

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR A LAW REQUIRING LABELING OF BUILDINGS FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

This sample language is based on recommendations in the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) report entitled “NIOSH Alert: Preventing Injuries and Deaths of Firefighters due to Truss System Failures.” The report states:

“Consider placing building construction information outside the building. Include information about roof and floor type...¹

The NIOSH report also recommends as part of pre-fire planning to:

Record data regarding roof and floor construction (e.g., wooden joist, wood truss, steel joist, steel truss, beam and girder, etc.) [NFPA 2003].²

The sample language below provides building labeling that identifies the building’s construction type, is simple yet logical, and should allow firefighters to quickly know the building’s floor and roof construction materials, promoting better and more complete information on the fireground and increased firefighter safety.

xxx Identification of structural construction. Structural construction types shall be identified by a sign or signs, such as that shown in Figure 1, in accordance with the provisions of this section.

xxx.1 Signs. Signs shall be affixed where a building or a portion thereof is classified as Group A, B, E, F, H, I, M, R-1, R-2, R-4 or S occupancy. The owner of the building shall be responsible for the installation of the sign.



Figure 1

xxx.2 New buildings and buildings being added to. Signs shall be provided in newly constructed buildings and in existing buildings where an addition that extends or increases the floor area of the building. Signs shall be affixed prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy or a certificate of compliance.

xxx.3 Existing buildings. Signs shall be provided in existing buildings. Signs shall be affixed within ninety days of being notified in writing by the Code Enforcement Official.

xxx.4 Contents of signs. Signs shall consist of a diagram (see Figure 1) 6 inches (152.4 mm) in height and width, with a stroke width of ¼ inch (6.4 mm). The sign background shall be reflective white in color. The diagram and contents shall be reflective red in color, conforming to Pantone matching system (PMS) #187. Where a sign is directly applied to a door or sidelight, it may be a permanent non-fading sticker or decal. Signs not directly applied to doors or sidelights shall be of sturdy, non-fading, weather resistant material.

¹ National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, “NIOSH Alert: Preventing Injuries and Deaths of Fire Fighters due to Truss System Failures,” p. 10.

² Ibid., p. 8.

xxx.5 Identification of construction classification. Signs shall contain the roman alphanumeric designation of the construction classification of the building, in accordance with the provisions for the classification of types of construction (types I through V) of the building code. The roman numeral designating construction classification shall be 1 inch (25.4 mm) minimum in height and have a stroke width of ¼ inch (6.4 mm) minimum, and it shall be reflective white in color on a background of reflective red.

xxx.6 Identification of year of construction. Signs shall indicate the building's year of construction or major reconstruction. The arabic numeral indicating year of construction shall be 1 inch (25.4 mm) minimum in height and have a stroke width of ¼ inch (6.4 mm) minimum, and it shall be reflective white in color on a background of reflective red.

xxx.7 Identification of structural construction types. Signs shall contain the alphabetic designations identifying the structural construction types used in the building, as follows:

"W" shall mean sawn joist/rafter construction, wood members

"I" shall mean engineered I-joist construction, wood members

"S" shall mean steel construction

"T" shall mean truss type construction³

"C" shall mean concrete construction



Figure 2

The construction type of the building's floors shall be indicated by placing the appropriate designating letter or letters in the lower portion of the diagram, and the construction type of the building's roof shall be indicated by placing the appropriate designating letter in the upper portion of the diagram, as shown in Figure 2. The designating letters shall be 2 inches (50.8 mm) minimum in height and have a stroke width of ½ inch (12.7 mm) minimum.

xxx.8 Location. Signs shall be placed at each entry of the structure used by the general public for entrance. The sticker/decal shall be placed on the glazing on the leaf of the entrance door, or on its sidelights, where applicable. Where no such glazings exist at the entrance, an aluminum plaque backer shall be installed in the same region as that where a sidelight would be permitted. The sign shall be at least 42 inches above grade but less than 60 inches. When installed on other than the door leaf, the sign shall be applied to the glazing/plaque within 8 inches of the door leaf.

³ Truss type construction is defined as a fabricated structure of wood or steel, made up of a series of members connected at their ends to form a series of triangles to span a distance greater than would be possible with any of the individual members on their own. Truss type construction shall not include individual wind or seismic bracing components which form triangles when diagonally connected to the main structural system.