



SUBJECT:

Use of Glass Block In Hazardous Locations – Safety Glazing Exemption for Glass Block

When it comes to safety standards for glazing used in storm doors, bathtub and shower doors and enclosures, door sidelights, etc. the (IRC & IBC) codes define these areas as “hazardous locations” and require that such glazing to be safety glazing and to meet the requirements of the Consumer Product Safety Commission Federal Standard CPSC 16-CFR, Part 1201 “Safety Glazing for Architectural Glazing Materials” or a comparable test standard such as the American National Standards Institute ANSI Z97.1. Basically these test standards require that such safety glazing pass an impact test, imparted by a leather bag filled with 100lbs. of lead shot, and dropped (by pendulum swing) from heights of 12”, 18” and 48” such that they impart impact forces of 100 ft.-lbs., 150 ft.-lbs., and 400 ft.-lbs., respectively.

The intent for these standards is to reduce or eliminate injuries or death resulting from persons walking or running into, or accidentally falling onto or through such glazing, that might not otherwise be apparently or immediately visible.

The CPSC Standard, however, does exempt glazing products that are conspicuously colored, textured, sandblasted or etched so as to be plainly visible and identifiable as aesthetic or decorative. It also exempts glazing materials whose assemblies are divided into segments by conspicuous and plainly visible lines (as would be the case with the glass block mortar joint grid).

It is because of these reasons that glass block is exempt from these requirements, even though glass block is not a safety glazing. Consequently, glass block is also listed as being exempt from these safety glazing requirements in the “glazing” sections of both building codes for mortar installations.

All the above is further substantiated by a letter received from the legal counsel of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

Respectfully,

Mario Marchi
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mario Marchi", is written over the printed name and title.