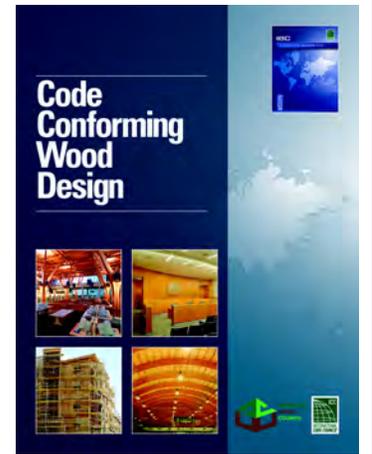


# Mercantile Buildings

## Allowable Wood Uses



### Introduction

Wood construction offers distinct design options typically not found in a single structural material. It is inexpensive, readily available, easy to work with, strong and adaptable. The economic, environmental and energy efficiency advantages account for more buildings being constructed of wood than any other structural material.

The intent of this pamphlet is to summarize allowable wood use in buildings in accordance with the International Code Council (ICC) 2009 *International Building Code*® (IBC®). Emphasis will be placed on the design flexibilities permitted for wood in commercial construction. This is not meant to be a replacement for the IBC and does not encompass all of the design options in the IBC. The IBC should always be consulted for applicable specific requirements related to designs and site conditions.

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8. Resources
9. Building Area Tables



## About the American Wood Council

The American Wood Council (AWC) is the voice of North American traditional and engineered wood products. AWC develops state-of-the-art engineering data, technology, and standards on structural wood products for use by design professionals, building officials, and wood products manufacturers to assure the safe and efficient design and use of wood structural components. AWC also provides technical, legal, and economic information on wood design, green building, and manufacturing environmental regulations advocating for balanced government policies that sustain the wood products industry.

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## About the International Code Council

The International Code Council is a member-focused association. It is dedicated to developing model codes and standards used in the design, build and compliance process to construct safe, sustainable, affordable and resilient structures. Most U.S. communities and many global markets choose the International Codes. ICC Evaluation Service (ICC-ES) is the industry leader in performing technical evaluations for code compliance fostering safe and sustainable design and construction.

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## Updates & Errata

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## 1. General Information

### Use and Occupancy Classification

The IBC lists Mercantile (M) occupancies in Section 309. Group “M” includes department stores, drugstores, markets, motor fuel-dispensing facilities, retail or wholesale stores and salesrooms. Essentially any place involving display and sale of merchandise is considered to be a Group M occupancy.



Figure 1: Retail Store

### Referenced Code and Standards

The IBC is developed by the International Code Council. Industry and professional standards are referenced in the IBC to clarify specific code requirements. Chapter 35 of the IBC provides a list of the standards referenced, the agency that writes the standard, the identification and title of the standard and its effective date.

Standards represent consensus on how a material, product or assembly is to be designed, manufactured, tested or installed so it achieves a specified level of performance. Several key standards relating to the design of wood structures are utilized by the IBC. Specifically, the 2009 IBC references the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA), a legacy organization of the American Wood Council (AWC), *2005 National Design Specification® (NDS-05®) for Wood Construction with 2005 Supplement* and the AF&PA/AWC SDPWS-08, *2008 Special Design Provisions for Wind and Seismic*. The NDS details structural and fire design methods in the use of lumber, timber, prefabricated wood i-joists, structural composite lumber and wood structural panels, using either Allowable Stress Design (ASD) or Load and Resistance Factor Design (LRFD). The SDPWS addresses materials, design and construction of wood members, fasteners and assemblies used to resist wind and seismic forces.

Section 8, Resources, of this pamphlet provides information on how to obtain these standards and other related materials.

## 2. Type of Construction

Chapter 6 of the IBC defines types of construction, with wood frame construction typically found in Types V, IV and III. Additionally, the IBC has specific applications that permit the use of wood in construction Types I and II. These circumstances will be addressed in Sections 5 and 6 of this pamphlet.

## Type V Construction

Type V construction permits the use of wood or other approved materials for structural elements, including structural frame members, bearing walls, floor and roof construction, as well as nonbearing elements such as exterior walls and interior partitions. Type V construction is further defined as Type VA (all interior and exterior load-bearing walls, floors, roofs and all structural members are designed or protected to provide a minimum 1-hour fire-resistance rating) and Type VB (no fire-resistance rating is required).



Figure 2: Type V Construction

## Type IV Construction

Type IV construction (Heavy Timber, HT) has exterior walls made of noncombustible materials or fire-retardant-treated wood (FRTW) and interior building elements made of solid or laminated wood without concealed spaces. Columns supporting roof and ceiling loads must be a minimum nominal dimension of 6 inches by 8 inches and 8 inches by 8 inches if supporting floor loads. Floor beams and girders must be a minimum nominal dimension of 6 inches by 10 inches and roof beams and girders must be a minimum nominal dimension of 4 inches by 6 inches. Flooring must be a minimum nominal 3-inch thickness covered with 1-inch nominal dimension tongue-and-groove flooring and roof decking must be a minimum nominal 2-inch thickness or 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-inch-thick wood structural panels. Partitions must be 1-hour fire-resistance-rated construction or a minimum two layers of 1-inch nominal board or laminated construction 4 inches thick.



Figure 3: Type IV Construction

## Type III Construction

Type III construction requires exterior walls to be noncombustible material or FRTW having a minimum 2-hour fire-resistance rating. All of the other building elements are permitted to be wood or other approved materials. Type IIIA construction needs to provide a minimum 1-hour fire-resistance rating for all building elements and Type IIIB construction does not require any fire-resistance rating other than the exterior load-bearing wall.



