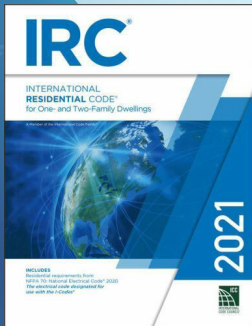


2021

International Residential Code (IRC) Significant Changes

The State of Washington and local jurisdictions adopt/amend updated codes on a three year cycle. This is a highlight of the most significant changes from the 2018 to 2021 versions of the International Residential Code (IRC) that is pending adoption. This list should not be considered inclusive or complete.



The IRC applies to single family, duplex and most townhouses related to new construction, alterations, additions, and relocation of structures as well as their accessory structures.

If you have specific questions regarding this list or code adoption, please contact your local Building Department.

1. The way the IRC manages existing or moved residential structures has changed. Changes resulting in a use, occupancy, height, or means of egress outside the scope of the IRC requires the building to comply with the International Existing Building Code (IEBC).
2. Duplexes are required to be separated by a one hour fire rated assembly or a thirty minute assembly with fire sprinklers, regardless of ownership. Adding an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is exempt from the separation requirements if smoke alarms are interconnected to the primary unit.
3. In addition to being self-closing, doors from garages to dwelling units shall be self-latching.
4. Vehicle charging infrastructure is now required on all new dwelling units with attached private garages or carports.
5. Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings located 44" or less from the exterior grade are permitted to have an opening area of 5 square feet. All rescue openings higher than 44" from exterior grade must be 5.7 square feet.
6. Stationary fuel cell power systems shall require a building permit in accordance with the International Residential Code and a fire permit in accordance with Washington State Fire Code.
7. Garage vehicle doors are now required to have a label that shows the ability of the door to withstand locally adopted windspeed of 110 MPH.
8. Commercial stove and exhaust hoods are not allowed in residential installations.

References:

International Code Council ICC - [International Code Council - ICC \(iccsafe.org\)](https://www.iccsafe.org)

State Building Code Council , see for effective date - [About SBCC | SBCC \(wa.gov\)](https://www.sbcc.wa.gov)



IRC Significant Changes