

**Fire Code Action Committee**  
**IBC code language to review for**  
**2015 & 2016 Cycle consideration**  
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IBC Section 1009.8 - Add an exception 6 with the following wording:

6. Two way communications systems are not required in buildings that are not high-rise buildings as defined in Section 403 or underground buildings as defined in Section 405, provided they are protected throughout with an automatic fire sprinkler system complying with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2.

Justification: This proposal attempts to target the requirement for two-way communication systems to only those buildings considered to be high-rise or underground buildings, as described in Section 403 and 405 of the IBC, respectively.

The reason for providing the exception is to no longer require two-way communication systems in buildings that are not considered high-rise or underground buildings, where such buildings are protected with fire sprinklers.

Prior to the addition of this requirement for two-way communication systems in all buildings, such systems were only found in areas of refuge. Areas of refuge associated with elevators are only required for buildings four or more stories in height. Code provides multiple instances where the area of refuge may be deleted, many of which occur due to the installation of fire sprinklers. Because areas of refuge at the elevators are typically not found in smaller buildings and because the protection of areas of refuge, it would seem reasonable to provide the same type of exception for the requirement of two-way communication.

There is a high probability that mobility impaired persons will be in contact with other persons exiting from the same floor, and those persons can communicate the need for rescue assistance. For hotel occupancies, the location of mobility impaired persons can be maintained at a front desk, who can communicate the need for rescue assistance. Further, with the proliferation of cell phones, there is a high probability that mobility impaired persons will be able to communicate themselves their need for rescue assistance and their location. Finally, the protection provided by fire sprinkler systems should be expected to extend the time

needed to affect rescue, making the added expense of a two-way communication system less necessary.