

Wood Uses In Residential Buildings



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 of allowable wood use in buildings in accordance with the International Code Council (ICC) 2012 *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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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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1. General Information

Use and Occupancy Classification

Building code requirements are dependent on the appropriate classification of the building or structure for its design purpose or current occupancy. The IBC lists Residential Group R occupancies in Section 310 and describes the occupancies as buildings used for sleeping purposes. Group “R” contains four subcategories: Group R-1 includes hotels, motels and boarding houses; Group R-2 includes apartments, dormitories, live/work units, timeshare properties and nontransient hotels, motels and boarding houses; Group R-3 includes buildings that do not contain more than two dwelling units, adult and child day care facilities with less than six occupants receiving care; and congregate living facilities—transient (less than 10 people) and nontransient (less than 17 people). Group R-4 includes residential care and assisted living facilities for six to 16 clients.



Figure 1: Apartments

Referenced Code and Standards

The IBC is developed by the International Code Council. Industry and professional standards are referenced in the IBC to provide clarification of specific code requirements. Chapter 35 of the IBC provides a list of the standards referenced, the agency that wrote the standard, the 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 2012 IBC references the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA), a legacy organization of the American Wood Council (AWC), *2012 National Design Specification® (NDS-12®) for Wood Construction with 2012 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 1¹/₈-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 Types 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 fire retardant treated wood 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. Upcoming editions of the IBC will recognize new mass timber products such as cross-laminated timber (CLT) and other advanced engineered wood products. Because of the structural capabilities of mass timber, wood design will be better able to take advantage of the generous building sizes permitted by the IBC—greater building heights, commercial loads, and long clear spans will be less likely to preclude it. This means the full environmental, economic, and aesthetic benefits of designing in wood will be available for more buildings.

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 6) 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.



Figure 5: Type I Construction

Group R		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)						
R-1	S	4	4	4	3	2
	A	24,000	16,000	20,500	12,000	7,000
R-2	S	4	4	4	3	2
	A	24,000	16,000	20,500	12,000	7,000
R-3	S	4	4	4	3	3
	A	UL	UL	UL	UL	UL
R-4	S	4	4	4	3	2
	A	24,000	16,000	20,500	12,000	7,000

Figure 6: 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 certain occupancies without sprinklers are placed 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.

Frontage widths (W) greater than 30 feet will only receive credit for a value of 30 feet in accordance with Section 506.2.1. 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.

Weighted Average

Section 506.2.1 allows use of a weighted average to calculate the frontage width around a building. Figure 7 illustrates use of the weighted average equation.

Note: this equation is only used when one or more of the open space widths are between 20 and 30 feet in length. If additional open space widths are greater than 30 feet, reduce the width to 30 feet before calculating a weighted average.

Weighted average $W = (L_1 \times w_1 + L_2 \times w_2 + L_3 \times w_3 \dots) / F$

(Equation 5-3)

where:

L_n = Length of a portion of the exterior perimeter wall

w_n = Width of open space associated with that portion of the exterior perimeter wall

F = Building perimeter that fronts on a public way or open space having a width of 20 feet or more

Length of Walls:

L_1, L_2, L_3 and $L_4 = 200$ ft

Frontage Width:

$w_1 = 22$ ft $w_3 = 55$ ft

$w_2 = 45$ ft $w_4 = 50$ ft

For w_2, w_3 and w_4 , use the maximum 30-foot width in the weighted average equation.

$F = 200 \times 4 = 800$ ft

$$W = \frac{(L_1 \times w_1 + L_2 \times w_2 + L_3 \times w_3 + L_4 \times w_4)}{F}$$

$$W = \frac{(200 \times 22 + 200 \times 30 + 200 \times 30 + 200 \times 30)}{800} = 28 \text{ ft}$$

Frontage Increase Calculation

The frontage calculation determines the additional allowable increase in area per story due to open space around the building. Figure 8 illustrates the frontage increase concept for a three-story apartment building of Type IIIA construction.

