

**SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO THE
International Residential Code®**

2021 EDITION

International Code Council

ICC Staff:

Executive Vice President and Director of
Business Development:

Mark A. Johnson

Senior Vice President, Business and
Product Development:

Hamid Naderi

Vice President and Technical Director,
Products and Services:

Doug Thornburg

Senior Marketing Specialist:

Dianna Hallmark

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Project Head: Doug Thornburg

Publications Manager: Anne F. Kerr

Cover Design: Ricky Razo



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Contents



PART 1

Administration Chapters 1 and 2

- R102.7.1
Additions, Alterations or Repairs
- R202
Definition of Emergency Escape and Rescue Opening
- R202
Definition of Townhouse

PART 2

Building Planning Chapter 3

- R301.1.4
Intermodal Shipping Containers
- R301.2
Wind Speeds
- Table R301.2.1(1)
Component and Cladding Wind Pressures
- R301.2.1.1
Special Wind Regions
- R301.2.2.6
Irregular Buildings in Seismic Areas
- R301.2.2.10
Seismic Anchorage of Water Heaters

1	■ R301.3 Story Height	23
2	■ R302.2 Townhouses	26
4	■ R302.3 Two-Family Dwelling Separation	29
6	■ R302.4 Dwelling Unit Rated Penetrations	31
7	■ R302.5 Dwelling-Garage Opening Protection	33
9	■ R303.1 Mechanical Ventilation	35
11	■ R305.1 Ceiling Height	37
13	■ R308.4.5 Glazing and Wet Surfaces	39
16	■ R308.6 Skylight Glass Retention Screens	41
18	■ R310.1 Emergency Escape and Rescue Opening Required	44
22	■ R310.2 Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings	46
	■ R310.3, R310.4 Area Wells for Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings	49

■ ■ R310.5, R310.6, R310.7 Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings in Existing Buildings	53	■ ■ R507.6 Deck Joists	105
■ ■ R311.7, R311.8 Stairways and Ramps	56	■ ■ R507.7 Decking	108
■ ■ R311.7.7 Stairway and Landing Walking Surface	58	■ ■ R507.10 Exterior Guards	110
■ ■ R312.2 Window Fall Protection	59	■ ■ Table R602.3(1) Fasteners – Roof and Wall	112
■ ■ R314.3 Smoke Alarm Locations	61	■ ■ Table R602.3(1) Fasteners – Roof Sheathing	114
■ ■ R315.2.2 Carbon Monoxide Alarms	63	■ ■ Table R602.3(2) Alternate Attachments	116
■ ■ R317.1 Protection of Wood Against Decay	65	■ ■ R602.9 Cripple Walls	118
■ ■ R320 Accessibility	69	■ ■ R602.10.1.2 Location of Braced Wall Lines	120
■ ■ R323 Storm Shelters	71	■ ■ R602.10.2.2 Location of Braced Wall Panels (BWPs)	123
■ ■ R324.3 Photovoltaic Systems	73	■ ■ R602.10.3(1) Bracing for Winds	125
■ ■ R326 Habitable Attics	76	■ ■ Table R602.10.3(3) Seismic Wall Bracing	127
		■ ■ Table R602.10.3(4) Adjustment Factors – Seismic	129
PART 3		■ ■ R602.10.6.5 Stone and Masonry Veneer	132
Building Construction		■ ■ R609.4.1 Garage Doors	135
Chapters 4 through 10	80	■ ■ R702.7 Vapor Retarders	137
■ ■ Table R403.1(1) Footings Below Light-Frame Construction	82	■ ■ R703.2, R703.7.3 Water-Resistive Barriers	141
■ ■ R406.2 Foundation Waterproofing	87	■ ■ Table R703.8.4(1) Veneer Attachment	144
■ ■ R408.8 Vapor Retarder in Crawlspace	89	■ ■ R703.11.2 Vinyl Siding Installation Over Foam Plastic Sheathing	146
■ ■ R506.2.3 Vapor Retarders Under Concrete Slabs	91	■ ■ R704 Soffits	148
■ ■ R507 Deck Loads	93	■ ■ R802 Wood Roof Framing	153
■ ■ R507.3 Deck Footings	95	■ ■ Table R802.5.2(1) Heel Joint Connections	155
■ ■ R507.4 Deck Posts	97		
■ ■ R507.5 Deck Beams	100		