Figure 4: Type III Construction

## Type I and II Construction

Type I and II construction requires building elements constructed of noncombustible materials. Sections 5 and 6 of this pamphlet outline circumstances where wood is permitted in Types I and II buildings.

### 3. Allowable Heights and Areas for Type V, IV and III Construction

When the first edition (2000) of the IBC was published, wood buildings were allowed to have areas and heights commensurate with the largest buildings permitted for each construction type under at least one of the regional legacy codes. Since then, allowable building sizes have not changed significantly, although the number of buildings that qualify for unlimited area under the special provisions of Section 507 has expanded. In addition, special allowances for various building features such as sprinklers or the use of FRTW continue to be added. As a result, size thresholds for wood structures are more often determined by structural considerations than by code limitations. This may not be the case in the future.

General building height and area allowances are given in Chapter 5 of the IBC. Height and per-story area limitations are shown in the Table 503 excerpt (Figure 5) and are based on occupancy and type of construction. These area and height limitations are unmodified and can be significantly increased based on certain provisions of the code that will be explained in this section.

Group M	Type of Construction				
	Type III		Type IV	Type V	
	A	B	HT	A	B
Height (ft)	65	55	65	50	40
Stories (S)					
Area (A)					
S	4	2	4	3	1
A	18,500	12,500	20,500	14,000	9,000

Figure 5: Table 503 Excerpt

The height and area of a structure may be increased depending on the building location on the lot, the presence of automatic sprinkler systems or using some of the design options recognized in Chapter 5 of the IBC. Upper limits for the size of select buildings without sprinklers are located in Chapter 9. These increases and limits are discussed in detail in this section.

Equation 5-1 establishes the maximum allowable area per floor based on the Chapter 5 modifications.

$$A_a = \{A_t + [A_t \times I_f] + [A_t \times I_s]\} \quad \text{(Equation 5-1)}$$

where:

$A_a$  = Allowable building area per story (square feet).

$A_t$  = Tabular building area per story in accordance with Table 503 (square feet).

$I_f$  = Area increase factor due to frontage as calculated in accordance with Section 506.2.

$I_s$  = Area increase factor due to sprinkler protection as calculated in accordance with Section 506.3.

## Allowable Increases for Frontage

Buildings adjacent to an open space adjoining a public way, with the exterior wall a minimum of 20 feet from the far side of the public way for more than 25 percent of the building perimeter, may increase the allowable floor area from Table 503 using Equation 5-2.

$$I_f = [F / P - 0.25] W / 30 \quad \text{(Equation 5-2)}$$

where:

- $I_f$  = Area increase due to frontage.
- $F$  = Building perimeter that fronts on a public way or open space having 20 feet open minimum width (feet).
- $P$  = Perimeter of entire building (feet).
- $W$  = Width of public way or open space (feet) in accordance with Section 506.2.1. (A weighted average may be used when  $W$  varies along the perimeter.)  $W$  is the open space width plus the width of the public way.

It should be noted that frontage widths ( $W$ ) greater than 30 feet will only receive credit for a value of 30 feet. The maximum increase that can be obtained for frontage would occur when 100 percent of the perimeter has frontage of 30 feet or more and would result in a 75 percent floor area increase. Figure 6 illustrates the frontage increase concept for a three-story retail building of Type IIIA construction.

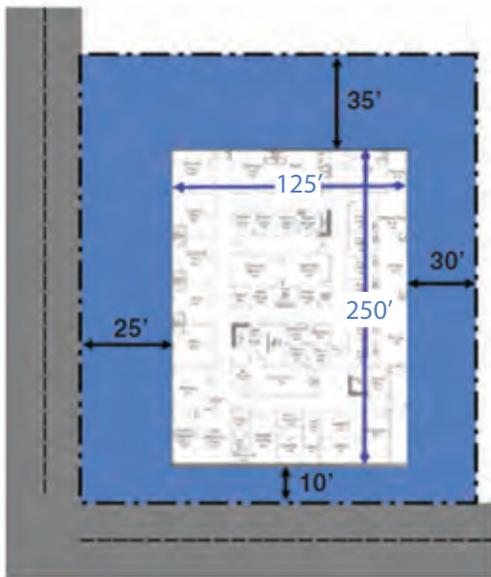


Figure 6: Frontage Calculation

### Given:

- Three-story retail store
- Type IIIA Construction
- Street width of 40 feet

### Determine:

- Area Limitation

### Solution:

$$A_t = 18,500 \text{ square feet}$$

$$I_f = (F / P - 0.25) \times W / 30$$

$$I_f = [(750 / 750) - 0.25] \times 30 / 30 = 0.75$$

$$A_a = 18,500 + (18,500 \times 0.75) = 32,375 \text{ per floor}$$

$$A_a = 32,375 \times 3 = 97,125 \text{ for building}$$

$$\text{Actual} = 31,250 \text{ per floor, } 93,750 \text{ total } \checkmark \text{ OK}$$

## Allowable Increases for Automatic Sprinkler Systems

When a building is equipped throughout with an NFPA 13-compliant automatic sprinkler system, the allowable floor area is permitted to be increased by 300 percent for a one-story building and 200 percent for a multistory building.

In addition to the area increase, Section 504.2 also permits the Table 503 building heights to be increased by 20 feet and the number of stories above grade plane to be increased by one story.

Figure 7 illustrates the combined effect of frontage and automatic sprinkler systems on the allowable area calculation.

**Given:** Single-story Type VB drug store

Provided with automatic sprinkler system throughout and located on lot as shown.

