



Miami Beach Fire Department
FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION
STANDARDS



TOPIC: Lessons Learned – Driveways

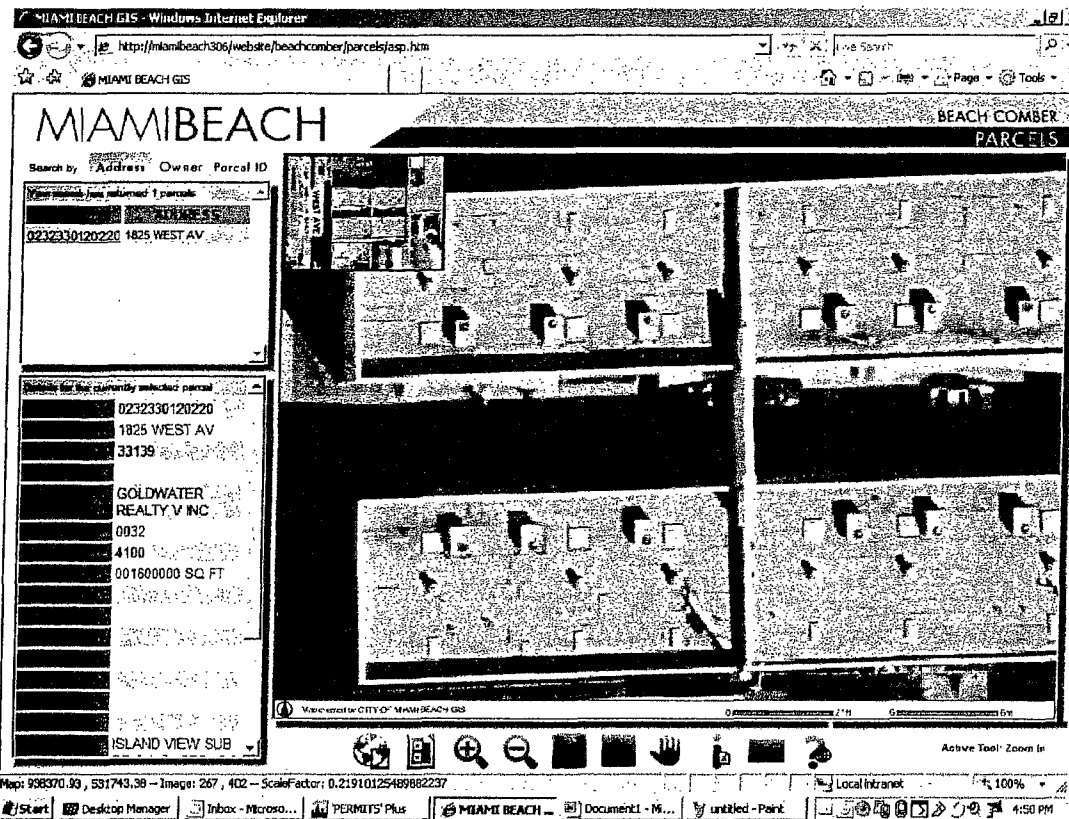
STANDARD NO: NEWC-S10

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Revision 0

This Fire Prevention Standard is based on actual events and experience and it is written in the attempt to avoid a similar problem in the future.

The picture below illustrates a project that was built a few years ago in the City of Miami Beach. There are two long buildings with a center courtyard or driveway. The buildings are one-story multi-tenant and designed to be business/mercantile occupancy. There is no sprinkler system and no fire alarm system. Each tenant has one single exit (front door) since the tenant space met the single exit requirements in the code (*that is, travel distance to the exit is less than common path of travel – 75 feet*).



The problem with this design is that the cars are allowed to drive in and park anywhere in the driveway. The cars are sometimes parked right in front of the exit door.

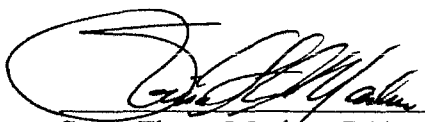
The car presents an obstruction for the full swing of the exit door. In addition, the car is a fire exposure if there is a vehicle on fire in front of the only exit.

Although the owner of the building has posted signs that cars cannot be parked in the courtyard, it has not solved this problem. The original design intent was to allow customers to drive in a "drop off" or "pick up" merchandise. The reality is that the business owners and customers are parking the cars in this area. The current solution for this existing building, in addition to the no parking, was to install bollards in front of the door so that cars are forced to park away from the front door and allow full swing.

Effective with this FPS, this project design as designed above will not be approved in the City of Miami Beach. The following features **MUST** be addressed in plan review.

- 1) If the design incorporates a driveway such as this one, then the tenants **MUST** have two exits. The second exit must be in the **REAR** of the building even if the common path of travel is met for a single exit, **AND**
- 2) There shall be a curbed sidewalk in front of the building to force parking to be at least 4 feet from the exit door. This is a similar arrangement to face-in parking at shopping centers.

An alternative solution to the rear exit in Item # 1 is to provide a sprinkler system and still comply with Item #2.


Soma Flores Machen, P.E.
Fire Marshal

4/5/07
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