

# HOW TO GET HAZARD CLASSIFICATION?

SPRINKLER HAZARDS AND OCCUPANCY SERIES BY MEYERFIRE UNIVERSITY | SEPTEMBER 2022

## SUMMARY

How to determine a sprinkler **occupancy hazard classification**?

1. Look through the **building floor plans** (and other plans as necessary) to get an idea for how each space will be used and what would burn there. If the documents don't clearly describe what the intended use of the space will be, get this clarified by the architect or building owner.
2. **Match each space with a corresponding hazard classification**, using the descriptions in NFPA 13 and the examples in the Annex of NFPA 13 as guidance. We're looking for a general sense of the fuel loads and potential fire intensity. Many spaces will be listed or have a very close match. Others may not be clearly identified.
3. For any **storage areas**, we will evaluate those separately. This involves assessing the commodities in each space, how things are stored, and working a code path through the storage chapters of NFPA 13.

If the space is not addressed in NFPA 13, what should I do? Seek outside input to see if this has already been addressed.

- **Factory Mutual (FM) Global Data Sheets** (such as FM Data 3-26) provides their own guidance on how to address hazards. Other insurers provide engineer-backed recommendations as well. These can be more conservative, which is not a bad thing.
- **Fire Sprinkler organizations** (such as NFSA and AFSA) have provided opinion pieces by experts that may provide informal opinions.

Ultimately, the decision for a sprinkler occupancy hazard classification is very important to the potential success of a fire sprinkler system. **It is our responsibility** (not NFPA 13, FM Global, or outside sources) **to evaluate this correctly** so that the fire sprinkler system can actually suppress a fire.



**Hospital**

(The Annex of NFPA 13 lists "Hospitals" as an example of a Light Hazard sprinkler occupancy hazard classification)



**Patient Exam Room**

(This room type is not specifically listed as an example, but in a relative sense of fuel load and fire intensity, this is similar to examples such as "hospitals" and "offices")



**Office**

(The Annex of NFPA 13 lists "Offices" as one example of a Light Hazard sprinkler occupancy hazard classification)

## CODE/STANDARD REFERENCES



NFPA 13 – 2022: 4.3.2, A.4.3.2 Light Hazard

NFPA 13 – 2022: 4.3.3.1, A.4.3.3.1 Ordinary Hazard (Group 1)

NFPA 13 – 2022: 4.3.3.2, A.4.3.3.2 Ordinary Hazard (Group 2)

NFPA 13 – 2022: 4.3.4, A.4.3.4 Extra Hazard (Group 1)

NFPA 13 – 2022: 4.3.5, A.4.3.5 Extra Hazard (Group 2)

## VIDEO LINK

[www.meyerfire.com/university/how-to-determine-an-occupancy-hazard-classification](http://www.meyerfire.com/university/how-to-determine-an-occupancy-hazard-classification)

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