

HEALTHCARE INTERPRETATIONS TASK FORCE INTERPRETATION

Number: HITF.1998.005

Date: November 24, 1998

Code: NFPA 101, 1997 Edition. Section 12-3.6.1/13-3.6.1

Background: In many health care settings, charting areas for use by nurses are provided in corridors. These spaces are open to the corridor and are not enclosed. They are in addition to and often not visible from nursing stations. They range in size from a small desk in an alcove to large rooms and sometimes have several racks/shelves of paper records and/or x-ray film. Generally, they are not occupied at all times. Sections 12/13-3.6.1 requires corridors to be separated from all other areas but allows several exceptions such as nursing stations to be open to the corridor. The 1997 edition of the Life Safety Code Handbook states in the explanatory commentary that..."Areas used for charting and communications by doctors and nurses are permitted to be open to the corridor." Some AHJs are confused whether this statement in the LSC HB is universally applied.

Question: Is it acceptable to have charting areas that are not part of a nursing station open to a corridor in a health care occupancy in accordance with 12/13-3.6.1, Exception No. 3?

Answer: NO. However, if such spaces can be protected using any of the options in:

101: 12-3.6.1, Exception No. 1; or

101: 13-3.6.1, Exception No. 1; or

101: 13-3.6.1, Exception No. 6

such spaces can be open to the corridor.