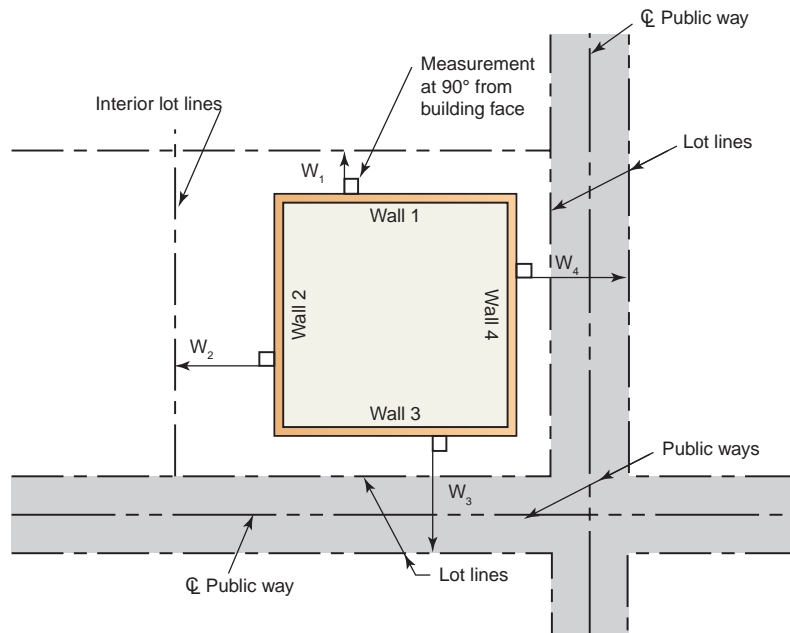


Figure 7: Open Space Width

Given:

- Three-story apartment building
- Type IIIA construction
- Street width of 22 feet

Determine:

- Area limitation

Solution:

Length of Walls:

$$L_1 = 100 \text{ ft} \quad L_3 = 100 \text{ ft}$$

$$L_2 = 375 \text{ ft} \quad L_4 = 375 \text{ ft}$$

Frontage Width:

(Note: Public way width is 22 ft)

$$w_1 = 15 \text{ ft} \quad w_3 = 10 + 22 = 32 \text{ ft}$$

$$w_2 = 25 \text{ ft} \quad w_4 = 30 + 22 = 52 \text{ ft}$$

For w_p , the open space width is less than 20 ft; this side of the building is not included in the frontage calculations. For w_3 and w_p , use the $w=30$ ft (maximum) in the weighted average in accordance with Section 506.2.1.

Frontage Length:

$$F = L_2 + L_3 + L_4 = 375 + 100 + 375 = 850 \text{ ft}$$

$$W = \frac{(L_1 \times w_1 + L_2 \times w_2 + L_3 \times w_3 + L_4 \times w_4)}{F} \quad \text{(Equation 5-3)}$$

$$W = \frac{(0 + 375 \times 25 + 100 \times 30 + 375 \times 30)}{850} = 28 \text{ ft}$$

$$A_t = 24,000 \text{ sq ft}$$

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

$$I_f = [(850 / 950) - 0.25] \times 28 / 30 = 0.60$$

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

$$A_a = 24,000 + (24,000 \times 0.60) + (24,000 \times 0) = 38,400 \text{ sq ft per story maximum}$$

(A Group R-2 apartment is required to have a sprinkler system per Section 903.2.8, but if that system is an NFPA 13R-compliant sprinkler system (as opposed to a full NFPA 13 system) then there is no increase of area for the sprinkler system. There is only an increase in area for frontage.)

$$A_a = 38,400 \times 3 \text{ stories} = 115,200 \text{ sq ft for total maximum building area}$$

