**UM System Code Determination**

Code Determination Number: 06

Date: March 9, 2021

Code Edition: 2018 IBC

Code Section: 202 DEFINITIONS

**COMMON USE**. Interior or exterior circulation paths, rooms, spaces or elements that are not for public use and are made available for the shared use of two or more people.

**EMPLOYEE WORK AREA**. All or any portion of a space used only by employees and only for work. Corridors, toilet rooms, kitchenettes and break rooms are not employee work areas.

**Question (from consultant):**

What is the AHJ’s interpretation for what is A-an Employee Work Area, and B-a Common Use space?

**Answer (from UM System):**

FPD’s interpretation is that a common use area is a non-public space where employees would congregate outside of their office - break room, meeting room, conference room, employee lounge area, corridors, and other circulation paths. An office large enough that it may be become or be converted to a “common use” area in the future with only minor alterations is of concern. Therefore, we propose the following:

* Offices up to 300 sf – Employee Work Area (fire alarm visible notification is not required).
* Offices 300 sf and above – Fire alarm visible notification required (even if presently identified as 1 person office).
* Open cubicle offices – Fire alarm visible notification required.

Note: Our design guidelines and adopted codes require a **minimum** of 20% spare capacity. Additional capacity is recommended in space where potential modifications could be frequent or of higher density. This would allow future flexibility for turning offices into common use areas or to cover future hearing-impaired employees as necessary.