



# 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-Nov04

**CODE:** 2018 International Fire Code / IWUIC

**SECTION:** IFC. 304 Vegetation  
IWUIC. 302

**QUESTION 1:** Does the IFC 304.1.2 Vegetation code cite apply to neighborhoods:

1. Designated as wildland-urban interface?
2. Not designated as wildland-urban interface?

**ANSWER 1:** 1. **If the area is designated as being in the WUI area, it shall be in accordance with the WUIC.**

2. **You would apply the intent of the code language in the IFC.**

**QUESTION 2:** Does IFC 304.1.2 apply to live landscaped yards that overhang the fence and are within 10 feet of the eaves of the home not in an area defined as wildland-urban interface?

**ANSWER 2:** **It may. However, your local ordinance would define this, as jurisdictions differ from one to the next.**

**QUESTION 3:** What guidance is there to determine if “growth that is capable of being ignited and endangering property?”

**ANSWER 3:** **The commentary in the IFC provides guidance as to dead vegetation and weed growth, but refers to the WUIC for growing vegetation. “Accumulations of natural waste, such as grass clippings, weed growth and shrubbery cuttings, are only unsightly, but also represent a serious fire hazard. All too often these accumulations occur at or near fence lines that are adjacent to streets or alleys. This makes accidental ignition by a cigarette butt tossed from a passing vehicle a good possibility. Common sense tells us that removal of this kind of waste is beneficial. The rules of nearly all jurisdictions make waste control and removal the responsibility of the building or property owner, his or her agent, the tenant or the contractor if work is being done on the site. Uncontrolled vegetation growth poses substantial risk to areas designated as wildland-urban interface areas. Accordingly, such areas must comply with the provisions of the International Wildland Urban Interface Code® (IWUIC®).”**

**Most jurisdictions will cover this in more detail through an ordinance adoption as the state codes and international model codes are unable to provide specific requirements based on geographical differences from one locale to the next. Local zoning ordinances are also a common tool used to address these specific bullet points.**

**QUESTION 4:** If it is determined that the code is applied to this situation, can the code official require the neighbors to mitigate the situation? And, if so, what actions would be required.

**ANSWER4:** **This would be a decision that needs to be made at the local level based on interpretation of the IFC, WUIC (if applicable), and local ordinances.**

**QUESTION 5:** Is the IWUIC applied to neighborhoods not defined by the legislative body as wildland-urban interface? If not, what code would be applied to potentially compostable live vegetation?

**ANSWER 5:** **At the state level, no. However, this does not keep the jurisdiction from being able to adopt the WUIC at the municipal level.**

**QUESTION 6:** When will the maps be available for use in King and Pierce County with areas defined by roads or boundaries that can be used to enforce the IWUIC?

**ANSWER 6:** **The maps are currently in the final stage of approval and should be available soon.**

**SUPERSEDES:** None

**REQUESTED BY:** Valley Regional Fire Authority