Actual = 37,500 sq ft per story, 112,500 sq ft total ✓ OK

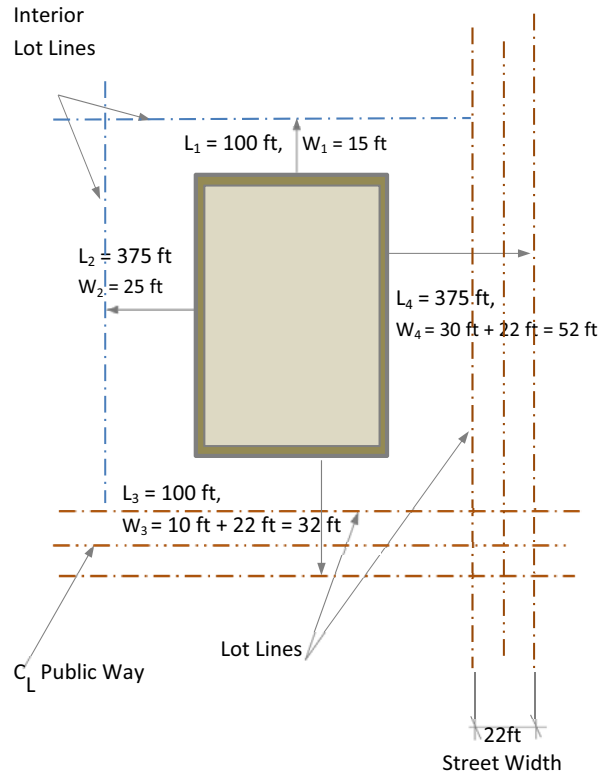


Figure 8: Frontage Increase Calculation

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.

For Group R buildings, a similar height increase (but no area increase) is given for the use of NFPA 13R-compliant systems, up to 60 feet and four stories in accordance with Section 504.2.

Figure 9 illustrates the combined effect of frontage and NFPA 13 automatic sprinkler systems on the allowable area calculation.

Given: Two-story Type VB motel

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

Determine: Maximum allowable building area per floor

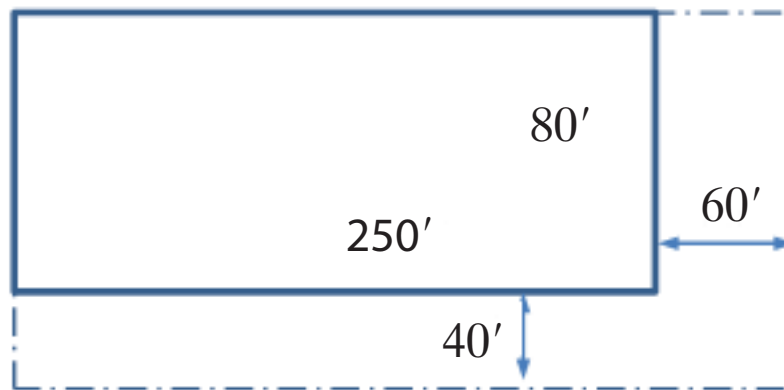


Figure 9: Allowable Building Area Calculation

Solution:

$$A_t = 7,000 \text{ square feet}$$

(Table 503)

Frontage Increase

(Section 506.2)

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

$$I_f = [(330 / 660) - 0.25] \times 30 / 30 = 0.25 \text{ (where } W > 30, \text{ use } 30)$$

Note: The weighted average calculation was not needed in this example.

Sprinkler Increase

(Section 506.3)

$$I_s = 2 \text{ (200 percent increase)}$$

Total Allowable area

(Section 506.1)

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

$$A_a = 7,000 + (7,000 \times 0.25) + (7,000 \times 2) = 22,750 \text{ square feet per floor}$$

$$\text{Actual area} = 250 \times 80 = 20,000 \text{ square feet per floor } \checkmark \text{ OK}$$

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. The allowable area per story can exceed allowable fire areas and a sprinkler system may be required. For Group R occupancies, all buildings must have an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.2.8, regardless of size.

There are three options for sprinklers. If an NFPA 13-compliant sprinkler system is used, the area increase for sprinklers may be used. If an NFPA 13R- or 13D-compliant sprinkler system is installed, there is no increase for sprinklers but an increase for frontage may be taken if applicable.

Even when sprinklers are not required for a specific occupancy, they 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. The code gives these benefits to Group R occupancies even though they are always required to be sprinklered. However, certain trade-offs may require a full NFPA 13 system (as opposed to NFPA 13R or 13D).

