June 12, 2017

Q: We have two small rooms that residents use as amenities -- a Resident's Laundry Room (to wash their own clothes if preferred) and also a small Library (with WIFI internet pc). These rooms have self-closing door hinges and do not stay open. Obviously door wedges are not permitted, and we are not sure about installing door magnets (fire safety reasons). What would be the best possible fix to ensure that no residents (in wheelchairs, especially) get trapped inside? We are thinking of installing a call light feature or a telephone or a camera to monitor...? Is it required for Life Safety Code to have door closers on these doors, or is it possible to take them away so we can keep the door open?

A: Both of these rooms sound like they are hazardous areas (laundry because of the dryer and library because of the combustible load (books). As such, the LSC requires the doors to be self-closing doors. Nothing can be done about that. To keep the doors open, you can use magnetic hold opens tied to the fire alarm system; or door closers with built in smoke detector in the closer. If there is a concern about residents getting trapped, anyone of the three features/systems you mentioned are acceptable.