

## Significant Changes to the International Residential Code

- **R302.1 Exterior Walls** – References to the International Building Code;
  - \* offer additional options and provide flexibility in determining the fire resistance rating of exterior wall assemblies.
- **R302.2 Townhouses** – The 2018 IRC allows townhouses to be separated by two 1-hour walls or a common wall.
  - \* The 2015 IRC only allows the use of a common wall.
- **R311.7.3 Vertical Rise** – The maximum rise of a flight of stairs, between landings, has increased by 4 inches. 12'3" to 12'7".
  - \*not much significance
- **R311.7.11 – R311.7.12** – Alternating treads and ships ladders are now permitted as a means of egress for serving lofts that do not exceed 200 square feet in area.
  - \*does not require a true set of stairs; makes it easier to add additional living space
- **R314 Smoke Alarms** – The exemption for interconnection of alarms during alterations based on feasibility has been removed from the code.
  - \*we may want to amend this section- this makes battery operated smoke detectors non-compliant
- **R315 Carbon Monoxide Alarms** – Interconnection is now required where multiple alarms are required in a dwelling unit.
  - \*this will make all alarms audible if one goes off
- **R322.3 Coastal High Hazard Flood Zones** – In V zones and coastal A zones, the IRC now provides specific guidance for the design and construction of concrete slabs, stairs, guards, decks and porches to reduce damage to the dwelling in a flood event.
  - \*this will be for the areas defined in our Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance
- **R325.6 Habitable Attics** – A section has been added for habitable attics.
  - \*we may want to redefine how we address "habitable attics"- the code is very restrictive on attic spaces; requiring windows/emergency egress openings in attics with certain wall heights and areas
- **R507 Exterior Decks** – Section 507 is reorganized for ease of use and additional provisions are added to simplify prescriptive construction of a deck.
  - \*this is a great addition to the code which will allow the building department to assist persons building decks without them having to get engineering.
- **N1104.1 Lighting** – The required percentage of permanent lighting fixtures having high efficacy lamps has increased from 75% to 90%.
  - \*this is consistent with the new bulbs (LED) fixtures being manufactured
- **M1503.6 Makeup Air for Kitchen Exhaust Systems** – Makeup air for domestic cooking exhaust systems is no longer required if all fuel burning appliances in the dwelling unit have a direct vent or mechanical draft vent system.
  - \*makes installation easier

- **G2406.2 Prohibited Locations for Appliances** – A gas fired clothes dryer is now allowed to be installed in a bathroom where a permanent opening communicates with other permitted spaces.  
\*not something we typically see in our area
- **G2447.2 Commercial Cooking Appliances** – Commercial cooking appliances are now permitted in dwelling units when installed in accordance with an engineered design and the manufacturer’s instructions.  
\*this is a good addition with the larger, higher end homes being built in our area
- **P2503.7 Water supply system testing** – Compressed air testing of PEX piping is now allowed when testing is in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.  
\*I recommend amending this section; water testing is the preferred method.
- **P2903.5 Water Hammer** – A water hammer arrestor is now required where quick closing valves are used in the water system.  
\*a good addition to the code to eliminate a potential problem/noise
- **P2906.6.1 Saddle Tap Fittings** – Saddle tap fittings are no longer permitted on water distribution system piping.  
\*not a big change
- **P3111 Combination Waste and Vent System** - Food waste disposers are now permitted to connect to a combination waste and vent system.  
\*a good change to the code
- **E3703.5 Garage Branch Circuits** – A separate 20 amp branch circuit is now required to serve receptacle outlets in garages.  
\*this requirement was taken out of the 2015 and has been added back to the code; good change
- **Appendix Q Tiny Houses** – A new appendix covers provisions for tiny houses, defined as dwellings with a maximum floor area of 400 square feet.  
\*this appendix helps us tremendously as a structure under 400 square feet could be considered a recreational vehicle, therefore not covered by code requirements.