Tables 1, 2 and 3 at the end of this pamphlet illustrate the allowable area and height increases permitted for Residential occupancies (R). Table 1 lists sprinklered allowable building area per story when an NFPA 13D-compliant system is used. Table 2 lists sprinklered allowable building area per story with an NFPA 13R-compliant system. Table 3 shows sprinklered allowable building area per story with an NFPA 13-compliant system.

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_a) 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 and 3+ Story Building

Total Allowable Building Area

$$A_t = 3 \times A_a$$

2-Story Building

Total Allowable Building Area

$$A_t = 2 \times A_a$$

where:

A_t = allowable building area

A_a = allowable building area per story.

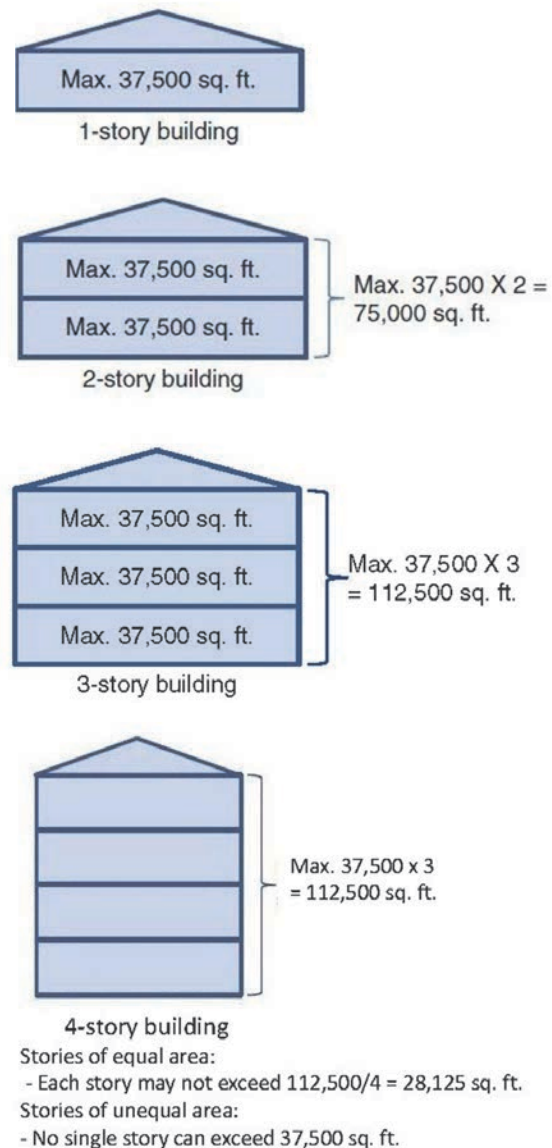


Figure 10: Maximum Building Area

The maximum allowable building area for residential buildings provided throughout with an NFPA 13R-compliant automatic sprinkler system is determined by multiplying the allowable building area per story (A_a), as determined in Section 506.1, by the number of stories above grade plane in accordance with Section 506.4.1 Exception 2. Recall that use of NFPA 13R means there is no automatic sprinkler area increase in accordance with Section 506.3. A building area increase can only be applied due to the frontage calculations. The building height increase for Group R structures still applies in accordance with Section 504.2.

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. Note that "incidental uses" (as opposed to accessory uses) are covered in Section 509 of the code and always require separation in accordance with Table 509.

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 R-1 and R-2 occupancies require a 3-hour minimum fire-resistance rating (2-hour minimum for Type V construction). R-3 and R-4 occupancies require a 2-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 510. Section 510.2 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 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 510.2 Item 7), thus permitting all types of construction above the Type IA pedestal. Group R occupancies are permitted in either building, subject to the building height and area limitations discussed previously.



Figure 11: Pedestal building

Type IIIA construction in Groups R-1 and R-2 may be increased above the general limitations of Sections 503 and 504 to six stories and 75 feet where the first-floor assembly has a fire-resistance rating of not less than 3 hours and the floor area is subdivided by 2-hour fire-resistance-rated fire walls into areas of not more than 3,000 square feet as provided by Section 510.5.