**Determine:** Maximum allowable building area

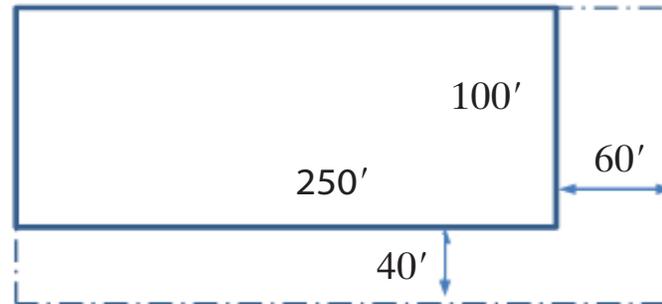


Figure 7: Allowable Building Area Calculation

**Solution:**

$$A_t = 9,000 \text{ square feet}$$

(Table 503)

Frontage Increase

(Section 506.2)

$$I_f = (F / P - 0.25) \times W / 30$$

$$I_f = [(350 / 700) - 0.25] \times 30 / 30 = 0.25 \text{ (where } W > 30, \text{ use } 30)$$

Sprinkler Increase

(Section 506.3)

$$I_s = 3 \text{ (300 percent increase)}$$

Total Allowable area

(Section 506.1)

$$A_a = A_t + (A_t \times I_f) + (A_t \times I_s)$$

$$A_a = 9,000 + (9,000 \times 0.25) + (9,000 \times 3) = 38,250 \text{ square feet}$$

$$\text{Actual area} = 250 \times 100 = 25,000 \text{ square feet } \checkmark \text{ OK}$$

### Area Limits for Nonsprinklered Buildings in Chapter 9

Many occupancies have floor area limits allowed by Chapter 5 that are greater than those permitted in Chapter 9 for nonsprinklered buildings. The same thresholds apply to all construction types, not just wood construction. The allowable area per story can exceed allowable fire areas and a sprinkler system may be required.

If sprinklers are provided, allowable area increases for both sprinklers and open frontage may be taken. Alternatively, fire areas may be kept below sprinkler thresholds by compartmentalizing floor areas with fire-resistance-rated construction in accordance with the definition for “Fire area” and the requirements of Chapter 7.

For Group M occupancies, the requirement for sprinklers can also be triggered by specific use or height above grade. For instance, although unsprinklered Group M occupancies may exceed three stories above grade in Type III construction, if the M occupancy is above the third story and has high-piled storage or displays upholstered furniture, the M occupancy must be sprinklered in

accordance with Section 903.2.7. Increases for both open frontage and sprinklers could then be taken.

Sprinklers offer a substantial increase to life safety, which is well documented and merits the consideration of designers for that reason alone. But their advantages can also be economic. The code offers considerable trade-offs for providing sprinklers, including:

- Reductions in corridor ratings and corridor opening protection,
- Flexibility in means of egress (travel distance to exits, number and separation of exits, common path of travel),
- Reductions in dwelling unit separations,
- Alternate to emergency escape openings,
- Alternate to certain fire and smoke damper requirements, and
- Interior finish flexibility.

For these reasons, the addition of sprinklers should always be considered in the overall cost analysis for any project.

## Total Building Area Limit

### Single Occupancy

A single occupancy building with three or more stories above grade has a total building area of the allowable building area per story ( $A_o$ ) multiplied by three in accordance with Section 506.4.1. Buildings with four or more stories of the same floor area will have smaller maximum areas per floor than a three-story building of the same type of construction and occupancy. For two-story buildings, the total building area is the maximum allowable building area multiplied by two. The maximum area of any story above grade cannot exceed the allowable building area per story. A single basement is not included in the total allowable building area in accordance with Section 506.4.

The actual building area for all stories added together must be less than the total allowable building area.

#### **3, 3+ Story Building**

Total Allowable Building Area

$$A_t = 3 \times A_o$$

#### **2-Story Building**

Total Allowable Building Area

$$A_t = 2 \times A_o$$

where:

$A_t$  = allowable building area.

$A_o$  = allowable building area per story.

### Mixed Occupancy

Mixed occupancy buildings are permitted a total allowable building area calculated in accordance with Section 506.5. But, a single-story basement does not need to be included in the total allowable building area, when the basement does not exceed the area permitted for a single story.

More than one occupancy in a single building can be accommodated by using the allowable area of the most restrictive occupancy (referred to as "nonseparated occupancies" in accordance with Section 508.3). Alternatively, the occupancies can be regulated as "separated occupancies" (Section 508.4) to allow somewhat larger floor areas. This methodology will often mandate separation of the occupancies by fire barriers and/or horizontal assemblies. The code also accommodates limited area spaces that are accessory to the function of the main occupancy, if the restrictions of Section 508.2 are followed. See Section 506.5 for additional limits for single- and multistory mixed occupancy buildings.

Tables 1 and 2 at the end of this pamphlet illustrate the allowable area and height increases permitted for Mercantile occupancies (M). Table 1 lists nonsprinklered allowable building area per story. Table 2 lists sprinklered allowable building area per story.

### Unlimited Area Buildings

Unlimited area Group M buildings of one or two stories above grade plane are permitted by Sections 507.3 and 507.4, provided they are equipped throughout with an NFPA 13-compliant automatic sprinkler system and are surrounded on all sides by public ways or yards not less than 60 feet wide.

It is also permissible to have up to 75 percent of the perimeter open space to be less than 60 feet in width. There must be at least 40 feet provided and the exterior wall and all openings on those portions will require 3-hour minimum fire-resistance and fire protection ratings.

### Allowable Increases with Fire Walls

A fire wall is a fire-resistance-rated wall with protected openings that restricts the spread of fire and extends continuously from the foundation to or through the roof. Fire walls built in compliance with Section 706 create separate buildings for the purpose of area limitations and other code-required features. Fire walls separating M occupancies require a 3-hour minimum fire-resistance rating. Each portion of a building separated by a fire wall is evaluated individually for allowable heights and areas based on the type of construction.

