



TACIR

The Tennessee Advisory Commission
on Intergovernmental Relations



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Commission Members

FROM: *J. Wynne*
Wynnisse Roehrich-Patrick
Executive Director

DATE: 12 June 2014

SUBJECT: Fire Sprinkler Exemptions for Certain Places of Worship

Tennessee law requires the installation of automatic sprinkler systems in places of assembly where the fire area exceeds 12,000 square feet, has a capacity of 300 or more, or is located on a floor other than the level of exit. House Bill 1649 by Representative T. Hill (Senate Bill 1749 by Niceley), sent to the Commission by the House Local Government Subcommittee, proposed changing the law, exempting single-story places of worship in unincorporated areas from installing sprinkler systems as long as they

- have a capacity of no more than four hundred (400) persons,
- do not have a water supply on the property,
- have a fire alarm system,
- have a minimum of two exits plus one additional exit for every 2,500 square feet of portion thereof over 4,500 square feet,
- have fixed seating for at least 250 people, and
- were built on or after July 1, 2012.

Gary West, assistant commissioner of the Department of Commerce and Insurance's Fire Prevention Division, will discuss Tennessee's building and fire codes in general and as they pertain to places of worship and other assemblies, the changes proposed by the referred legislation, and implications if it were to become law.