For Group R occupancies, the number of stories of a building with a single-story Group S-2 parking garage of Type I construction or open parking garage of Type IV construction, with grade entrance, are permitted by Section 510.4 to be measured from the floor above such a parking area. The floor assembly between garage and the Group R above must be the type of construction required for the parking garage, must provide a fire-resistance rating in accordance with Table 508.4 and must comply with the requirements for horizontal assemblies in accordance with Section 711.

Section 510.7 contains another alternative with conditions independent of Section 510.2. The upper building height and area are limited as previously discussed and the open parking garage is regulated in Section 406.5 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. See the other conditions listed in 510.7 regarding separate means of egress and other protected features if this alternative is used.

Multiple upper buildings may be positioned on a single parking structure complying with Section 510.2, and be treated as separate buildings in accordance with Section 510.9. Lastly, Group S-2 open parking garages above a first-story occupancy of Group B or M are allowed in accordance with Section 510.8. Recent changes to upcoming editions of the IBC have added even more flexibility to the possible combination of construction types and uses for pedestal buildings.

4. Establishing Fire Resistance

Table 601 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*.

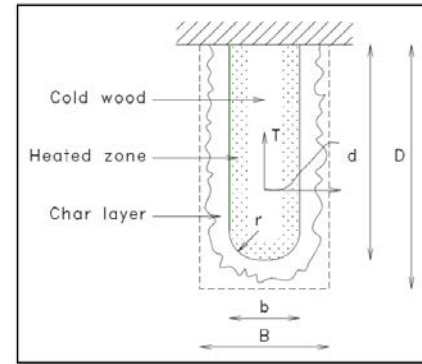


Figure 12: Heavy Timber Member Exposed to Fire

Prescriptive Assemblies

The fire resistance of certain wood assemblies is prescribed in Section 721 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.

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 722.1). AWC's Technical Report 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. Although Section 722.6.3 contains an acceptable calculation method as well, it is limited to 1-hour fire resistance. This method will be deleted in the upcoming editions of the IBC and replaced by a reference to the NDS Chapter 16 method which has broader application and leaves less room for design error.

The fire resistance of wood frame assemblies also may be calculated using the provisions of Section 722.6, 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.

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.

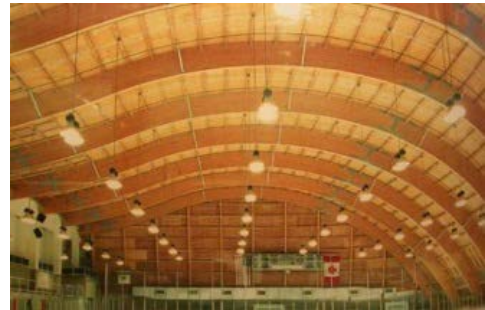


Figure 13: Heavy Timber Construction

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.

Wood Interior Finish

In general, wood materials may be used as interior finish in Residential (R) 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).



Figure 14: Wood Interior Finish
(Photo Courtesy of Barbara J Sales)

Nonsprinklered buildings are not allowed for Group R occupancies. NFPA 13D-compliant sprinkler systems require the same class of interior finishes as nonsprinklered buildings. NFPA 13 and 13R allow lower fire ratings for finish materials. Figure 15 lists the required material class for exit enclosures and exit passageways, corridors, rooms and enclosed spaces.

GROUP R	SPRINKLERED – NFPA 13 or 13R			SPRINKLERED – NFPA 13D		
	Exit enclosures and exit passageways	Corridors	Rooms and enclosed spaces	Exit enclosures and exit passageways	Corridors	Rooms and enclosed spaces
R-1	B	C	C	A	B	C
R-4	B	C	C	A	B	B
R-2	C	C	C	B	B	C
R-3	C	C	C	C	C	C

Figure 15: Table 803.9 Excerpt

Two exceptions to the table are:

1. Buildings less than three stories above grade plane are permitted a reduction of the exit enclosure and exit passageway classifications for Groups R-1 and R-4 to Class C for buildings sprinklered per NFPA 13 or 13R and Class B for buildings protected with an NFPA 13D systems (considered nonsprinklered).
2. 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.

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. Flame spread information according to wood species is provided in AWC DCA 1, Flame Spread Performance of Wood Products, which is available for free download at www.awc.org/codes/dcaindex.html.