Fire walls in Type V construction may be wood frame; in other construction types they must be of noncombustible materials in accordance with Section 706.3.

### Special Provisions for Stacked Buildings

Under specific circumstances, buildings of different types of construction are allowed to be built on top of each other and are commonly referred to as pedestal buildings. They are only permitted when following the provisions of Section 509. Two subsections recognize wood construction. Section 509.2 requires a 3-hour minimum fire-resistance-rated horizontal assembly between the lower and upper buildings. The lower building is limited to one story above grade plane and must be Type IA construction. The upper building's type of construction and building height in stories are determined as if it did not have a building below (except the height in feet is still limited and measured from grade plane in accordance with in accordance with Section 509.2 Item 7), thus permitting all types of



Figure 8: Pedestal building

construction above the Type IA pedestal. Group M occupancies are permitted in either building, subject to the building height and area limitations discussed previously.

Group M occupancies over open parking structures are limited by Section 509.7. The upper building height and area is limited as previously discussed and the open parking garage is regulated in Section 406.3 and is permitted to be Type IV construction. The height of the upper building is measured from the grade plane and includes the open parking garage level.

Multiple upper buildings may be positioned on a single parking structure complying with Section 509.2, and be treated as separate buildings in accordance with Section 509.9. Lastly, Group S-2 open parking garages above a first-story occupancy of Group M are allowed in accordance with Section 509.8.

#### 4. Establishing Fire Resistance

Table 601 of the IBC establishes the required fire resistance of building elements (primarily the structural frame, walls, floors and roofs) due to the construction type of the building (e.g., Type IIIA, Type IIIB, Type IV, etc.). Required ratings are given in hours. The exception is Type IV, where the wood structural elements are assumed to have inherent fire resistance due to their required minimum dimensions (no fire-resistance rating is required except for exterior walls).

Fire resistance describes the rate at which a building material degrades due to a fire. Resistance is based on how fast a material will burn, how rapidly the strength of the member or assembly is affected by the fire and whether the member or assembly can maintain its design strength. Fire resistance of wood members and assemblies may be established by any one of five means listed in Section 703.3. The most common methods are indicated below.

##### Tested Assemblies

Tested assemblies include wood assemblies that have been tested to the ASTM E 119 or UL 263 standard. Using one of these standards, an assembly is typically assigned a 1- or 2-hour fire rating depending on its performance in the fire test(s). Designers choose listed assemblies from various fire resistance publications or directories, such as the *UL Fire Resistance Directory* or the *Gypsum Association Fire Resistance Design Manual*.

##### Prescriptive Assemblies

The fire resistance of certain wood assemblies is prescribed in Section 720 based on testing using ASTM E 119 or UL 263. Section 703.3 permits the use of other sources, as well. Often used is the AWC publication AWC DCA 3, *Fire Rated Wood Floor and Wall Assemblies*, which is available for free download at [www.awc.org/codes/dcaindex.html](http://www.awc.org/codes/dcaindex.html).

##### Calculated Fire Resistance

The fire resistance of exposed wood members may be calculated using the provisions of Chapter 16 of the *National Design Specification*® (NDS®) (see Section 721.1). AWC's Technical Report

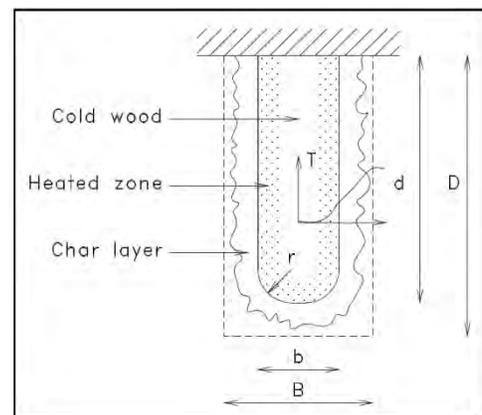


Figure 9: Heavy Timber Member Exposed to Fire

No. 10 (TR10), *Calculating the Fire Resistance of Exposed Wood Members*, contains full details of the NDS method as well as design examples, and is available for free download at [www.awc.org/publications/TR/index.html](http://www.awc.org/publications/TR/index.html). Although Section 721.6.3 contains an acceptable calculation method as well, it is limited to 1-hour fire resistance.

The fire resistance of wood frame assemblies also may be calculated using the provisions of Section 721.6, which is based on the known fire resistance of many tested assemblies. The information in AWC DCA 4, *Component Additive Method (CAM) for Calculating and Demonstrating Assembly Fire Endurance*, was the basis for these code provisions. It is available for free download at [www.awc.org/codes/dcaindex.html](http://www.awc.org/codes/dcaindex.html).

## 5. Wood Use in “Noncombustible” Construction

Type I and II construction typically requires the use of noncombustible materials. Section 603 specifies 25 applications where combustible materials are permitted without reclassifying the building to a different type of construction. For example, wood blocking is permitted for handrails, millwork, cabinets and window and door frames. Furring or nailing strips used in connection with “set-out” construction are also permitted. Show windows, wooden bulkheads below the window and nailing and furring strips are also permitted to be wood if the window is not more than 15 feet above grade.

### Fire-Retardant-Treated Wood

There are many additional applications for fire-retardant-treated wood (FRTW) in Type I and II construction. FRTW is permitted in nonbearing partitions where the fire-resistance rating does not exceed 2 hours, and may be used in nonbearing exterior walls that do not require a fire-resistance rating. Roof construction, including structural framework, permits FRTW, except for Type IA construction of three stories or more where the lowest roof member is less than 20 feet measured vertically from the upper floor.

