

# 2021 Virginia Construction Code

## CHAPTER 5 GENERAL BUILDING HEIGHTS AND AREAS

### SECTION 505 MEZZANINES AND EQUIPMENT PLATFORMS

#### 505.1 General.

Mezzanines shall comply with [Section 505.2](#). Equipment platforms shall comply with [Section 505.3](#).

#### 505.2 Mezzanines.

A mezzanine or mezzanines in compliance with [Section 505.2](#) shall be considered a portion of the story below. Such mezzanines shall not contribute to either the building area or number of stories as regulated by [Section 503.1](#). The area of the mezzanine shall be included in determining the fire area. The clear height above and below the mezzanine floor construction shall be not less than 7 feet (2134 mm).

##### 505.2.1 Area limitation.

The aggregate area of a mezzanine or mezzanines within a room shall be not greater than one-third of the floor area of that room or space in which they are located. The enclosed portion of a room shall not be included in a determination of the floor area of the room in which the mezzanine is located. In determining the allowable mezzanine area, the area of the mezzanine shall not be included in the floor area of the room.

##### Exceptions:

1. The aggregate area of mezzanines in buildings and structures of Type I or II construction for special industrial occupancies in accordance with [Section 503.1.1](#) shall be not greater than two-thirds of the floor area of the room.
2. The aggregate area of mezzanines in buildings and structures of Type I or II construction shall be not greater than one-half of the floor area of the room in buildings and structures equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system in accordance with [Section 903.3.1.1](#) and an approved emergency voice/alarm communication system in accordance with [Section 907.5.2.2](#).
3. The aggregate area of a mezzanine within a dwelling unit that is located in a building equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system in accordance with [Section 903.3.1.1](#) or [903.3.1.2](#) shall not be greater than one-half of the floor area of the room, provided that:
  - 3.1. Except for enclosed closets and bathrooms, the mezzanine shall be open to the room in which such mezzanine is located;
  - 3.2. The opening to the room shall be unobstructed except for walls not more than 42 inches (1067 mm) in height, columns and posts; and
  - 3.3. Exceptions to [Section 505.2.3](#) shall not be permitted.

##### 505.2.1.1 Aggregate area of mezzanines and equipment platforms.

Where a room contains both a mezzanine and an equipment platform, the aggregate area of the two raised floor levels shall be not greater than two-thirds of the floor area of that room or space in which they are located. The area of the mezzanine shall not exceed the area determined in accordance with [Section 505.2.1](#).

##### 505.2.2 Means of egress.

The means of egress for mezzanines shall comply with the applicable provisions of [Chapter 10](#).

##### 505.2.3 Openness.

A mezzanine shall be open and unobstructed to the room in which such mezzanine is located except for walls not more than 42 inches (1067 mm) in height, columns and posts.

##### Exceptions:

1. Mezzanines or portions thereof are not required to be open to the room in which the mezzanines are located, provided that the occupant load of the aggregate area of the enclosed space is not greater than 10.
2. A mezzanine having two or more exits or access to exits is not required to be open to the room in which the mezzanine is located.
3. Mezzanines or portions thereof are not required to be open to the room in which the mezzanines are located, provided that the aggregate floor area of the enclosed space is not greater than 10 percent of the mezzanine area.
4. In industrial facilities, mezzanines used for control equipment are permitted to be glazed on all sides.
5. In occupancies other than Groups H and I, which are no more than two stories above grade plane and equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with [Section 903.3.1.1](#), a mezzanine having two or more exits or access to exits shall not be required to be open to the room in which the mezzanine is located.

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### **505.3 Equipment platforms.**

*Equipment platforms* in buildings shall not be considered as a portion of the floor below. Such *equipment platforms* shall not contribute to either the *building area* or the number of *stories* as regulated by Section 503.1. The area of the *equipment platform* shall not be included in determining the *fire area* in accordance with Section 903. *Equipment platforms* shall not be a part of any *mezzanine* and such platforms and the walkways, *stairways*, *alternating tread devices* and ladders providing access to an *equipment platform* shall not serve as a part of the *means of egress* from the building.

#### **505.3.1 Area limitation.**

The aggregate area of all *equipment platforms* within a room shall be not greater than two-thirds of the area of the room in which they are located. Where an *equipment platform* is located in the same room as a *mezzanine*, the area of the *mezzanine* shall be determined by [Section 505.2.1](#) and the combined aggregate area of the *equipment platforms* and *mezzanines* shall be not greater than two-thirds of the room in which they are located. The area of the *mezzanine* shall not exceed the area determined in accordance with Section 505.2.1.

#### **505.3.2 Automatic sprinkler system.**

Where located in a building that is required to be protected by an *automatic sprinkler system*, *equipment platforms* shall be fully protected by sprinklers above and below the platform, where required by the standards referenced in [Section 903.3](#).

#### **505.3.3 Guards.**

*Equipment platforms* shall have *guards* where required by [Section 1015.2](#).