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 16: 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.



Figure 17: Wood Windows

For Group R occupancies, unlimited amounts of unprotected openings are permitted by Table 705.8 provided 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 these windows in buildings not more than three stories above grade plane and of construction Types I, II, III and IV (Section 1406.4).

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 716.5 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 18: 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 19: Wood Veneer
Photo Courtesy of Jeremy Bittermann

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).

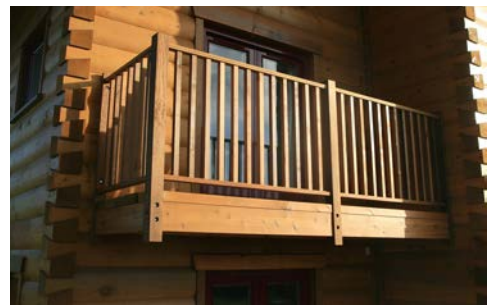


Figure 20: Wood Balcony

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 1009.9 and 1010.8. 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 in accordance with Section 1026.2.

Wood Roof Coverings

Roof assemblies and coverings are divided into classifications in accordance with testing by the ASTM E 108 or UL 790 standard. FRT 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 Types 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 (Table 1505.1).



Figure 21: Wood Shakes

Fire-retardant-treated wood (FRTW) 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

Regardless of the material used or the construction type, Section 705.2 places limits on the proximity of projections to the line used to calculate fire separation distance (typically the lot line). According to Table 705.2, in no case may a projection come within 24 inches of a lot line. When the fire separation distance (FSD) from the exterior wall is 5 feet or greater, projections cannot come within 40 inches of the lot line; when the FSD is less than 2 feet, projections are prohibited altogether.

In Type III, IV, and V construction, projections of any material are permitted subject to the limitation of Section 705.2.3. That section says that combustible projections located where openings are not permitted, where protection of some openings is required, or when located within five feet of the lot line (or other line used to determine the fire separation distance) must be one of the following:

- Minimum 1-hour fire-resistance-rated construction;
- Type IV construction; or
- FRTW

Note that the exception in Section 705.2.3 allows projections in Groups R-3 and U occupancies to be of typical Type VB construction (protection in the form of rated construction, Type IV construction, or FRTW is not required) when the fire separation distance is greater than or equal to 5 feet.

