STATE OF WASHINGTON

# STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL

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: New Appendix XX

Title: Appendix XX: Temporary Emergency Shelters

2. Proponent Name:

Proponent: Washington State Building Code Council
Title: International Building Code TAG
Date: December 18, 2025

3. Designated Contact Person:

Name: Dustin Curb
Title: SBCC Managing Director
Address: P.O. Box 41449, Olympia, WA 98504

Office Phone: (360) 972-4158
Cell:
E-Mail address: dustin.curb@des.wa.gov

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)** __IBC_____ **Section(s)** new Appendix XX_____

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

   Black Text _____CA Appendix Code Language
   ~~Strike Through Text~~ _____Proposed Deletions
   Underline Text _____Proposed Additions
   Highlighted Text _____Emphasis

**APPENDIX XX – Temporary Emergency Shelters**

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

**Section XX101 General**

**XX101.1 Scope.** This appendix shall be applicable to emergency housing and emergency housing facilities, as defined in Section XX102.

**Section XX102 Definitions**

**XX102.1 General.** The following words and terms shall, for the purposes of this appendix, have the meanings shown herein. Refer to Chapter 2 of this code for general definitions.

**DEPENDENT UNIT.** Emergency housing not equipped with a kitchen area, toilet and sewage disposal system.

**EMERGENCY.** State of Emergency as defined in RCW 38.52.

**EMERGENCY HOUSING.** Housing in a permanent or temporary structure(s), occupied during a declaration of state of emergency, local emergency or shelter crisis. Emergency housing may include, but is not limited to, buildings and structures constructed in accordance with the Washington Building Code; and emergency sleeping cabins, emergency transportable housing units and tents constructed in accordance with this appendix.

**EMERGENCY HOUSING FACILITIES.** On-site common use facilities supporting emergency housing. Emergency housing facilities include, but are not limited to, kitchen areas, toilets, showers and bathrooms with running water. The use of emergency housing facilities is limited exclusively to the occupants of the emergency housing, personnel involved in operating the housing and other emergency personnel.

**EMERGENCY HOUSING SITE.** A site containing emergency housing and emergency housing facilities supporting the emergency housing.

**EMERGENCY SLEEPING CABIN.** Relocatable hard-sided structure constructed in accordance with this appendix, which may be occupied only for emergency housing if allowed by the enforcing agency.

**EMERGENCY TRANSPORTABLE HOUSING UNIT.** A single- or multiple-section prefabricated structure that is transportable by a vehicle and that can be installed on a permanent or temporary site in response to a need for emergency housing.

**LANDING PLATFORM.** A landing provided as the top step of a stairway accessing a loft.

**LOCAL EMERGENCY.** Emergency as defined by local ordinance.

**LOFT.** A floor level located more than 30 inches (762 mm) above the main floor and open to it on at least one side with a ceiling height of less than 6 feet 8 inches (2032 mm), used as a living or sleeping space.

**MEMBRANE STRUCTURE.** An air-inflated, air-supported, cable or frame-covered structure, not otherwise defined as a tent. (See Chapter 31 of this code.)

**TENT.** A structure, enclosure or shelter, with or without sidewalls or drops, constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by any manner except by air or the contents that it protects.

**Section XX103 Emergency Housing**

**XX103.1 General.** Emergency sleeping cabins, emergency transportable housing units, membrane structures and tents constructed and/or assembled in accordance with this appendix, shall be occupied only during declaration of state of emergency, local emergency.

Buildings and structures constructed in accordance with the Washington Building Code, used as emergency housing, shall be permitted to be permanently occupied.

**XX103.2 Existing Buildings Used for Emergency Housing.** Existing residential and nonresidential buildings or structures shall be permitted to be used as emergency housing and emergency housing facilities provided such buildings or structures comply with the building code provisions or this appendix. Existing buildings or structures used as emergency housing shall be occupied only during declaration of state of emergency, local emergency. Existing buildings used for emergency facilities shall constitute a temporary use and shall not be construed as a change of occupancy or change or use as defined elsewhere in the Code. After the emergency is removed the occupancy and use will revert to the previous classification.

**XX103.2.1 New Additions, Alterations and Change of Occupancy.** New additions, alterations and change of occupancy to existing buildings shall comply with the requirements of the Washington Building Code effective at the time of addition, alteration or change of occupancy. The requirements shall apply only to and/or within the specific area of the addition, alteration or change of occupancy.

