

International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (WUI)

Beginning on the effective date of the 2021 codes, projects not currently vested will be required to meet the new 2021 International Code Council (ICC) codes as adopted by the Washington State Legislature. One adopted code having a significant impact on proposed construction is the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) code.

The WUI code adds fire protection standards to all structures whether residential or commercial based on proximity to wildlands and areas with "vegetative fuels" that can contribute to wildfires **even if permits are not required**. The WUI code guides ignition-resistant construction requirements for buildings, decks, detached structures, and other components to protect against fire ignition from embers.

Determining whether a project will have to comply with requirements of the WUI code has been made simple through the utilization of a map produced by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). See below for the link to the interactive map. While complex in administration and application, there are some items that when incorporated into projects, go a long way towards compliance with the WUI code. Some of those are shown in the illustration to the right for easy reference.

Resources:



View the state Department of Natural Resources WUI interactive map at <https://data-wadnr.opendata.arcgis.com/> and click "Wildfire."



Learn more about the 2021 ICC codes, go to <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/> and select Title 51



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WHAT'S NEW?



Ventilation openings such as crawlspace and attic openings shall not exceed 144 square inches per vent. Openings are to be protected with max. 1/4" metal mesh or be designed and approved to prevent flame or embers from entering the structure. Attic ventilation openings are no longer permitted in eave overhangs or soffits.



Exterior wall construction options include non-combustible materials, ignition resistant materials, 1-hour rated, heavy timber, or fire-retardant treated materials.



Class A roofing and valley flashing if applicable, shall be metal.



Deck material options include heavy timber construction or approved alternatives per WAC 51-55-0500 Section 501.6. Heavy Timber minimum sizes for posts (6"x6"), beams (6"x8") and joists/stair stringers (4"x8"). Walking surface materials have specific construction requirements, and decks less than 48" above finished grade shall be enclosed with screen material from grade to the underside of joists.