■ ■ R802.6	Rafter and Ceiling Joist Bearing	158	■ ■ N1103.3.5	Duct Testing	205
■ ■ Table R804.3	CFS Roof Framing Fasteners	160	■ ■ N1103.6	Mechanical Ventilation	207
■ ■ R905.4.4.1	Metal Roof Shingle Wind Resistance	163	■ ■ N1104	Lighting Equipment	210
PART 4			■ ■ N1105 and Table N1105.2		
Energy Conservation			Total Building Performance Analysis		
Chapter 11			212		
165			■ ■ N1106 and Table N1106.2		
■ ■ N1101.6	Definition of High-Efficacy Light Sources	167	Energy Rating Index Analysis		
■ ■ N1101.7	Climate Zones	168	216		
■ ■ N1101.13	Compliance Options	171	■ ■ N1108		
■ ■ N1101.13.5	Additional Energy Efficiency Requirements	174	Additional Efficiency Package Options		
■ ■ N1101.14	Permanent Energy Certificate	176	220		
■ ■ N1102.1	Building Thermal Envelope	178	PART 5		
■ ■ Tables N1102.1.2 and N1102.1.3	Insulation and Fenestration Requirements	180	Mechanical		
■ ■ N1102.2	Ceiling Insulation	184	Chapters 12 through 23		
■ ■ N1102.2.4	Access Hatches and Doors	187	223		
■ ■ N1102.2.7	<i>R</i> -Value Reduction for Walls with Partial Structural Sheathing	189	■ ■ M1505		
■ ■ N1102.2.7	Floor Insulation	191	Balanced Ventilation System Credit		
■ ■ N1102.2.8	Unconditioned Basement	193	224		
■ ■ N1102.4 and Table N1102.4.1.1	Building Air Leakage and Testing	195	■ ■ M1802.4		
■ ■ N1102.4.6	Air-Sealed Electrical Boxes	200	Blocked Vent Switch for Oil-fired Appliances		
■ ■ N1103.3	Duct Installation	202	227		
			■ ■ M2101		
			Hydronic Piping Systems Installation		
			228		
			PART 6		
			Fuel Gas		
			Chapter 24		
			231		
			■ ■ G2403		
			Definitions of Point of Delivery and Service Meter Assembly		
			232		
			■ ■ G2414.8.3		
			Threaded Joint Sealing		
			234		
			■ ■ G2415.5		
			Fittings in Concealed Locations		
			236		
			■ ■ G2427.5.5.1		
			Chimney Lining		
			237		
			■ ■ G2427.8		
			Through-the-wall Vent Terminal Clearances		
			239		
			■ ■ G2439.5		
			Makeup Air for Dryer Installed in a Closet		
			242		

■ ■ **G2447.2**
Commercial Cooking Appliances Prohibited 243

PART 7
Plumbing
Chapters 25 through 33 **245**

■ ■ **P2503.5.1**
Drain, Waste and Vent Systems Testing 246

■ ■ **P2708.4, P2713.3**
Shower and Bathtub Control Valves 248

■ ■ **P2904**
Installation Practices for Residential Sprinklers 250

■ ■ **P2905.3**
Length of Hot Water Piping to Fixtures 254

■ ■ **P3005.2.10.1**
Removable Fixture Traps as Cleanouts 255

■ ■ **P3011**
Relining of Building Sewers and Building Drains 256

PART 8
Electrical
Chapters 34 through 43 **259**

■ ■ **E3601.8**
Emergency Service Disconnects 261

■ ■ **E3606.5**
Service Surge-Protective Device 263

■ ■ **E3703.4**
Bathroom Branch Circuits 264

■ ■ **E3703.5**
Garage Branch Circuits 266

■ ■ **E3901.4**
Kitchen Countertop and Work Surface Receptacles 268

■ ■ **E3902**
GFCI Protection for 250-Volt Receptacles 271

■ ■ **E3902.5**
GFCI Protection for Basement Receptacles 274

■ ■ **E3902.10**
GFCI Protection for Indoor Damp and Wet Locations 276

PART 9
Appendices
Appendix A through W **277**

■ ■ **AF104**
Radon Testing 278

■ ■ **Appendix AU**
Cob Construction 281

■ ■ **Appendix AW**
3D Printed Buildings 284

Preface

The purpose of *Significant Changes to the International Residential Code®*, 2021 Edition, is to familiarize building officials, fire officials, plans examiners, inspectors, design professionals, contractors, and others in the building construction industry with many of the important changes in the 2021 *International Residential Code®* (IRC®). This publication is designed to assist code users in identifying the specific code changes that have occurred and understanding the reasons behind the changes. It is also a valuable resource for jurisdictions in their code-adoption process.

Only a portion of the code changes to the IRC are discussed in this book. The changes selected were identified for a number of reasons, including their frequency of application, special significance, or change in application. However, the importance of the changes not included is not to be diminished. Further information on all code changes can be found in the Complete Revision History to the 2021 I-Codes, available from the International Code Council® (ICC®) online store. This resource provides the published documentation for each successful code change contained in the 2021 IRC since the 2018 edition.

