



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL**

May 2018  
Log No. \_\_\_\_\_

**1. State Building Code to be Amended:**

- ☐ International Building Code
- ☐ ICC ANSI A117.1 Accessibility Code
- ☐ International Existing Building Code
- ☒ International Residential Code
- ☐ International Fire Code
- ☐ Uniform Plumbing Code

- ☐ International Mechanical Code
- ☐ International Fuel Gas Code
- ☐ NFPA 54 National Fuel Gas Code
- ☐ NFPA 58 Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code
- ☐ Wildland Urban Interface Code

For the Washington State Energy Code, please see specialized [energy code forms](#)

**Section(s):** R101.2, R102.5, R302.13, P2904.1.1, Appendix (AW)U, and Appendix AWW107.1

**Title:** Scope, Appendices, Fire protection of floors, Required sprinkler locations, Dwelling unit fire-sprinkler systems, Fire sprinklers.

**2. Proponent Name (Specific local government, organization or individual):**

**Proponent:** 2024 IRC TAG  
**Title:** 2024 IRC TAG  
**Date:** 8/15/25

**3. Designated Contact Person:**

**Name:** Dustin Curb  
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**4. Proposed Code Amendment.** Reproduce the section to be amended by underlining all added language, striking through all deleted language. Insert new sections in the appropriate place in the code in order to continue the established numbering system of the code. If more than one section is proposed for amendment or more than one page is needed for reproducing the affected section of the code, additional pages may be attached.

Clearly state if the proposal modifies an existing amendment or if a new amendment is needed. If the proposal modifies an **existing amendment**, show the modifications to the existing amendment by underlining all added language and striking through all deleted language. If a new amendment is needed, show the modifications to the **model code** by underlining all added language and striking through all deleted language.

Code(s) 2024 IRC Section(s) R101.2, R102.5, R302.13,  
P2904.1.1, Appendix (AW)U, and Appendix AWV107.1

Enforceable code language must be used.  
Amend section to read as follows:

#### **WAC 51-51-003**

##### **International Residential Code.**

The 2021 edition of the *International Residential Code* as published by the International Code Council is hereby adopted by reference with the following additions, deletions, and exceptions: Provided that chapters 11; ~~and 25 through 28; 29, except for section P2904; and 30~~ through 43 of this code are not adopted. Energy Code is regulated by chapter 51-11R WAC; Plumbing Code is regulated by chapter 51-56 WAC; Electrical Code is regulated by chapter 296-46B WAC or Electrical Code as adopted by the local jurisdiction. Appendix AF, Radon Control Methods, and Appendix AQ, Tiny Homes, ~~and Appendix AWU, Dwelling Unit Fire Sprinkler Systems,~~ are included in adoption of the International Residential Code.

#### **WAC 51-51-01010**

##### **Section R101—Scope and general requirements.**

**R101.2 Scope.** The provisions of the *International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* shall apply to the construction, *alteration*, movement, enlargement, replacement, *repair, equipment*, use and occupancy, location, removal and demolition of detached one- and two-family dwellings, adult family homes, and *townhouses* not more than three stories above *grade plane* in height with a separate means of egress and their *accessory structures* not more than three stories above *grade plane* in height.

EXCEPTIONS: 1. Live/work units located in *townhouses* and complying with the requirements of

Section 508.5 of the *International Building Code* shall be permitted to be constructed in accordance with the *International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings*. An automatic sprinkler system required by Section 508.5.7 of the *International Building Code* where constructed under the *International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* shall conform to P2904-Appendix AWU.

2. Owner-occupied lodging houses with one or two guestrooms shall be permitted to be constructed in accordance with the *International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings*.

3. Owner-occupied lodging homes with three to five guestrooms shall be permitted to be constructed in accordance with the *International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* where equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system in accordance with P2904-Appendix AWU.

4. A care facility with five or fewer persons receiving custodial care within a dwelling unit shall be permitted to be constructed in accordance with the *International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* where equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system in accordance with P2904-Appendix AWU.

5. A care facility with five or fewer persons receiving medical care within a dwelling unit shall be permitted to be constructed in accordance with the *International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* where equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system in accordance with [P2904](#) ~~Appendix AWU~~.
6. A care facility with five or fewer persons receiving care that are within a single-family dwelling shall be permitted to be constructed in accordance with the *International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* where equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system in accordance with [P2904](#) ~~Appendix AWU~~.

