



February 6, 2008

Charles Boulard, Building Official
City of Novi

RE: Fire Safety Considerations for Sidewalk Sales

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As per our discussion, I am making the following recommendations regarding the practice of mercantile occupancies utilizing the sidewalks in front of their stores for the display of their merchandise, a practice commonly referred to as "Sidewalk Sales".

The fire safety concern with sidewalk sales is that when a building is required by the Building and Fire Codes to be fully protected with a sprinkler system and the merchandise is moved outside usually under a canopy, that merchandise is now no longer protected by the sprinkler system. In addition, the unprotected merchandise is located in the area of the main exit from the building and may prevent the safe egress under fire conditions.

The sprinkler code, NFPA 13, requires the areas under canopies to be protected by the sprinkler system when the area will have combustible materials stored or handled there.

Fire Safety Recommendations for Sidewalk Sales under Unprotected Canopies:

1. Combustible merchandise shall never be left unattended.
2. Smoking shall be prohibited in the area of combustible merchandise.
3. A fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 2A:10B:C shall be provided in the area of the combustible materials in a location accessible to the attendant. (Note: The extinguisher shall not be taken from the store)
4. No electrical hazards shall be present. Extension cords to run cash registers and other electronic devices shall not be run through the door opening. Electrical devices shall be powered by approved electrical outlets.

In addition to the above fire safety recommendations, tenant spaces in buildings that are required by the Building Code to be protected with a NFPA 13 sprinkler system and who may be storing combustible products under an unprotected canopy should be upgraded to include sprinkler protection in these areas at the time the tenant space is renovated. This is a very simple fix and it would increase the fire protection in the building.

Please contact me if you have any further questions regarding his matter.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Evans
Fire Marshal

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