Significant Changes to the International Residential Code, 2021 Edition, is organized into nine parts, each representing a distinct grouping of code topics. It is arranged to follow the general layout of the IRC, including code sections and section number format. The table of contents, in addition to providing guidance in the use of this publication, allows for a quick identification of those significant code changes that occur in the 2021 IRC.

Throughout the book, each change is accompanied by a photograph, an application example or an illustration to assist and enhance the reader's understanding of the specific change. A summary and a discussion of the significance of the change are also provided. Each code change is identified by type, be it an addition, modification, clarification, or deletion.

The code change itself is presented in a legislative format similar to the style utilized for code-change proposals. Deleted code language is shown with a strikethrough, and new code text is indicated by underlining.

As a result, the actual 2021 code language is provided, as well as a comparison with the 2018 language, so the user can easily determine changes to the specific code text.

As with any code-change text, *Significant Changes to the International Residential Code, 2021 Edition*, is best used as a companion to the 2021 IRC. Because only a limited discussion of each change is provided, the code itself should always be referenced in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the code change and its application.

The commentary and opinions set forth in this text are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of ICC. In addition, they may not represent the views of any enforcing agency, as such agencies have the sole authority to render interpretations of the IRC. In many cases, the explanatory material is derived from the reasoning expressed by code-change proponents.

Comments concerning this publication are encouraged and may be directed to ICC at significantchanges@iccsafe.org.

About the *International Residential Code*[®]

Building officials, design professionals, contractors and others involved in the field of residential building construction recognize the need for a modern, up-to-date residential code addressing the design and installation of building systems through both prescriptive and performance requirements. The *International Residential Code*[®] (IRC), *2021 Edition*, is intended to meet these needs through model code regulations that safeguard the public health and safety in all communities, large and small. The IRC is kept up to date through ICC's open code-development process. The provisions of the 2018 edition, along with those code changes approved in the most recent code development cycle, make up the 2021 edition.

The IRC is one in a family of 15 International Codes[®] (I-Codes[®]) published by ICC. This comprehensive residential code establishes minimum regulations for residential building systems by means of prescriptive and performance-related provisions. It is founded on broad-based principles that make possible the use of new materials and new building designs. The IRC is a comprehensive code containing provisions for building, energy conservation, mechanical, fuel gas, plumbing and electrical systems. The IRC is available for adoption and use by jurisdictions internationally. Its use within a governmental jurisdiction is intended to be accomplished through adoption by reference, in accordance with proceedings established by the jurisdiction's laws.

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About the Authors

Stephen A. Van Note, CBO
International Code Council
Managing Director, Product Development

Stephen A. Van Note is the Managing Director of Product Development for the International Code Council (ICC), where he is responsible for developing technical resource materials in support of the International Codes. His role also includes the management, review, and technical editing of publications developed by ICC staff members and other expert authors. He has authored a number of ICC support publications, including *Residential Code Essentials and Inspector Skills*. In addition, Steve develops and presents *International Residential Code* seminars nationally. He has over 50 years of experience in the construction and building code arena. Prior to joining ICC in 2006, Steve was a building official for Linn County, Iowa. Prior to his 15 years at Linn County, he was a carpenter and construction project manager for residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. A certified building official and plans examiner, Steve also holds certifications in several inspection categories.

Sandra Hyde, P.E.
International Code Council
Senior Staff Engineer, Product Development

Sandra Hyde is a Senior Staff Engineer with the International Code Council (ICC), where, as part of the Product Development team, she develops technical resource materials in support of the structural provisions of the International Residential, Building and Existing Building Codes. Her role also includes review and technical editing of publications authored by ICC and engineering associations, and the presentation of technical seminars on the IRC and IBC structural provisions. She has authored and reviewed support publications, including *Significant Changes to the International Building Code*, *Special Inspection Manual*, and, in conjunction with APA, *Guide to the IRC Wall Bracing Provisions*. Prior to joining ICC in 2010, Sandra worked in manufacturing and research of engineered wood products. She is a Registered Civil Engineer in Idaho and California.

About the International Code Council®

The International Code Council is a nonprofit association that provides a wide range of building safety solutions including product evaluation, accreditation, certification, codification and training. It develops model codes and standards used worldwide to construct safe, sustainable, affordable and resilient structures. ICC Evaluation Service (ICC-ES) is the industry leader in performing technical evaluations for code compliance, fostering safe and sustainable design and construction.

Washington DC Headquarters:

500 New Jersey Avenue, NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20001

Regional Offices:

Eastern Regional Office: (BIR)

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Distribution Center (Lenexa, KS)

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