

SKYLIGHTS AND CEILING POCKET PROTECTION (NFPA 13 – 2002)

The *2002 Edition of NFPA 13* (1) has simplified the rules for protecting skylights (8.5.7) and ceiling pockets (8.6.7). The new rules reduce or even eliminate the need for sprinklers in these types of spaces under specific conditions. Summarized below are the requirements found in the current edition of NFPA 13.

Skylights

Sprinklers are no longer required in skylights and similar ceiling pockets as long as they do not exceed 32 square feet in area. The omission of sprinklers is regardless of hazard classification or depth of the pocket or skylight. If multiple skylights or pockets are not separated by at least 10 feet horizontally from other skylights or unprotected ceiling pockets then sprinkler protection is required.

Ceiling Pockets

Sprinkler protection is required in all ceiling pockets unless all of the following requirements are met:

- The volume of the ceiling pocket cannot exceed 1,000 cubic feet.
- The depth of the ceiling pocket can't exceed 36 inches.
- Sprinklers installed at the lower ceiling area protect the floor area under the ceiling pocket.
- Ceiling pockets must be separated by a minimum of 10 feet horizontally.
- Construction of the ceiling pocket must be non-combustible or limited combustible construction as defined in NFPA 13.
- Skylights less than 32 square feet in area are allowed to have a plastic cover.
- Sprinklers protecting the remainder of the compartment must be quick response.

As you can see, these requirements are relaxed, as well as better defined, from previous editions of NFPA 13. This summary has been provided for information purposes only, when evaluating skylights or ceiling pockets for sprinkler protection please be sure to follow the currently adopted edition of NFPA 13 and take into consideration the requirements of the AHJ's involved.

(1) *2002 Edition of NFPA 13 "Installation of Sprinkler Systems"*, National Fire Protection Association