



Washington State Building Code Council

Improving the built environment by promoting health, safety and welfare

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STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. 15-03

CODE: 2012 International Building Code

SECTION: IBC 311.2 moderate-hazard storage, Group S-1
IFC 903.2.9 Automatic Sprinkler Systems Group S-1

A large mini storage development has been presented to Benton County Building Department. During the preconstruction meeting, the developers were advised that based on IBC 311.2 all the mini-storage units would be classified as S-1.

QUESTION: What is the occupancy classification for mini storages?

ANSWER: Occupancy classification is at the discretion of the local official. Classification of units as S-1 is reasonable based on the list of possible contents in IBC section 311.2. Classifying mini storage as Group S-1 is appropriate based on the history of these types of buildings.

IFC 903.2.9 Group S-1. An automatic sprinkler system shall be provided throughout all buildings containing a Group S-1 occupancy where one of the following conditions exists:

1. A Group S-1 fire area exceeds 12,000 square feet (1115 m²).
2. A Group S-1 fire area is located more than three stories above grade plane.
3. The combined area of all Group S-1 fire areas on all floors, including any mezzanines, exceeds 24,000 square feet (2230m²).
4. A Group S-1 fire area used for storage of commercial trucks or buses where the fire area exceeds 5,000 square feet (464m²).
5. A Group S-1 occupancy used for the storage of upholstered furniture or mattresses exceeds 2,500 square feet.

QUESTION: At a 2012 IBC update class, the instructor stated, paraphrasing, “Due to mini storages being subject to the storing of upholstered furniture and mattresses, 903.2.9 (5) is applicable”. While not every unit will be used to store upholstered furniture or mattresses, the plan check dilemma is determining which units will store what.

Is IFC/IBC 903.2.9 (5) always applicable to S-1 mini storages built under the current code?

ANSWER: The answer depends on what is allowed to be stored in the mini storage units. The answer is No if the building does not allow storage of upholstered furniture or mattresses per IFC 903.2.9(5). If the storage of upholstered furniture or mattresses is allowed, then the answer is Yes as IFC 903.2.9 applies.

SUPERSEDES: None

REQUESTED BY: Benton County Building Department