



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) 407-9277 • e-mail sbcc@des.wa.gov • www.sbcc.wa.gov

STATE BUILDING CODE OPINION NO. 20-03

CODE: 2015 Washington State Energy Code
2015 International Building Code

SECTION: WSEC C405.2.5
IBC 1008.3

QUESTION: For the conditions specified in Sections 1008.3.1, 1008.3.2 and 1008.3.3 of the 2015 IBC, an emergency electrical system is required to 'automatically illuminate' specific areas of a building. However, Section C405.2.5 of the 2015 WSEC require occupancy motion sensors that would prevent the emergency lights from illuminating unless there is motion by an occupant in the area where the light is located.

Because the IBC says the electrical system shall "automatically illuminate" the specified area but the WSEC requires the emergency lighting to "automatically shut off" when the areas served by the emergency lights are unoccupied, does this constitute a conflict between the IBC and the WSEC?

If the answer to the above question is yes, then which code should apply?

If the answer is no, did the Council anticipate that the emergency lights may not function properly if the motion sensors are obscured by smoke?

ANSWER: **No. The intent was that the emergency lighting required by the IBC would govern. This requirement in the WSEC was based on the 2012 IBC language in Section 1006.1, which is comparable to the 2015 IBC Section 1008.2, and addresses means of egress illumination when the building is occupied. During an emergency, it was the intent that the 90 minutes of emergency lighting would still be provided per IBC Section 1008.3, and the level of emergency lighting required by the code at an average of 1 footcandle would be met by the 0.02 watts/sq. ft. exception.**

SUPERSEDES: None

REQUESTED BY: City of Bellevue