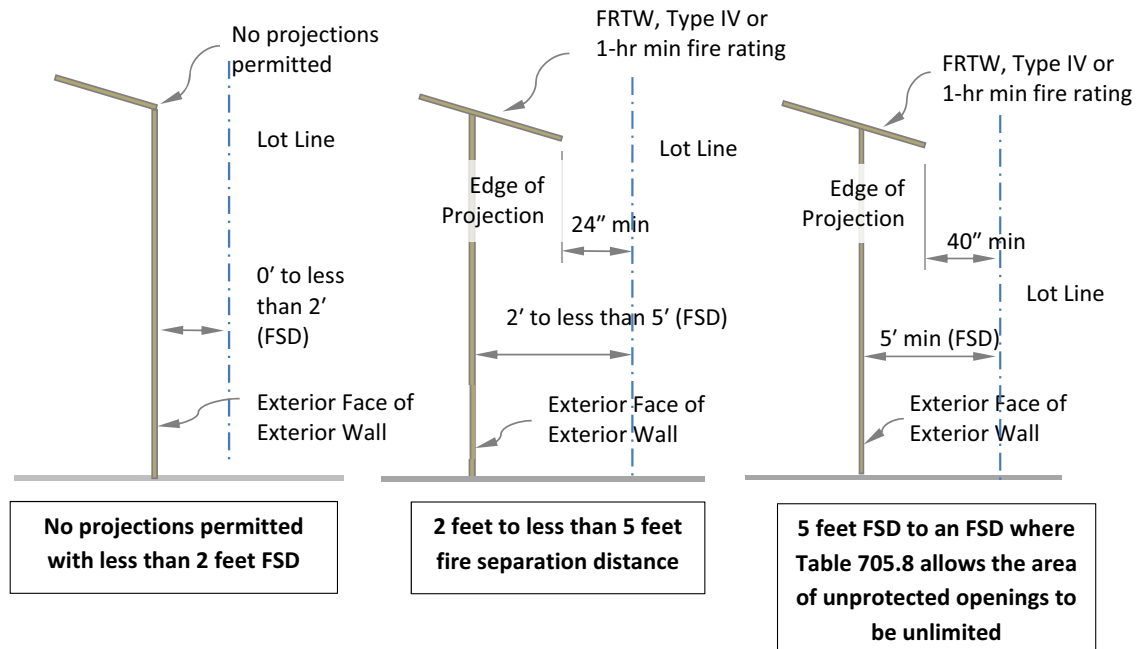


Figure 22: Wood Projection Limitations for other than Group R-3 and U

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 lot lines in accordance with Section 1509. A 1-hour fire-resistance rating is required when the exterior wall of the penthouse is less than 20 feet from the lot line.

Type III, IV and VA construction permit 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.

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 202 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 maintained 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*[®]

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. For additional assistance and information from the International Code Council (ICC), see 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.

2012 NDS®	<i>2012 National Design Specification® (NDS®) for Wood Construction with 2012 Supplement</i>
SDPWS-2008	<i>2008 Special Design Provisions for Wind and Seismic</i>
2012 WFCM	<i>2012 Wood Frame Construction Manual for One- and Two-family Dwellings</i>
2007 PWF	<i>2007 ANSI/AF&PA Permanent Wood Foundation Design Specification</i>
	<i>2012 ANSI/AF&PA Span Tables for Joists and Rafters</i>
WCD No. 4-2003	<i>2003 ANSI/AF&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/A440-11	<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 7-10	<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 84-09	<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 119-08a	<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 M4-08	<i>Standard for the Care of Preservative-treated Wood Products</i>	
AWPA U1-11	<i>USE CATEGORY SYSTEM: User Specification for Treated Wood Except Section 6, Commodity Specification H</i>	
2012 IBC	<i>2012 International Building Code</i>	iccsafe.org
2012 IRC	<i>2012 International Residential Code</i>	
ICC 600-08	<i>Standard for Residential Construction in High Wind Regions</i>	
NFPA 13-10	<i>Installation of Sprinkler Systems</i>	nfpa.org
NFPA 13D-10	<i>Installation of Sprinkler Systems in One- and Two-family Dwellings and Manufactured Homes</i>	
NFPA 13R-10	<i>Installation of Sprinkler Systems in Residential Occupancies Up to and Including Four Stories in Height</i>	
NFPA 70-11	<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 723-08	<i>Standard for Test for Surface Burning Characteristics of Building Materials</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.

Section 903.2.8 requires all Group R buildings to have automatic sprinkler systems. Therefore, there are no maximum building heights and areas for nonsprinklered Group R buildings. When using NFPA 13D- or 13R-compliant sprinkler systems, there is no increase in area for having sprinklers, rather only an increase in area for frontage is allowed. Table 1 contains NFPA 13D-compliant sprinklered building allowable maximum floor areas. Table 2 has NFPA 13R-compliant sprinklered building allowable maximum floor areas and Table 3 contains NFPA 13-compliant sprinklered building allowable maximum floor areas.

Table 1 – Group R-4, NFPA 13D-Compliant Sprinklered Buildings – Maximum floor area per story

Group R-4 Sprinklered Buildings – NFPA 13D Compliant ^{a, b, c, d, f}						
# of stories	% frontage	Maximum floor area per story (sq. ft.)				
		IIIA	IIIB	IV	VA	VB
1, 2 & 3 ^e	0-25	24,000	16,000	20,500	12,000	7,000
	50	30,000	20,000	25,620	15,000	8,750
	100	42,000	28,000	35,870	21,000	12,250
4	0-25	18,000	12,000	15,370	NP	NP
	50	22,500	15,000	19,210	NP	NP
	100	31,500	21,000	26,900	NP	NP

NP = Not Permitted

- NFPA 13D-compliant sprinklered buildings do not receive an increase of area for sprinklers. There is an increase in building area for frontage.
- 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. 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.
- Type VB construction does not permit three stories above grade plane.
- NFPA 13D-compliant sprinkler systems are allowed in congregate residences only in accordance with Section 903.3.1.3. Group R-4 buildings which are not congregate residences require NFPA 13-compliant sprinkler systems.