## **WAC 51-51-0102**

### **Section R102—Applicability.**

**R102.5 Appendices.** Provisions in the appendices shall not apply unless specifically referenced in the adopting ordinance. An appendix adopted by a local jurisdiction shall not be effective unless approved by the state building code council pursuant to RCW [19.27.060](#) (1)(a).

EXCEPTIONS: 1. The state building code council has determined that a local ordinance providing specifications for light straw-clay or strawbale construction, requiring a solar-ready zone, requiring fire sprinklers, or addressing construction and demolition material management or building deconstruction in accordance with Appendix AR, AS, AT, AWV, AWY, or AWZ of this code may be adopted by any local government upon notification of the council.

2. Appendix AF, Radon Control Methods, [and](#) Appendix AQ, Tiny Homes, ~~and Appendix AWU, Dwelling Unit Fire Sprinkler Systems~~, are included in adoption of the International Residential Code.

## **WAC 51-51-0302**

### **Section R302—Fire-resistant construction.**

**R302.13 Fire protection of floors.** Floor assemblies that are not required elsewhere in this code to be fire-resistance rated, shall be provided with a 1/2-inch (12.7 mm) gypsum wallboard membrane, 5/8-inch (16 mm) wood structural panel membrane, or equivalent on the underside of the floor framing member. Penetrations or openings for ducts, vents, electrical outlets, lighting, devices, luminaires, wires, speakers, drainage, piping and similar openings or penetrations shall be permitted.

EXCEPTIONS: 1. Floor assemblies located directly over a space protected by an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with [P2904](#) ~~Appendix AWU~~, NFPA 13D, or other approved equivalent sprinkler system.

2. Floor assemblies located directly over a crawl space not intended for storage or fuel-fired appliances.

3. Portions of floor assemblies shall be permitted to be unprotected when complying with the following:

3.1. The aggregate area of the unprotected portions shall not exceed 80 square feet (7.4 m<sup>2</sup>) per story.

3.2. Fire blocking in accordance with Section R302.11.1 is installed along the perimeter of the unprotected portion to separate the unprotected portion from the remainder of the floor assembly.

4. Wood floor assemblies using dimension lumber or *structural composite lumber* with a cross sectional area equal to or greater than 2-inch by 10-inch (50.8 mm by 254 mm) nominal dimension, or other approved floor assemblies demonstrating equivalent fire performance.

## **WAC 51-51-2904**

## Section 2904—Dwelling unit fire-sprinkler systems.

**P2904.1.1 Required sprinkler locations.** [Where required,](#) ~~s~~Sprinklers shall be installed to protect all areas of a dwelling unit.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. Uninhabitable attics, crawl spaces and normally unoccupied concealed spaces that do not contain fuel-fired appliances do not require sprinklers. In uninhabitable attics, crawl spaces and normally unoccupied concealed spaces that contain fuel-fired equipment, a sprinkler shall be installed above the equipment; however, sprinklers shall not be required in the remainder of the space.
2. Clothes closets, linen closets and pantries not exceeding 24 square feet (2.2 m<sup>2</sup>) in area, with the smallest dimension not greater than 3 feet (915 mm) and having wall and ceiling surfaces of gypsum board.
3. Bathrooms not more than 55 square feet (5.1 m<sup>2</sup>) in area.
4. Garages; carports; exterior porches; unheated entry areas, such as mud rooms, that are adjacent to an exterior door; and similar areas.

## WAC 51-51-60105

### Reserved.

### ~~Appendix U—Dwelling unit fire sprinkler systems.~~

~~The design and installation of residential fire sprinkler systems shall be in accordance with the International Residential Code Section P2904 Dwelling Unit Fire Sprinkler Systems.~~

~~**P2904.1.1 Required sprinkler locations.** Sprinklers shall be installed to protect all areas of a dwelling unit.~~

~~EXCEPTIONS:~~

- ~~1. Uninhabitable attics, crawl spaces and normally unoccupied concealed spaces that do not contain fuel-fired appliances do not require sprinklers. In uninhabitable attics, crawl spaces and normally unoccupied concealed spaces that contain fuel-fired equipment, a sprinkler shall be installed above the equipment; however, sprinklers shall not be required in the remainder of the space.~~
- ~~2. Clothes closets, linen closets and pantries not exceeding 24 square feet (2.2 m<sup>2</sup>) in area, with the smallest dimension not greater than 3 feet (915 mm) and having wall and ceiling surfaces of gypsum board.~~
- ~~3. Bathrooms not more than 55 square feet (5.1 m<sup>2</sup>) in area.~~
- ~~4. Garages; carports; exterior porches; unheated entry areas, such as mud rooms, that are adjacent to an exterior door; and similar areas.~~

## WAC 51-51-60107

### **Appendix AWW—Fire sprinklers.**

The provisions contained in this appendix are not mandatory unless specifically referenced in the adopting ordinance.

