcare = No Wedges or kickdowns

All corridor doors, regardless of the corridor rating, must only require a single motion to close. The use of a wedge, kick-down, trash can, or other similar object would require more than a single motion to close; one to remove the prop and one to close the door. It is permissible to utilize a magnetic hold-open device on rated corridors if the device is tied into the fire alarm system. It is permissible to utilize a magnetic hold-open device or an approved friction device on non-rated corridors, provided that it only requires a single motion to close the door.