As mentioned above, FRTW may also be used in exterior walls of Type III and IV construction, which are required to be noncombustible. Because of this, certain code provisions that assume noncombustible exterior walls have become difficult to interpret. But usually a practical solution to these code questions can be achieved by working closely with the code official. For instance, the addition of solid FRTW wood blocking of a certain thickness in floor cavities that intersect with the exterior wall in Type III construction is an appropriate precaution to maintain the fire resistance and material integrity of the exterior wall.

### Heavy Timber Members

Heavy timber (HT) construction is permitted in roof construction as an alternative to 1-hour or less fire-resistance-rated noncombustible construction. This would allow HT use in all roof construction except Type IA. HT columns and arches are permitted on the exterior of walls if the fire separation distance is 20 feet or more.

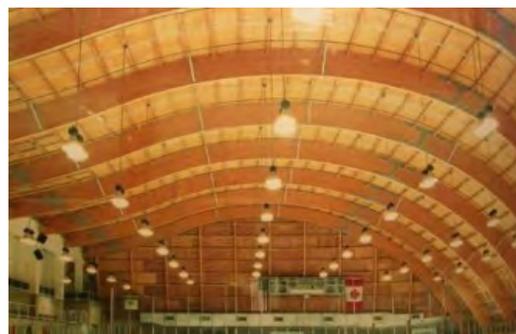


Figure 10: Heavy Timber Construction

## 6. Wood Features

Wood may be used as an architectural or structural component of a building. It is renewable and biodegradable, using less energy to manufacture than steel, concrete, aluminum or plastic. Wood use in foundations, doors, windows, exterior and interior finishes, trim and roofing contributes to the aesthetics of the building in an economical and efficient manner.

### Wood Foundations

Wood foundations for buildings are permitted when designed and installed in accordance with the AF&PA/AWC *Permanent Wood Foundation Design Specification* (PWF). Insulated wood foundation systems conserve energy and easily accommodate installation of wiring, plumbing, ductwork and interior finishes. Savings in labor, time and material costs may be achieved when these systems are used.

### Wood Walls and Partitions

Wood stud framing is permitted for all load-bearing and nonload-bearing interior walls and partitions in Type III and V construction. Type IV construction permits wood stud framed partitions of 1-hour fire-resistance-rated construction (Section 602.4.6) or solid wood formed by at least two layers of 1-inch matched boards or 4-inch-thick laminated construction. In Type I and II construction, partitions dividing single tenant offices or retail and not creating corridors serving 30 or more occupants are permitted to be FRTW, 1-hour fire-resistance-rated construction or of wood panels or similar light construction up to 6 feet in height. (Section 603.1 Item 10)

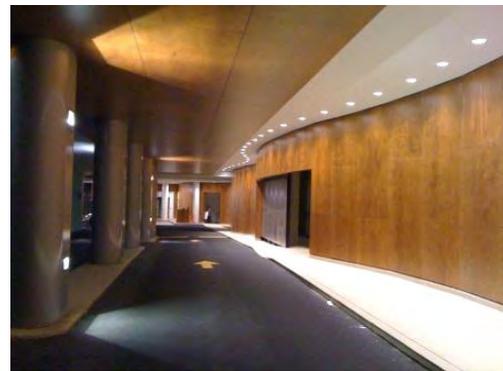


Figure 11: Wood Interior Finish  
Photo Courtesy of Barbara J Sales

### Wood Interior Finish

In general, wood materials may be used as interior finish in Mercantile (M) occupancies. Table 803.9 places minimum performance classifications on finish materials based on their location in the building. The material performance classification is determined by testing in accordance with the ASTM E 84 or UL 723 standard and results in a classification as Class A (flame spread index 0-25); Class B (26-75) or Class C (76-200). All classifications must have a smoke-developed index between 0-450 (Section 803.1.1).

Exit enclosures and exit passageways in Group M occupancies require Class A materials if in a nonsprinklered building and Class B if it is sprinklered. (Note: Buildings less than three stories above grade plane permit the reduction of the exit enclosure and exit passageway classifications to Class B and Class C, respectively.) Exit enclosures and exit passageways are permitted to use Class C wainscoting or paneling in the grade lobby for not more than 1,000 square feet of applied surface when applied to a noncombustible base. Corridors require Class B (nonsprinklered) and Class C (sprinklered) materials while rooms and enclosed spaces, whether sprinklered or not, allow Class C materials.

Most wood species qualify as Class C, while some, such as cedar, west coast hemlock, Idaho white pine, redwood, and spruce, can qualify as Class B. Wood boards and panels may meet Class A criteria when pressure treated with a fire-retardant chemical. Traditional wood floor covering is exempt from interior floor finish requirements. Exposed portions of Type IV structural members are also exempt from the interior finish requirements in accordance with Section 803.3.

### Wood Interior Trim

Baseboards, chair rails, picture molding, handrails, guards, windows and doors are permitted to be wood or wood-based materials. Trim is required to meet a Class C classification and combustible trim, excluding handrails and guards, cannot exceed 10 percent of the wall or ceiling area to which it is attached (Section 806.5).



Figure 12: Wood Trim

### Wood Doors and Windows

Wood doors and windows are often the optimum choice for buildings due to their aesthetics, energy efficiency and functionality. Exterior openings are generally required to be protected as an opening protective assembly when the exterior wall is within given distances of a lot line. Table 602 determines when the exterior walls are required to be fire-resistance rated due to their location on the lot and Table 705.8 defines the allowable percentages of protected and unprotected openings allowed in those walls.

