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To Whom It May Concern:

We would like to make sure your church is aware of the 15 point compliance plan set forth by the Rhode Island State Fire Marshall requiring all churches that existed prior to January 1, 2008 to upgrade their life safety and fire alarm systems by December 31, 2010. This was detailed at a seminar for pastors this summer, addressing the requirements and guidelines of the inspection and upgrade process. As a reminder, the Providence Fire Department will be contacting you to schedule an inspection this year and will require all upgrades to be made on or before December 31, 2010. The steps to compliance are much simpler than you may think and by utilizing a qualified professional you can streamline the process and install a system that will meet requirements by the required deadline within a respectable budget.

Robinson Design, Inc recently assisted the Providence Assembly of God in preparing a review of the 15 Point Plan which included a code review, evaluating the existing conditions, preparing drawings and proposing code solutions and coordinating an inspection meeting with the Providence Fire Department. The fire department inspectors praised us for our well-documented and well-organized inspection report and recommendations, saying this helped make the process work smoothly. This, we believe, went a long way towards gaining favorable code interpretation in areas in question, resulting in a cost savings of potentially tens of thousands of dollars.

Attached is a firm description, the Robinson Design Inc. plain English summary of the State Fire Marshall's 15 Point Plan and letter of reference for your review. We would like the opportunity to meet with you to evaluate how we might help you in the code compliance process. Please give us a call at (401) 231-0101 to schedule a free consultation.

Best regards,

John Robinson, PE, AIA
President

Church Fire Safety Compliance Overview

15 Point Plan

The Providence Fire Department is conducting inspections of church facilities during 2010 for fire safety compliance. The following is a brief summary of our interpretation of this code, for general reference.

1. **Fire Alarm** - All churches will need an approved fire-alarm system. This is the primary method of protection, and means most churches will not need sprinkler systems. This system does not need to provide coverage for the entire building, only higher risk areas, like the sanctuary, hallways, stairs and storage areas. If the church less than a determined # of occupants the system required may provide some cost savings.
2. **Day-Care** - If there is a licensed nursery (not just for use during services), then there will be a need for approved smoke and carbon monoxide detectors that are hard-wired into the building.
3. **Emergency Lighting** - If the church holds more than 300 people, acceptable battery-powered emergency lighting will be required in the main areas used to exit the building.
4. **Exit Signs** - Illuminated exit signs will be needed at turns or "decision area" on a path used to exit the building. If an exit is obvious (such as a glass door to the exterior, or a monumental main entrance), the fire marshal can chose to waive the need for some of the signs.
5. **Occupancy Maximum** - The Fire Code uses a specific formula to calculate how many people are allowed in a space, based on the size of the space. This figure is required to determine the maximum number of people allowed in a sanctuary or a large meeting room, the number of exits required and the direction of door swings.
6. **Fire Rating in Exits** - Paths used to exit the building should not be in danger of fire burning through them. Plaster or gypsum-board walls, in good repair, are acceptable.
7. **Combustible Materials in Exits** - Also, the materials inside of these exit-pathways should not be at risk of catching fire. Thick hard-wood paneling may be approved, but thin wood veneers, or other combustible materials, will need a special fire-rated coating.
8. **Exit Size** - Exits need to be wide enough to allow for "rapid evacuation" of the space. Even if they do not meet all the code's technical requirements, they may still be approved.
9. **No Smoking**
10. **Furnace Shut-Off** - The furnace of the building needs a remote shut-off switch, the same type that is found in single-family homes.
11. **Heating System Enclosure** - The furnace of the building will need to have either a single sprinkler head over it, or walls constructed of a fire-rated material.
12. **Portable Fire Extinguishers** - will be required at approved locations.
13. **Sprinklers**- may, in general, not be required. Local officials cannot require sprinklers; only the State Fire Marshal's Office can require them in situations where there is a "serious threat to life". Most existing churches will not be required to install sprinklers.
14. **Commercial Cooking Equipment** - These will need commercial vent-hoods (as seen in restaurants), unless they are used less than 2 hours a week. Equipment used for weekly services or soup kitchens only is generally exempt. The Fire Marshal will require a letter stating how often they are used.
15. **Open Flame** - "The fire marshal will make reasonable recommendations for the safe use of candles."

* NOTE: This document represents our general interpretation of the state of Rhode Island's life safety code requirements. It is not intended to replace or modify the code, but simply provide a helpful guideline. The local fire marshal shall determine the final interpretation and recommendations.