



Washington State Building Code Council

Improving the built environment by promoting health, safety and welfare

1500 Jefferson Street SE • P.O. Box 41449 • Olympia, Washington 98504
(360) 407-9280 • fax (360) 586-5366 • e-mail sbcc@ga.wa.gov • www.ga.wa.gov/sbcc

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. 15-05

CODE: 2012 International Residential Code
2012 International Building Code

SECTION: IRC R325 / IBC 308.3.3,420 – Adult Family Homes

QUESTION: IBC Section 308.3.3, Adult family homes, states “Adult family homes licensed by Washington State shall be classified as Group R-3 or shall comply with the *International Residential Code*.” IRC Section R325.2, Submittal standards, states “In addition to those requirements in Section 106.1, the submittal shall identify the project as a Group R-3 Adult Family Home Occupancy.” The State amendments require an adult family home to be reviewed as an R3 (even though it would be allowed to be constructed as an IRC structure). Would the adult family home have to be provided with fire sprinklers?

ANSWER: **The state code regulates adult family homes the same as a single family residence as required by RCW 70.128.140:**

RCW 70.128.140 Compliance with local codes and state and local fire safety regulations.

(1) Each adult family home shall meet applicable local licensing, zoning, building, and housing codes, and state and local fire safety regulations as they pertain to a single-family residence. It is the responsibility of the home to check with local authorities to ensure all local codes are met.

(2) An adult family home must be considered a residential use of property for zoning and public and private utility rate purposes. Adult family homes are a permitted use in all areas zoned for residential or commercial purposes, including areas zoned for single-family dwellings.

Requirements for fire sprinklers are contingent on the local codes. The language in IBC 310.5.2 provides that the adult family home is permitted to comply with the IRC. In 2012 the SBCC adopted a new section 420.7 in the IBC to be consistent with the IRC; the R3 designation was intended to establish the facility as a single family occupancy, not a commercial or institutional occupancy.

The issue with the 2012 State amendments (Section 420.7) is that Section 420.4 requires fire sprinklers in R occupancies. By designating adult family homes as an R3, the requirements of Section 420.4 would apply (and be in conflict with RCW 70.28.140). In order to correct this code conflict, there is a proposal to remove IBC Section 420.7 and have adult family homes addressed only in the IRC.

SUPERSEDES: None

REQUESTED BY: South Kitsap Fire & Rescue