For Group M occupancies, unlimited amounts of unprotected openings are permitted when the exterior walls are 30 feet or more from the lot line, 10 feet or more if Type IIB or VB construction. No unprotected openings are permitted in the exterior wall within 5 feet of the lot line for nonsprinklered buildings and no openings are permitted if the wall is closer than 3 feet from the lot line.

Bay and oriel windows must conform to the type of construction required for the building; however, FRTW is permitted for windows in buildings not more than three stories above grade plane and of construction Types I, II, III and IV (Section 1406.4).



Figure 13: Wood Windows

Interior wood door assemblies are required to be fire-protection rated when the wall assembly they are in requires a fire-resistance rating and opening protection, such as door assemblies in exit enclosures or exit access corridor walls. The minimum required fire-protection rating of the fire door assembly is given in Table 715.4 and ranges from 20 minutes up to 3 hours based on the required fire-resistance rating and type of wall assembly.

## Wood Siding

Wood siding products come in a variety of sizes, shapes and textures, ranging from wood shingles and shakes to boards and wood structural panels. Each material brings different characteristics in look and performance. The IBC addresses the minimum expectations of these products in Chapter 14 as exterior wall components and Chapter 23 as a wood building material.

Wood shingles as a weather covering are required to be a minimum  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch thick and wood siding without sheathing is required to be  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick. According to Table 1405.2, wood siding less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick requires bracing for support in accordance with Table 2304.6.



Figure 14: Wood Siding

## Wood Veneer

Wood veneer is permitted on buildings of Type I, II, III or IV construction and allowed up to 40 feet above grade, 60 feet if FRTW is used, provided the veneer is 1-inch nominal thickness,  $\frac{7}{16}$ -inch exterior hardboard siding or  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch exterior-type wood structural panels or particleboard. Open or spaced veneers without concealed spaces are not permitted to project more than 24 inches from the building wall (Section 1405.5).



Figure 15: Wood Veneer  
Photo Courtesy of Sound Seal

## Wood Balconies, Open Exterior Exit Stairs and Ramps

Exterior balconies may be of Type IV construction or of wood construction that provides a fire-resistance rating equal to the floor rating required by Table 601. The aggregate length of the balcony is limited to 50 percent of the building perimeter. Type I or II structures not more than three stories above grade plane are permitted to have FRTW in the balcony as long as the balcony is not a required exit. Type III, IV and V buildings may have Type V construction of the balcony without requiring a fire-resistance rating if the balcony is sprinkler protected. In this case, the length limitation of the balcony is eliminated (Section 1406.3).



Figure 16: Wood Balcony

Open exterior exit stairs and ramps may be constructed of wood when the building is of Type IV and V construction in accordance with Sections 1009.6 and 1010.7. The IBC limits their use to buildings that do not exceed six stories above grade and do not have occupied floor levels 75 feet or more above the lowest level of vehicular access by the fire department.

## Wood Roof Coverings

Roof assemblies and coverings are divided into classifications in accordance with testing by the ASTM E 108 or UL 790 standard. FRTW roof coverings are also tested in accordance with the ASTM D 2898 standard. Table 1505.1 requires a minimum Class B roof covering for all types of construction except Type IIB, IIIB and VB. These construction types require minimum Class C materials and if the buildings are not more than two stories above grade plane, have no more than 6,000 square feet of roof area and 10-foot minimum frontage width on all sides of the roof, they are permitted to use No. 1 cedar or redwood shakes and No. 1 shingles (Section 1505.1).



Figure 17: Wood Shakes

Fire-retardant-treated wood shingles and shakes can qualify for Class A, B or C classification. Wood shingles and wood shake installation requirements are found in Sections 1507.8 and 1507.9 with a comparison in Table 1507.8.

## Wood Projection Limitations

Cornices, eaves overhangs, exterior balconies and similar projections are limited beyond the exterior wall based on the three criteria given in Section 705.2. Figure 18 illustrates two of the methods prescribed and the third is to make sure that the projection doesn't extend more than 12 inches into the distance from the lot line where openings are prohibited, meaning the 3-foot distance from the lot line in which openings are prohibited in Table 705.8. Therefore, in no case can a projection extend closer than 2 feet to the lot line.

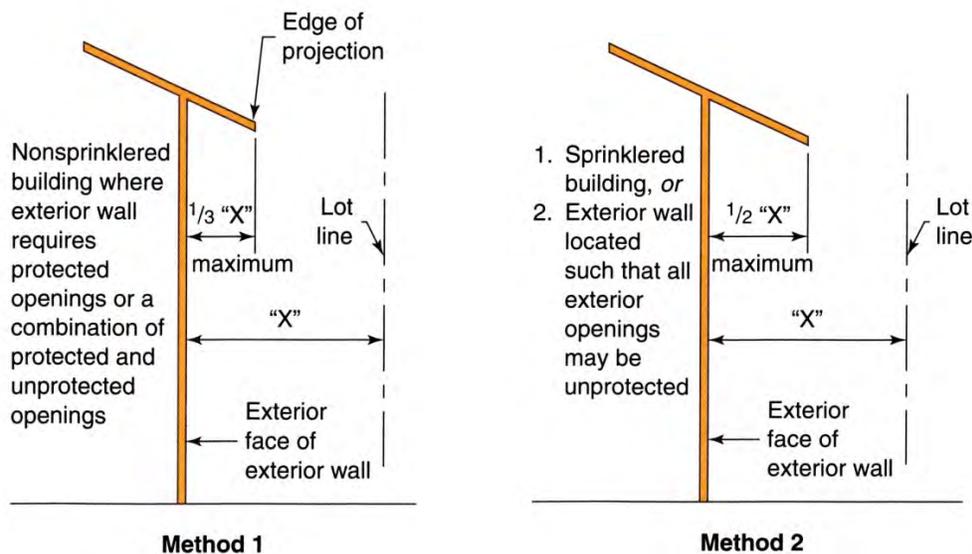


Figure 18: Wood Projection Limitations

Type III, IV and V construction permits combustible projections. When the projection is located within 3 feet of the lot line or where Table 705.8 requires protected openings, the projection is required to be 1-hour minimum fire-resistance-rated construction, Type IV construction or FRTW.

