

Education and Day-Care Occupancies – Codes Summary, Items Hanging From Ceilings

1. In means of egress, projections from the ceiling shall not be less than 6 ft. 8 in. nominal height above the finished floor. NFPA 101, 2012 Edition 7.1.5
2. Curtains, draperies, hangings, and other decorative materials suspended from walls or ceilings shall meet the flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701 in accordance with Section 807.2 or be noncombustible. IFC, 2012 Edition 807.1

Noncombustible Materials – The permissible amount of noncombustible decorative material shall not be limited. IFC, 2012 Edition 807.1.1

Combustible Decorative Materials – The permissible amount of decorative materials meeting the flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701 shall not exceed 10% of the specific wall or ceiling area to which it is attached. Exceptions: IFC, 2012 Edition 807.1.2

Additional requirements vary with occupancy classification.

NFPA 101, 2012 Edition 16/17.7.4.1 leads to 10.3.1 modified by 120-3-3 and leads to IFC Chapter 8

3. Signs. Foam plastic signs that are not affixed to interior building surfaces shall have a maximum heat release rate of 150 kW when tested in accordance with UL 1975, or when tested in accordance with NFPA 289 using the 20-kW ignition source.

Exception: Where the aggregate area of foam plastic signs is less than 10% of the floor area or wall area of the room or space in which the signs are located, whichever is less, subject to the approval of the fire code official. IFC, 2012 Edition 808.3

4. For sprinklered buildings. Sprinklers shall be installed in accordance with their listings. NFPA 13, 2013 Edition 8.3.1.1

This addresses numerous issues but in regard to ceilings, the technical data for many sprinklers specifies that they are to be installed directly under a ceiling. For this reason ceilings and ceiling tiles must remain intact to ensure most sprinklers installed under them will activate correctly.

5. Sprinklers shall be located so as to minimize obstructions to discharge. NFPA 13, 2013 Edition 8.6.5

Items hanging from the ceiling that may obstruct the sprinkler flow are required to maintain a distance from the sprinkler deflector from the bottom of the obstruction at a certain distance from the sprinkler. There are different requirements for standard spray sprinklers, sidewall sprinklers, extended coverage sprinklers, residential sprinklers, and others. See Examples: NFPA 13, 2013 Edition 8.6.5