

The Ontario Fire Code Retrofit Section 9.8 looks at five areas of Fire Safety:

- Containment - Fire separations between dwelling units.

The containment features provided under this subsection are intended to provide protection for the occupants living in a dwelling unit from a fire occurring in another portion of the building, outside of their control. A continuous separation with a 30 min. Fire Resistance Rating is required between dwelling units and between dwelling units and other areas. This may be provided by existing membrane of lath and plaster or gypsum board. Openings in Fire Separation shall be protected with rated doors installed in hollow metal or solid wood frames and equipped with self-closing devices. Lesser degrees of Fire Resistance Rating may be acceptable with the provision of interconnected Smoke Alarms or Sprinkler Protection.

- Means of egress - The number of means of escape from a dwelling unit. One may be sufficient if other Fire Safety Measures are present.

This section contains provisions for the escape of persons from each dwelling unit in the event of fire. A single means of egress may be acceptable if the following conditions are met: It is properly separated with a 30 min. Fire Resistance Rating, The flame spread rating of means of escape does not exceed 150 (wood paneling is unacceptable), The means of escape does not involve entering another dwelling unit or other occupancy and leads directly to the outside at ground level. Two means of escape are required if one means of escape is through another dwelling unit. An existing means of egress may be acceptable if the building is sprinklered.

- Fire Alarm and Detection - Smoke alarms and Carbon Monoxide detectors are the minimum.

Interconnected smoke alarms may be required if: 15 min. Fire Resistance Rating is used between dwelling units, one dwelling unit must exit through another dwelling unit, a dwelling unit is located entirely on the third floor. If required, interconnected smoke alarms must be installed in every storey above and below grade in each dwelling unit, and in every shared means of escape where applicable. These alarms must be audible in bedrooms when the intervening doors are closed.

Smoke alarms must be installed in each dwelling unit on every floor including those containing a bedroom or sleeping area. The alarm must be audible in bedrooms when the bedroom doors are closed. The smoke alarm may be battery operated or connected to an electrical circuit with no disconnect switch between the over current device and the smoke alarm.

Smoke alarms must be maintained in operating condition. This is the responsibility of the owner.

Carbon Monoxide alarms are required under many Municipal By-laws. They are to be provided in each dwelling unit in a building containing a fuel fired appliance or an attached garage. Even if they are not required by legislation they make good sense with today's design methods providing for air-tight construction of dwelling units.

- Suppression- Sprinkler protection may be considered as an option to some of the above noted requirements.

Sprinklers are not mandatory, however they may be used as an option under the containment option or means of egress option. Sprinklers may also be used in rooms containing a fuel-fired appliance as an alternative to the rating of a ceiling. Portable fire extinguishers should be provided in an area common to the dwelling units for the use of all occupants.

- Electrical Safety

In order to ensure that the electrical wiring in a two unit dwelling is safe, the owner is responsible for having a general inspection conducted by the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) and must pay for the associated inspection fees. Any electrical hazards identified during the inspection must be repaired. Owners should retain the letter of compliance from ESA for future reference purposes. This letter must be made available to the Chief Fire Official upon request.

ESA may be contacted at: http://www.esainspection.net/Corporate/con_001.php