## Wood Rooftop Structures

Wood penthouses are limited by the construction classification permitted for the building. FRTW is permitted for use on buildings of Type I construction two stories or less above grade plane and in Type II construction when the exterior of the penthouse is 5 feet or more from the property lines in accordance with Section 1509.

Type III, IV and VA construction permits the penthouse to be Type IV construction or FRTW if 20 feet or more from the lot line.

Wood penthouses used to enclose tanks or elevators must not exceed 28 feet in height above the roof. If enclosing other uses, their height is limited to 18 feet maximum.

Wood unroofed mechanical equipment screens, fences or enclosures limited to 4 feet in height are permitted on one-story buildings.

Wood towers, spires, domes and cupolas are permitted on buildings of Type III, IV and V provided that they do not exceed 85 feet in height above grade plane or 200 square feet in area. The IBC places further limitations on these structures in Section 1509.5.

## Wood in locations subject to decay or termites

Wood that is located where it will be exposed to weather, moisture or termites is required to be naturally durable wood species or preservative-treated wood using water-borne preservatives, in accordance with AWPA U1. Naturally durable decay-resistant wood species are heartwood of redwood, cedar, black locust and black walnut. Naturally durable termite-resistant wood species are heartwood of redwood, Alaska yellow-cedar, eastern red cedar and heartwood and sapwood of all western red cedars (Sections 2302 and 2304.11).

## 7. Precautions During Construction

Chapter 33 provides minimum safety precautions for fire during construction for all buildings. The section includes provisions for fire extinguishers, standpipes, means of egress and sprinkler system commissioning. The *International Fire Code*® (IFC®) also contains detailed requirements for fire precautions during construction.

### Fire Extinguishers

During construction, one portable fire extinguisher must be placed at each stairway on all floor levels with combustible materials, in each storage or construction shed and where special hazards exist in accordance with Section 3309.

### Maintaining Means of Egress

During construction, when a building height reaches 50 feet or four stories, a minimum of one temporary lighted stairway must be provided unless a permanent stairway is available for use at all times in accordance with Section 3310.

### Standpipes

A minimum of one standpipe must be available during construction for fire department use. The standpipe must be installed before the construction is 40 feet above fire department access. The standpipe is placed adjacent to usable stairs and has fire department hose connections. The standpipe is extended during construction to within one floor of the highest point of construction having flooring in accordance with Section 3311. During demolition, a standpipe is main-

tained in working condition. The standpipe may be demolished floor by floor as demolition proceeds.

### Sprinkler System Commissioning

The sprinkler system must be tested and approved before the certificate of occupancy is awarded in accordance with Section 3312.

### Additional requirements in the *International Fire Code*<sup>®</sup>

Additional requirements for fire safety during construction are contained in the IFC, as follows:

- Temporary heating equipment must be listed and labeled; installation and maintenance of the equipment must be in accordance with the listing (IFC 3303).
- Smoking is prohibited except in approved areas with posted signage (IFC 3304).
- A fire watch must be maintained with qualified personnel if required by the fire code official (IFC 3304).
- Welding operations must follow the provisions of IFC Chapter 35. Electrical wiring must follow the provisions of NFPA 70 (IFC 3304).
- The owner must designate a fire prevention superintendent responsible for the fire prevention program during construction. Requirements for the program are listed in IFC Section 3308.
- An accessible emergency phone must be provided in an approved location at the construction site. The construction site street address and fire department emergency phone number must be posted by the phone (IFC 3309).
- Fire-fighting vehicle access must be provided within 100 feet of temporary or permanent fire department connections (IFC 3310).
- An approved water supply for fire protection must be available when combustible material is at the construction site (IFC 3312).
- Requirements for safeguards during roofing operations are listed in IFC Section 3317.

## 8. Resources

For additional assistance and information, contact the American Wood Council (AWC) at (202) 463-4713 or [info@awc.org](mailto:info@awc.org). For additional assistance and information from the International Code Council (ICC), see [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org).

### American Wood Council Standards

These standards and related code publications, design aids, technical reports and guides for wood design and construction can be purchased or, in some cases, downloaded for free at [www.awc.org](http://www.awc.org).

2005 NDS <sup>®</sup>	<i>2005 National Design Specification<sup>®</sup> (NDS<sup>®</sup>) for Wood Construction with 2005 Supplement</i>
SDPWS-2008	<i>2008 Special Design Provisions for Wind and Seismic</i>
2001 WFCM	<i>2001 Wood Frame Construction Manual for One- and Two-family Dwellings</i>
2007 PWF	<i>2007 ANSI/AF&amp;PA Permanent Wood Foundation Design Specification</i>
	<i>2005 ANSI/AF&amp;PA Span Tables for Joists and Rafters</i>
WCD No. 4-2003	<i>2003 ANSI/AF&amp;PA Wood Construction Data—Plank and Beam Framing for Residential Buildings</i>

## Other Associations Publishing Referenced Standards

Standards from additional organizations are referenced in this publication. The following table lists the standard, its title and the site from which the standard is available.

