Class IV Construction Barriers in Healthcare

THE DIRECT ANSWER

A Class IV construction barrier is the highest level of ICRA containment — critical barriers meeting NFPA 241 that completely isolate major demolition/construction work from occupied areas. Barriers must extend to the ceiling, or to the deck above where ceiling tile is removed ; all penetrations sealed with UL-listed firestop meeting the appropriate fire rating; the entire work zone under continuous negative pressure with HEPA-filtered exhaust; and an anteroom required for worker/material transition.

CLASS IV BARRIER REQUIREMENTS

- Critical barriers per NFPA 241 — full-height, sealed, dust-tight; plastic or hard construction completed without dust release.
- Extend to structure — to the ceiling, or to the deck above when tiles are removed; no open plenum bypass.
- Sealed penetrations — every hole, pipe, conduit, and puncture sealed; UL-listed firestop where the barrier is rated.
- Negative pressure throughout — entire workspace negatively pressurized via HEPA exhaust; airflow cascades from entry → anteroom → work area.
- HEPA exhaust outdoors — directed outside; if 25+ feet from entrances/intakes/windows, HEPA filtration of exhaust may not be required; indoor discharge must be HEPA-filtered at ≥99.97%.
- HVAC isolated — supply and return diffusers removed or isolated to prevent duct contamination and positive pressurization.
- Anteroom — required; workers HEPA-vacuumed or change coveralls passing through.

CLASS IV IN THE ICRA MATRIX

- Class IV applies to major demolition and construction (Type D activity) in medium to high-risk patient areas — and to any lower activity level the assessment elevates based on adjacent population.

FIELD QUESTION

What makes a barrier "Class IV"?

NFPA 241 critical barriers, full height to ceiling/deck, sealed UL-firestopped penetrations, continuous negative pressure with HEPA exhaust, isolated HVAC, and an anteroom — for major construction near medium/high-risk patient areas.

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