Table 2 – Group R, NFPA 13R-Compliant Sprinklered Buildings – Maximum floor area per story

Group R-1, R-2, R-4 Sprinklered Buildings^{a, b, c, d}						
# of stories	% frontage	Maximum floor area per story (sq. ft.)				
		IIIA	IIIB	IV	VA	VB
1, 2 & 3^e	0-25	24,000	16,000	20,500	12,000	7,000
	50	30,000	20,000	25,620	15,000	8,750
	100	42,000	28,000	35,870	21,000	12,250
4^{e,f}	0-25	18,000	12,000	15,370	9,000	NP
	50	22,500	15,000	19,210	11,250	NP
	100	31,500	21,000	26,900	15,750	NP
Group R-3 Sprinklered Buildings^{a, b, c}						
# of stories	% frontage	Maximum floor area per story (sq. ft.)				
		IIIA	IIIB	IV	VA	VB
1, 2 & 3	0-25	UL	UL	UL	UL	UL
	50	UL	UL	UL	UL	UL
	100	UL	UL	UL	UL	UL
4^f	0-25	UL	UL	UL	UL	UL
	50	UL	UL	UL	UL	UL
	100	UL	UL	UL	UL	UL

NP = Not Permitted

UL = Unlimited

- NFPA 13R-compliant sprinklered buildings do not receive an increase of area for sprinklers. There is an increase in building area for open frontage, if applicable.
- 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. 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.
- Due to story height increase in accordance with Section 504.2, Type VB construction permits three stories above grade plane and Type VA construction permits four stories above grade plane.
- Maximum building height is 60 feet and 4 stories in accordance with Sections 504.2 and 903.1.2.

Table 3 – Group R NFPA 13-Compliant Sprinklered Buildings – Maximum floor area per story

Group R-1, R-2, R-4 Sprinklered Buildings^{a, b, c, d}						
# of stories	% frontage	Maximum floor area per story (sq. ft.)				
		IIIA	IIIB	IV	VA	VB
1	0-25	96,000	64,000	82,000	48,000	28,000
	50	102,000	68,000	87,120	51,000	29,750
	100	114,000	76,000	97,370	57,000	33,250
2, 3	0-25	72,000	48,000	61,500	36,000	21,000
	50	78,000	52,000	66,620	39,000	22,750
	100	90,000	60,000	76,870	45,000	26,250
4	0-25	54,000	36,000	46,120	27,000	NP
	50	58,500	39,000	49,960	29,250	NP
	100	67,500	45,000	57,650	33,750	NP
5	0-25	43,200	28,800	36,900	NP	NP
	50	46,800	31,200	39,970	NP	NP
	100	54,000	36,000	46,120	NP	NP
Group R-3 Sprinklered Buildings^{a, b, c, d}						
# of stories	% frontage	Maximum floor area per story (sq. ft.)				
		IIIA	IIIB	IV	VA	VB
1, 2, 3 & 4	0-25	UL	UL	UL	UL	UL
	50	UL	UL	UL	UL	UL
	100	UL	UL	UL	UL	UL
5	0-25	UL	UL	UL	NP	NP
	50	UL	UL	UL	NP	NP
	100	UL	UL	UL	NP	NP

NP = Not Permitted

UL = Unlimited

- The maximum floor area for four or more stories above grade plane shown 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 is based on open space widths of 30 feet or more.
- Interpolation permitted.
- Group R occupancies must have a NFPA 13-compliant sprinkler system unless specifically allowed an NFPA 13R- or 13D-compliant sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1. If NFPA 13R is used, the building must meet height limits of four stories and 60 feet in accordance with Section 504.2 and there is no increase in area per floor for sprinklers. Using NFPA 13D, there is no increase in building height or area due to use of the automatic sprinklers in accordance with Section 504.2. See Tables 1 and 2 for area increases due to frontage.

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