



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF CODES AND STANDARDS
BUREAU OF HOUSING INSPECTION

**TECHNICAL
BULLETIN
NO. 2**

SUBJECT: Door Closers

DATE: March 4, 1991

Revised: December 9, 2015

GOVERNING CODE: State of New Jersey Uniform Fire Code

CODE REFERENCES: N.J.A.C. 5:70-4.11(1)2 & 3

QUESTION 1: N.J.A.C. 5:70-4.11(1)2, makes reference to “listed closing devices”. How do you determine if a closing device is listed? Also, what is the difference between a “self-closing” and an “automatic closing device”?

ANSWER: Equipment is “listed” if it appears in a list that is published by a nationally recognized testing laboratory which makes periodic inspections of the production of such equipment and which states that such equipment meets nationally recognized standards or has been tested and found safe for use in a specified manner.

Often listed equipment is “labeled” with a plate, tag or other device that is permanently and prominently affixed to the equipment indicating that it has been tested and evaluated by a recognized agency. This labeling provides a way in determining if the equipment is listed. Where such type labeling is not found on a closing device, the owner shall provide documentation verifying that the device is listed.

The difference between a “self-closing” and a “automatic closing device”, can be explained by utilizing the following definitions taken from the ICC International Building Code:

- Self-Closing: As applied to a fire door or other opening protective, means normally closed and equipped with an approved device which will insure closing after having been opened for use.
- Automatic: As applied to fire protection devices, automatic refers to a device or system that provides an emergency function without the necessity of human intervention and activated as a result of a predetermined temperature rise, rate of temperature rise or increase in an automatic sprinkler system, automatic fire door, etc.

QUESTION 2: Does N.J.A.C. 5:70-4.11(1)2, apply to doors in garden type apartments having entrance arrangement layouts similar to those shown on page 11 in the smoke detector guide booklet?

ANSWER: Yes, since the dwelling unit doors open directly into an open exit stair, and the lower level foyer is an exit passageway at grade.

QUESTION 3: N.J.A.C. 5:70-4.11(1)3, makes reference to “approved door closers”. What is considered an approved door closer? Will a list of such devices be issued?

ANSWER: An approved door closer is one that is acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction. When performing fire-safety related inspections, you must determine if the installed device is acceptable.

According to the Division of Fire Safety, a device that will easily close an opened door without having to apply additional manual force is acceptable. Additional items to be considered when determining acceptability are whether the closer device is of a type that will not require above normal maintenance in order to function properly at all times, and that the closer device effectuates positive latching of the required door lockset hardware to maintain dwelling unit security per N.J.A.C. 5:10-19.2(a)4 requirements.

A list of approved door closers will not be published by the Division of Fire Safety. Therefore, consideration of the above-mentioned performance criteria is necessary when determining acceptability of the door closer.

If building owners should seek assistance from you for the selection of an approved door closer device, instruct them to contact their local construction official for such information.

QUESTION 4: Some building owners have stated that tenants who are not fully ambulatory are complaining that they are having difficulty trying to enter their units since door closers have been installed on their entrance doors. Can such closers be removed, if the tenants sign affidavits stating that they do not want to closers on the entrance doors?

ANSWER: No, the required door closer cannot be removed, as it is not only for their protection, but also for the protection of all the other occupants within that building section and for the structure too, as a closed door can be expected to impede the spread of fire. It is suggested that, if a problem does exist for certain tenants, the building owner should consider replacing the existing door closer with one that complies with the performance criteria requirements contained in the building subcode of the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code (N.J.A.C. 5:23-3.14) for barrier-free door closers, which states as follows:

ICC/ANSI A117.1, as referenced by Chapter 11 of the building subcode:

- Section 404.2.7, Closing Speed
 - Door Closers – Door closers shall be adjusted so that from and open position of 90 degrees, the time required to move the door to an open position of 12 degrees shall be 5 seconds minimum.
 - Spring Hinges – Door spring hinges shall be adjusted so that from an open position of 70 degrees, the door shall move to the closed position in 1.5 seconds.
- Section 404.2.8, Door-Opening Force
 - Fire doors shall have the minimum opening force allowable by the appropriate administrative authority. The force for pushing or pulling open doors other than fire doors shall be as follows:
 1. Interior hinged door: 5.0 pounds maximum.
 2. Sliding or folding door: 5.0 pounds maximum.These forces do not apply to the force required to retrace latch bolts or disengage other devices that hold the door in a closed position.



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