**AWV107.1 Fire sprinklers.** An approved automatic fire sprinkler system shall be installed in new one-family and two-family dwellings and townhouses in accordance with [P2904](#) ~~Appendix AWW~~.

- 5. Briefly explain your proposed amendment, including the purpose, benefits and problems addressed.** Specifically note any impacts or benefits to business, and specify construction types, industries and services that would be affected. Finally, please note any potential impact on enforcement such as special reporting requirements or additional inspections required.

The IRC Technical Advisory Group (TAG) finds that the current 2021 Washington State Residential Code (WSRC) has duplicated fire sprinkler installation requirements with P2904 and Appendix (AW)U. The goal of this proposal is to retain current standards and exceptions for mandatory fire sprinkler adoption while simplifying the code.

We propose the following changes:

- Removing Appendix (AW)U and reserving the WAC.
- Changing references in the code to Appendix (AW)U to P2904.
- Clarifying only P2904 of chapter 29 is adopted.
- Clarifying that P2904 only applies to dwelling units that are required to install fire sprinklers.

If this code change is adopted it will provide the following benefits:

1. Clarity – Removes redundant appendix, keeps design/installation requirements in one place (P2904).
2. Consistency – Aligns all sprinkler references to a single authoritative section.
3. Ease of maintenance – Updates to P2904 in future IRC adoptions will not require editing an entire appendix.
4. Alignment with intent – Continues to avoid mandatory fire sprinklers while preserving proper installation standards when locally required.

This will make it easier for code users to understand the intention and requirements of the code and make enforcement simpler. It will affect townhouses and other multifamily residential buildings that are required to have fire sprinklers under the code. No special reporting requirements or additional inspections required.

**6. Specify what criteria this proposal meets.** You may select more than one.

- ☐ The amendment is needed to address a critical life/safety need.
- ☒ The amendment clarifies the intent or application of the code.
- ☐ The amendment is needed to address a specific state policy or statute.
- ☐ The amendment is needed for consistency with state or federal regulations.
- ☐ The amendment is needed to address a unique character of the state.
- ☐ The amendment corrects errors and omissions.

**7. Is there an economic impact:** ☐ Yes ☒ No

If no, state reason:

This code change only makes editorial changes to the code and does not change fundamental requirements. No change to construction cost, operational costs, or enforcement time.

If yes, provide economic impact, costs and benefits as noted below in items a – f.

- Life Cycle Cost.** Use the OFM Life Cycle Cost [Analysis tool](#) to estimate the life cycle cost of the proposal using one or more typical examples. Reference these [Instructions](#); use these [Inputs](#). Webinars on the tool can be found [Here](#) and [Here](#)). If the tool is used, submit a copy of the excel file with your proposal submission. If preferred, you may submit an alternate life cycle cost analysis.
- Construction Cost.** Provide your best estimate of the construction cost (or cost savings) of your code change proposal.

\$[Click here to enter text.](#)/square foot

(For residential projects, also provide \$[Click here to enter text.](#)/ dwelling unit)

Show calculations here, and list sources for costs/savings, or attach backup data pages

- c. ***Code Enforcement.*** List any code enforcement time for additional plan review or inspections that your proposal will require, in hours per permit application:
- d. ***Small Business Impact.*** Describe economic impacts to small businesses:
- e. ***Housing Affordability.*** Describe economic impacts on housing affordability:
- f. ***Other.*** Describe other qualitative cost and benefits to owners, to occupants, to the public, to the environment, and to other stakeholders that have not yet been discussed:

Please send your completed proposal to: [sbcc@des.wa.gov](mailto:sbcc@des.wa.gov)

**All questions must be answered to be considered complete. Incomplete proposals will not be accepted.**