**Exception:** Existing buildings and structures used for emergency housing and emergency housing facilities may not be required to comply with the Washington Energy Code, as determined by the enforcing agency.

**XX103.3 Occupant Load.** Except as otherwise stated in this appendix, the maximum occupant load allowed in buildings and structures used as emergency housing shall be determined by the enforcing agency, but the interior floor area shall not be less than 70 square feet (6.5 $m^2$ ) for one occupant. Where more than one person occupies the building/structure, the required floor area shall be increased at the rate of 50 square feet (4.65 $m^2$ ) for each occupant in excess of one.

**Exceptions: 1.** Tents.

**2.** For emergency housing the minimum interior floor area may be reduced to 53 square feet (4.9 $m^2$ ) if the enforcing agency determines that 53 square feet (4.9 $m^2$ ) is adequate space for a single-occupancy sleeping unit.

**XX103.4 Fire and Life Safety Requirements Not Addressed in This Appendix.** If not otherwise addressed in this appendix, fire and life safety measures, including, but not limited to, means of egress, fire separation, fire sprinklers, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms, shall be determined and enforced by the enforcing agency.

**XX103.5 Privacy.** Emergency housing shall be provided with a privacy lock on each entrance door and all windows for use by the occupants.

**XX103.6 Heating.** All sleeping areas shall be provided with adequate heating as determined by the enforcing agency.

**Section XX104 Emergency Sleeping Cabins**

**XX104.1 General.** Emergency sleeping cabins shall have an interior floor area of not less than 70 square feet (6.5 $m^2$ ) for one occupant. Where more than one person occupies the cabin, the required floor area shall be increased at the rate of 50 square feet (4.65 $m^2$ ) for each occupant in excess of one. The interior floor area shall not exceed 400 square feet (37 $m^2$ ), excluding lofts.

**XX104.2 Live Loads.** Emergency sleeping cabins shall be designed to resist intrusion of wind, rain, and to support the following live loads:

**1.** Floor live loads not less than 40 pounds per square foot (1.92 kPa) of floor area.

**2.** Lateral loads not less than 15 pounds per square foot (718 Pa) of vertical wall and roof area.

**3.** Roof live loads not less than 20 pounds per square foot (958 Pa) of horizontal roof area.

**4.** In areas where snow loads are greater than 30 pounds per square foot (958 Pa), the roof shall be designed and constructed to resist these additional loads.

**XX104.3 Minimum Ceiling Height.** Habitable space and hallways in emergency sleeping cabins shall have a ceiling height of not less than 80 inches (2032 mm). Bathrooms, toilet rooms and kitchens, if provided, shall have a ceiling height of not less than 76 inches (1930 mm). Obstructions shall not extend below these minimum ceiling heights including beams, girders, ducts, lighting and other obstructions.

**Exception:** Ceiling heights in lofts constructed in accordance with Section XX108 are permitted to be less than 80 inches (2032 mm).

**XX104.4 Means of Egress.** Emergency sleeping cabins shall be provided with at least two forms of egress placed remotely from each other. One form of egress may be an egress window complying with Section XX104.4.1. When a loft is provided, one form of egress shall be an egress window complying with Section XX104.4.1, provided in the loft space.

**XX104.4.1 Egress Window.** The bottom of the clear opening of the egress window shall not be more than 44 inches (1118 mm) above the floor. The egress window shall have a minimum net clear opening height of 24 inches (610 mm), and a minimum net clear opening width of 20 inches (508 mm). The egress window shall have a minimum net clear opening area of 5 square feet (0.465 $m^2$ ).

**XX104.5 Plumbing and Gas Service.** If an emergency sleeping cabin contains plumbing or gas service, it shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Washington Plumbing Code and the Washington Mechanical Code.

**XX104.6 Electrical.** Emergency sleeping cabins shall be provided with all of the following installed in compliance with the Washington Electrical Code RCW 19.28:

**1.** Continuous source of electricity.

**Exception:** The source of electricity may be an emergency generator or renewable source of power such as solar or wind power.

**2.** At least one interior lighting fixture.

**3.** Electrical heating equipment listed for residential use and a dedicated receptacle outlet for the electrical heating equipment.

**Exception:** Electrical heating equipment and a dedicated receptacle outlet for the electrical heating equipment are not required if a nonelectrical source of heating is provided.

