2024 Significant Code Changes for the IRC

This summary includes significant changes to the International Residential Code (IRC) building provisions (Chapters 1-10 and 44), electrical, mechanical and plumbing provisions (Chapters 12-43) and appendices. Changes to the energy efficiency provisions (Chapter 11) are addressed as part of the 2024 IECC Adoption Kit. This is not all the changes that were approved.

IRC Section R104 Duties and Powers of the Building Official: The 2024 IRC sees an entire replacement of Section R104 Duties and Powers of the Building Official. Most sections do not have significant technical changes. One area of concern is R104.2.1 that would allow a Building Official to require equipment, materials, products, or service listings to be provided to the Building Official at cost to an applicant.

IRC Section R302.1 Exterior walls: Where a lot line doesn't already exist between townhouses, a lot line is required to be assumed for purposes of fire separation distance measurement. The proposal is meant to address interior corners where there is no existing or possible future structure measured perpendicular to the wall--a large departure from how fire separation distance has been used.

IRC Section R318.7 Stairways: Several changes were made to requirements for stairways, as noted below.

IRC Section R318.7.5.3 (was R311.7.5.3) Nosings: This change limits the 3/8" minimum/maximum uniformity requirement for nosing projections from applying across the entire stairway to application individual flights of stairs and their upper landings.

IRC Section R318.7.6 (was R311.7.6)

IRC Section R318.7.9 Stairways in existing buildings: Alterations to existing stairways are no longer required to comply with the requirements for new stairs when the existing space and construction does not allow a reduction in stairway pitch or slope.

IRC Section R329.6.4 (was R324.6.4) Building- integrated photovolt aic (BIPV) systems: A new section is added requiring reflective markings beneath eaves where installed BIPV systems create hidden electrical hazards. An exception is provided for systems listed to UL 3741 as they do not present a hazard.

IRC Section R401.4.1 Geotechnical evaluation: The existing Table R405.1 of soil classifications is moved to a more logical location early in Chapter 4 near where it is first referenced. The table is expanded to enable the use of USDA data and textural descriptions to ensure builders select a proper soil classification where a geotechnical investigation isn't done and clarifies what soil types are unsuitable for backfill due to their poor drainage characteristics.

IRC Section R502.3, R 802.4.1 & R802.5 Framing Member Splices: Adds new text in the sections for floor joists, rafters and ceiling joists requiring that all splices in framing members occur over vertical supports or shall be designed by a registered design professional.

HVAC systems with new A2L refrigerants, which are becoming available for residential installations.

IRC Section M1602.2 Return Air Openings: Provides new prescriptive requirements for return air taken from mechanical, boiler and furnace rooms and closets.

IRC Section P2503.5.2 Drainage and vent final test: T he requirement for a gas-tight test of finished plumbing systems is removed at the option of the local building official. A final visual inspection proof that trap and fixture connections are watertight is required.

IRC Section P2603.2: The distance is reduced between piping installed through framing members and the face of the framing before shield plates are required.

Appendix BO Existing Buildings and Structures: Appendix AJ Existing Buildings and Structures is renumbered Appendix BO and extensively revised to address structural requirements for work on existing buildings. Existing sections on repairs and alterations are revised and expanded and new sections on additions and relocated buildings are added Significant changes include the following:

- x Removing the requirement for a preliminary meeting with the building official and permit applicant.
- x Removing the provision allowing a building official to require an evaluation by a registered design professional for a house undergoing reconstruction.
- x Removing the requirement for wall and ceiling finishes in areas being reconstructed to comply with flame spread and smoke development requirements and for area separation walls between attached dwelling units to comply with Chapter 3.
- x Allowing the loads required at the time of construction to be used for existing elements and just require current loads for new elements or for existing elements found to be unsafe.
- x Adding a requirement to provide CO alarms where required existing dwellings. by IRC R311.
- x Adding requirements for alterations that increase the structural loads on a building (say, by adding a heavier floor or roof material) or decrease structural capacity (say, by removing portions of a wall serving as braced wall panels). Affected structural elements must be shown to comply or be altered to comply with the prescriptive structural provisions of the IRC. An engineered design may be required if the prescriptive provi

- masonry parapets in high-seismic areas when more than 25 percent of the roof is reroofed, and a reroofing permit is issued.
- x Adding a requirement for a wall-mounted switch controlling lighting outlets when a room is altered. The switch must be located near an entrance to the room.
- x Adding requirements to provide stairway illumination and code-compliant handrails and guards when stairs are altered.
- x Adds requirements for horizontal and vertical additions to an existing dwelling. For horizontal additions, the new portions and altered elements of the existing dwelling must comply with the structural code requirements J -0.004ay ilented,