



**TOPIC: Fire Sprinkler Requirements For R Occupancy
IBC/9/#2**

CODE: Structural Specialty Code – 2010 Edition

REVISED: March 18, 2013 *[Paul L. Scarlett]* , Director

REFERENCE: Structural Specialty Code – Chapter 9 and Appendix AN

**SUBJECT: Fire Sprinkler Requirements For Existing Buildings
With a Residential Fire Area**

QUESTION: The Code requires an automatic fire sprinkler system to be installed throughout all buildings containing a Residential (Group R) occupancy. Group R occupancies include hotels, apartments and condominiums. When and where is a fire sprinkler system required in existing buildings that have a Group R fire area added?

RESPONSE: The following conditions describe when and if a full or partial automatic fire sprinkler system is required in an existing building that has a Group R fire area added:

Condition 1 Converting a portion of the structure to a use classification other than R occupancy within a building containing an existing R occupancy:

Automatic sprinklers are not required to be installed in existing, unsprinklered buildings containing one or more dwelling units or guest rooms where a portion of the structure is converted to a use classification other than R occupancy, provided all of the following conditions are met:

1. It can be clearly documented by permit records that the building is legally classified as containing R occupancy.
2. The area being converted to other than R occupancy is not required to be sprinklered by any other provisions of the Structural Specialty Code based on the occupancy classification.
3. The allowable area, allowable height and type of construction for the building comply with the Structural Specialty Code without automatic sprinklers.

IBC/9/#2

Fire Sprinkler Requirements for Existing Buildings With a Residential Fire Area

Page 2 of 3

March 18, 2013

4. Required separations between the R occupancy portions of the building and the portion of the building being converted to a different occupancy are constructed as required by the Structural Specialty Code.

Condition 2 Enlarging existing dwelling unit(s) or guest room(s) by adding residential use floor areas converted from adjacent non-residential space within a building:

Automatic sprinklers may be installed solely in additional residential use floor areas converted from adjacent non-residential space to enlarge an existing dwelling unit within existing unsprinklered buildings, without installing sprinklers throughout the entire building, provided all of the following conditions are met:

1. It can be clearly documented by permit records that the building is legally classified as containing R occupancy.
2. The additional residential use floor areas are not located three or more stories above grade. Creation of this condition will require the entire structure to be fully sprinklered.
3. The automatic sprinkler system serving the additional residential use floor areas is installed to meet NFPA 13 R standards, to the satisfaction of the Fire Marshal's Office.

Condition 3 Adding new dwelling unit(s) or guest room(s) within a building containing an existing R occupancy:

Automatic sprinklers may be installed solely in newly-created dwelling unit(s) or guest room(s) and their exit ways within existing unsprinklered buildings, without installing sprinklers throughout the entire building, provided all of the following conditions are met:

1. It can be clearly documented by permit records that the building is legally classified as containing R occupancy.
2. The newly-created dwelling units are not located three or more stories above grade. Creation of this condition will require the entire structure to be fully sprinklered.
3. The automatic sprinkler system serving the newly-created dwelling units(s) or guest room(s) and their exit ways is installed to meet NFPA 13 R standards to the satisfaction of the Fire Marshal's Office. For the purpose of this Guide, exit way sprinkler protection includes the corridors, hallways, stairways,

lobbies and any rooms along the egress path from a dwelling unit to an exterior exit door on grade and also at least one sprinkler head at the opening of each room that has an opening directly into the egress path.

4. Any existing fire alarm or detection system in the building is improved or extended, if required by the Fire Marshal's Office, to provide coverage for the added dwelling unit(s) or guest room(s).
5. If the addition of the dwelling unit(s) or guest room(s) creates a condition where a fire alarm system is required for the building under the provisions of the Fire Code, such system shall be installed under permit from the Fire Marshal's Office.

Condition 4 Adding new dwelling unit(s) or guest room(s) within a building not containing an existing R occupancy:

An existing, unsprinklered building without documentation by permit records that the building is legally classified as containing R occupancy that has a portion of the building converted to an R occupancy shall have an automatic sprinkler system installed throughout the entire building.

Condition 5 Altering a building currently regulated under the Chapter 13 Inspection Program*:

The provisions of this Guide may not be applied to a building regulated under the Chapter 13 Inspection Program. An Administrative Building Code Appeal shall be approved prior to alterations as described in Conditions 1, 2 or 3 above of a building that is currently regulated under the Chapter 13 Inspection Program.

*The Chapter 13 Inspection Program is a systematic inspection program of multi-family residential buildings three or more stories in height constructed in or prior to 1972. See City of Portland Ordinance No. 135236 (<http://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/webdrawer.dll/webdrawer/rec/3962294/view/135236.PDF>), enacted on September 7, 1972 and Section 1313 of Chapter 13 of the Appendix to the 1973 Edition of the Uniform Building Code (<http://www.portlandonline.com/bds/index.cfm?c=42751>).