**4.** At least one GFCI-protected receptacle outlet for use by the occupant(s).

**XX104.7 Ventilation.** Emergency sleeping cabins shall be provided with means of ventilation (natural and/or mechanical) allowing for adequate air replacement, as determined by the enforcing agency.

**XX104.8 Smoke Alarms.** Emergency sleeping cabins shall be provided with at least one smoke alarm installed in accordance with the Washington Building Code.

**XX104.9 Carbon Monoxide Alarms.** If an emergency sleeping cabin contains a fuel-burning appliance(s) or a fireplace(s), a carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed in accordance with the Washington Building Code.

**Section XX105 Tents and Membrane Structures**

**XX105.1 General.** Tents shall not be used to house occupants for more than 7 days unless such tents are maintained with tight wooden floors raised at least 4 inches (101.6 mm) above the ground level and are equipped with baseboards on all sides to a height of at least 6 inches (152.4 mm). Tents may be maintained with concrete slabs with the finished surface at least 4 inches (101.6 mm) above grade and equipped with curbs on all sides at least 6 inches (152.4 mm) high.

A tent shall not be considered a suitable sleeping place when it is found necessary to provide heating facilities in order to maintain a minimum temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10 degrees Celsius) within such tent during the period of occupancy.

Membrane structures installed and/or assembled in accordance with Chapter 31 of this code, may be permitted to be used as emergency housing and emergency housing facilities, as determined by the enforcing agency.

**Section XX106 Accessibility**

**XX106.1 General.** Emergency housing shall comply with the applicable requirements in Chapter 11 and/or the US Access Board Accessibility Guidelines for Emergency Transportable Housing Units.

**Note:** The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (US Access Board) issued the Final Guidelines for Emergency Transportable Housing on May 7, 2014. The final guidelines amended the 2004 ADA Accessibility Guidelines (2004 ADAAG) and the 2004 Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Accessibility Guidelines (2004 ABAAG) to specifically address emergency transportable housing units provided to disaster survivors by entities subject to the ADA or ABA. The final rule ensures that the emergency transportable housing units are readily accessible to and usable by disaster survivors with disabilities.

**Section XX107 Lofts in Emergency Housing**

**XX107.1 Minimum Loft Area and Dimensions.** Lofts used as a sleeping or living space shall meet the minimum area and dimension requirements of Sections XX108.1.1 through XX108.1.3.

**XX107.1.1 Minimum Area.** Lofts shall have a floor area of not less than 35 square feet (3.25 $m^2$ ).

**XX107.1.2 Minimum Dimensions.** Lofts shall be not less than 5 feet (1524 mm) in any horizontal dimension.

**XX107.1.3 Height Effect on Loft Area.** Portions of a loft with a sloping ceiling measuring less than 3 feet (914 mm) from the finished floor to the finished ceiling shall not be considered as contributing to the minimum required area for the loft.

**Exception:** Under gable roofs with a minimum slope of 6:12, portions of a loft with a sloping ceiling measuring less than 16 inches (406 mm) from the finished floor to the finished ceiling shall not be considered as contributing to the minimum required area for the loft.

**XXP107.2 Loft Access.** The access to and primary egress from lofts shall be any type described in Sections XX108.2.1 through XX108.2.4.

**XX107.2.1 Stairways.** Stairways accessing lofts shall comply with the California Residential Code or with Sections XX108.2.1.1 through XX108.2.1.6.

**XX107.2.1.1 Width.** Stairways accessing a loft shall not be less than 17 inches (432 mm) in clear width at or above the handrail. The minimum width below the handrail shall be not less than 20 inches (508 mm).

**XX107.2.1.2 Headroom.** The headroom in stairways accessing a loft shall be not less than 74 inches (1880 mm), as measured vertically, from a sloped line connecting the tread or landing platform nosings in the middle of their width.

**XX107.2.1.3 Treads and Risers.** Risers for stairs accessing a loft shall be not less than 7 inches (178 mm) and not more than 12 inches (305 mm) in height. Tread depth and riser height shall be calculated in accordance with one of the following formulas:

**1.** The tread depth shall be 20 inches (508 mm) minus 4/3 of the riser height, or
**2.** The riser height shall be 15 inches (381 mm) minus 3/4 of the tread depth.