Standard-Edition	Title	Website
AAMA/WDMA/CSA 101/I.S.2/A440-08	<i>North American Fenestration Standard/ Specifications for Windows, Doors and Skylights</i>	aamanet.org wdma.com
APA PDS—04	<i>Panel Design Specification</i>	apawood.org
ASCE 7-05	<i>Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures</i>	asce.org
ASTM D 2898-04	<i>Test Methods for Accelerated Weathering of Fire-retardant-treated Wood and Wood-based Products</i>	astm.org
ASTM E 84-07	<i>Test Methods for Surface Burning Characteristics of Building Materials</i>	
ASTM E 108-07a	<i>Test Methods for Fire Tests of Roof Coverings</i>	
ASTM E 119-07	<i>Test Methods for Fire Tests of Building Construction and Materials</i>	
AWPA C1-03	<i>All Timber Products-Preservative Treatment by Pressure Processes</i>	awpa.com
AWPA M4-06	<i>Standard for the Care of Preservative-treated Wood Products</i>	
AWPA U1-07	<i>USE CATEGORY SYSTEM: User Specification for Treated Wood Except Section 6, Commodity Specification H</i>	
2009 IBC	<i>2009 International Building Code</i>	iccsafe.org
2009 IRC	<i>2009 International Residential Code</i>	
ICC 600-08	<i>Standard for Residential Construction in High Wind Regions</i>	
NFPA 13-07	<i>Installation of Sprinkler Systems</i>	nfpa.org
NFPA 13R-07	<i>Installation of Sprinkler Systems in Residential Occupancies Up to and Including Four Stories in Height</i>	
NFPA 70-08	<i>National Electrical Code</i>	
UL 263-03	<i>Standard for Fire Tests of Building Construction and Materials, with revisions through October 2007</i>	ul.com
UL 723-03	<i>Standard for Test for Surface Burning Characteristics of Building Materials- with Revisions through May 2005</i>	
UL 790-04	<i>Standard Test Methods for Fire Tests of Roof Coverings</i>	

This publication was developed by the International Code Council in cooperation with the American Wood Council. While every effort was made to insure accuracy of the information it contains, neither organization assumes responsibility for particular designs or plans prepared from this pamphlet.

## 9. Building Area Tables

The tables are organized by sprinkler status and contain the maximum number of stories and maximum allowable area per floor for Type IIIA, IIIB, IV, VA and VB construction.

**Table 1 – Group M Nonsprinklered Buildings – Maximum floor area per story<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>**

# of stories	% frontage	Maximum floor area per story (sq. ft.)				
		IIIA	IIIB	IV	VA	VB
1, 2 <sup>e</sup>	0-25	18,500	12,500	20,500	14,000	9,000
	50	23,120	15,620	25,620	17,500	11,250
	100	32,370	21,870	35,870	24,500	15,750
3	0-25	18,500	NP	20,500	14,000	NP
	50	23,120	NP	25,620	17,500	NP
	100	32,370	NP	35,870	24,500	NP
4	0-25	13,870	NP	15,370	NP	NP
	50	17,340	NP	19,210	NP	NP
	100	24,280	NP	26,900	NP	NP

NP = Not Permitted

- The maximum floor area for four stories above grade plane was determined by dividing the maximum total allowable building area by the number of stories in accordance with Section 506.4. The floor area of each story is assumed to be equal in area to the other stories.
- Frontage based on open space widths of 30 feet or more.
- Interpolation permitted.
- Sprinklers must be provided for Group M occupancies when the fire area exceeds 12,000 square feet, or the combined area of all Group M occupancies exceeds 24,000 square feet, in accordance with Section 903.2.7, or by reason of other specific conditions in that section. In lieu of sprinklers, compartmentalization of the floor area into fire areas not more than 12,000 square feet per compartment and not more than 24,000 square feet total can be provided with fire-resistance-rated construction in accordance with Chapter 7.
- Type VB construction does not permit two stories above grade plane.

**Table 2 – Group M Sprinklered Buildings – Maximum floor area per story<sup>a, b, c</sup>**

# of stories	% frontage	Maximum floor area per story (sq. ft.)				
		IIIA	IIIB	IV	VA	VB
1	0-25	74,000	50,000	82,000	56,000	36,000
	50	78,620	53,120	87,120	59,500	38,250
	100	87,870	59,370	97,370	66,500	42,750
	100 (60') <sup>d</sup>	UL	UL	UL	UL	UL
2	0-25	55,500	37,500	61,500	42,000	27,000
	50	60,120	40,620	66,620	45,500	29,250
	100	69,370	46,870	76,870	52,500	33,750
	100 (60') <sup>d</sup>	UL	UL	UL	UL	UL
3	0-25	55,500	37,500	61,500	42,000	NP
	50	60,120	40,620	66,620	45,500	NP
	100	69,370	46,870	76,870	52,500	NP
4	0-25	41,620	NP	46,120	31,500	NP
	50	45,090	NP	49,960	34,120	NP
	100	52,030	NP	57,650	39,370	NP
5	0-25	33,300	NP	36,900	NP	NP
	50	36,070	NP	39,970	NP	NP
	100	41,620	NP	46,120	NP	NP

NP = Not Permitted

UL = Unlimited

- The maximum floor area for four or more stories above grade plane was determined by dividing the maximum total allowable building area by the number of stories in accordance with Section 506.4. The floor area of each story is assumed to be equal in area to the other stories.
- Frontage based on open space widths of 30 feet or more.
- Interpolation permitted.
- Sprinklered Group M buildings of one or two stories may be unlimited in area if the frontage width is at least 60 feet in accordance with Sections 507.3 and 507.4.

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