

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-72-00

December 11, 2000

The following is offered in response to your letter in which you request a formal interpretation of section 412.2 of the BOCA National Building Code/1996 portion of the 1999 State Building Code as it applies to the definitions of platform and stage.

Background: A raised area is adjacent to a gymnasium in a proposed new elementary school. The area is to be used for the presentation of musical programs and other entertainment. The area is approximately 2200 square feet in area, is raised 2 feet 8 inches above the gymnasium floor, has a sloped ceiling from 20 feet to 34 feet in height and has rolling curtains, supported from above at the opening to the gymnasium and around the back of the area. There is no provision for overhead scenery or vertically operable curtains.

Question 1: Is this area a platform or stage in the eyes of the code?

Answer 1: A platform. The code differentiates between the two by the installation of overhead drops, pieces of scenery, or stage effects other than lighting and a screening valance. When such equipment is not installed as in the scenario you describe, the raised area is designated as a platform. When such equipment is installed, the area is a stage. The primary difference is that a stage, with the overhead items that are frequently made of combustible material, presents a greater risk from fire. Stages, therefore, are subject to requirements that platforms are not.

Question 2: Are the rooms surrounding and opening onto this area required to be separated from the raised area or from each other by fireresistance rated construction?

Answer 2: No. The requirements for separation of the surrounding rooms found at section 412.5 of the code only apply to stages, not to platforms.