**XX107.2.1.4 Landing Platforms.** The top step of stairways accessing lofts shall be constructed as a landing platform where the loft ceiling height is less than 74 inches (1880 mm). The landing platform shall be 18 inches (457 mm) to 22 inches (559 mm) in depth measured from the nosing of the landing platform to the edge of the loft, and 16 inches (406 mm) to 18 inches (457 mm) in height measured from the landing platform to the loft floor.

**XX107.2.1.5 Handrails.** Handrails shall comply with the Washington Building Code.

**XX107.2.1.6 Stairway Guards.** Guards at open sides of stairways shall comply with the Washington Building Code.

**XX107.2.2 Ladders.** Ladders accessing lofts shall comply with Sections XX108.2.2.1 and XX108.2.2.2.

**XX107.2.2.1 Size and Capacity.** Ladders accessing lofts shall have a rung width of not less than 12 inches (305 mm), and 10 inches (254 mm) to 14 inches (356 mm) spacing between rungs. Ladders shall be capable of supporting a 200 pound (90.7 kg) load on any rung. Rung spacing shall be uniform within 3/8 inch (9.5 mm).

**XX107.2.2.2 Incline.** Ladders shall be installed at 70 to 80 degrees from horizontal.

**XX107.2.3** Alternating Tread Devices. Alternating tread devices are acceptable as allowed by the enforcing agency.

**XX107.2.4 Loft Guards.** Loft guards shall be located along the open side of lofts. Loft guards shall not be less than 36 inches (914 mm) in height or one-half of the clear height to the ceiling, whichever is less. Loft guards shall not have openings from the walking surface to the required guard height that allow passage of a sphere 4 inches (102 mm) in diameter.

**Section XX108 Location, Maintenance and Identification**

**XX108.1 Maintenance.** Emergency housing and emergency housing facilities shall be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition, and free from vermin, vectors and other matter of an infectious or contagious nature. The grounds within emergency housing sites shall be kept clean and free from accumulation of debris, filth, garbage and deleterious matter. Emergency housing and emergency housing facilities shall not be occupied if a substandard condition exists, as determined by the enforcing agency.

**XX108.1.1 Fire Hazards.** Dangerous materials or materials that create a fire hazard, as determined by the enforcing agency, shall not be allowed on the grounds within emergency housing sites.

**XX108.2 Identification.** Emergency housing shall be designated by address numbers, letters or other suitable means of identification. The identification shall be in a conspicuous location facing the street or driveway fronting the building or structure. Each identification character shall be not less than 4 inches (102 mm) in height and not less than 0.5 inch (12.7 mm) in width, installed/painted on a contrasting background.

**Section XX109 Emergency Housing Facilities**

**XX109.1 Drinking Water.** Potable drinking water shall be provided for all occupants of emergency housing.

**XX109.2 Kitchens.** Where occupants of dependent units are permitted or required to cook for themselves, a separate area shall be equipped and maintained as a common use kitchen. Refrigerated storage shall be provided for safe storage of food.

**XX109.3 Toilet and Bathing Facilities.** When dependent units are used as emergency housing, the emergency housing site shall be provided with one toilet and one bathing facility for every 15 occupants of each gender. The enforcing agency may permit different types and ratios of toilet and bathing facilities. The approval shall be based upon a finding that the type and ratio of toilet and bathing facilities are sufficient to process the anticipated volume of sewage and waste water, while maintaining sanitary conditions for the occupants of the emergency housing. Bathing facilities shall be provided with heating equipment which shall be capable of maintaining a temperature of 70 degrees F (21.0 degrees Celsius) within such facilities. Lavatories with running water shall be installed and maintained in the toilet facilities or adjacent to the toilet facilities.

**XX109.4 Garbage, Waste and Rubbish Disposal.** All garbage, kitchen waste and rubbish shall be deposited in approved covered receptacles, which shall be emptied when filled and the contents shall be disposed of in a sanitary manner acceptable to the enforcing agency.

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 Washington State Building Code Council via RCW 19.27.042 (3) has been directed to adopt, by rule, standards for temporary emergency shelters to make them available for local adoption. The 2024 International Building Code Technical Advisory Group Has developed this proposed language based on Appendix Q Emergency Housing of the 2025 California Building Code.

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.
19.27.042 (3)
☐ 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:

Economic impacts are not included in the development of these provisions. In accordance with RCW 19.27.042(3) and RCW 34.05.310 (4) (b), the above content is explicitly and specifically dictated by statute.

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

a. ***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.

b. ***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: