



MEMORANDUM

TO: Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research, Arkansas Secretary of State (*Arkansas Register*), and others

FROM: Capt. Lindsey Williams, Fire Marshal's Office, and Mr. Greg Downs, Attorney, Department of Arkansas State Police

RE: Proposed 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Rules - SUMMARY

DATE: 05-9-2013

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES

The current Arkansas Fire Prevention Code is the 2007 Edition based on the 2006 Editions of the International Fire Code, the International Building Code, and the International Residential Code. The International Codes were amended and adopted, effective August 1, 2008, by the Arkansas State Fire Marshal of Department of Arkansas State Police ("ASP") as the "Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Rules" ("Code" or "Rules").

The proposed 2012 Edition of the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code ("Code" or "Rules") is based on the 2012 Edition of the International Fire Code, the International Building Code, and the International Residential Code. As in the past, Arkansas changes are being proposed to the 2012 International Fire Code, the International Building Code, and the International Residential Code, primarily to insure that the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code adequately addresses concerns which may be unique to Arkansas.

There are obvious differences in the 2006 Editions and the 2012 Editions of the International Fire Code, the International Building Code, and the International Residential Code. The updates to the International Codes were carefully considered through an open Code development process, in which all interested and affected parties and industry were invited and afforded an opportunity to participate, before Arkansas started its current review. The additional changes proposed by the informal Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Revision Committee are the result of countless hours of work by dedicated, experienced, and knowledgeable Arkansans with an interest in fire and building safety for Arkansas citizens. The Fire Marshal's Office extends its heartfelt thanks to those who gave valuable time and labor to help complete these proposed Rules for public distribution and discussion.

The regular adoption of a modern code is an ongoing effort intended to maintain comprehensive standards for ever changing systems, materials, methods, procedures, and equipment in fire safety and building construction. The

adoption of a modern code is rewarded regularly during fire and building department inspections throughout Arkansas where insurance rates are determined at least partially on the age of the current fire and building code in use. Six years is the lowest rating allowed by the ISO when inspecting local jurisdictions.

The vast majority of the changes proposed by the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Revision Committee involve simple changes to a term or phrase that have no impact on the intent of the Code. EXAMPLE: Replacing the term “International Building Code” with “Arkansas Fire Prevention Code, Volume II” is a type of change of term or phrase.

The most significant change from the 2007 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code involves automatic sprinkler system requirements for a Group E Educational Occupancy. The 2007 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code requires an automatic sprinkler system in a Group E Educational Occupancy when the fire area exceeds twenty thousand (20,000) square feet. This requirement was taken directly from the 2006 Edition of the International Fire Code. The 2012 Edition of the International Fire Code requires an automatic sprinkler system in a Group E Educational Occupancy when the fire area exceeds twelve thousand (12,000) square feet. The Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Revision Committee did not recommend any modification to this requirement. It is prudent to adopt the more stringent change to achieve better protection of Arkansas residents’ lives and their valuable property in such public venues. However, it should also be noted that provisions within the code allow school officials, architects, and engineers to use fire barriers to divide larger school buildings into smaller fire areas as an alternative to sprinklers.

Another significant change, also involving Group E Educational facilities, is the removal of paneling from classrooms and corridors in existing school buildings and day care facilities. This change is intended to address a hazard present in Group E Educational Occupancies that exists from the use of a material that has never met the building code for this application. Due to the significance of this change facilities will be given until 2018 to mitigate this hazard.

A second provision involving Day Care Facilities is the requirement of a residential type hood suppression system over cook tops. This will provide additional protection and will remove any confusion associated with the need for commercial fume hoods in Day Care facilities where none is required. The deadline to comply with this change is January 1, 2017 which give providers ample time to comply.

One notable and positive change to the International Fire Code is the addition of Lockdown Plans to the section for Fire Safety Plans and Evacuation Plans. Sheltering in place is a necessary precaution for several types of hazards. The code will now contain planning, training, and notification requirements to insure that Lockdown Plans are safe and effective.

One significant change eliminates the current requirement for automatic fire suppression at unattended self service fueling stations.

Another significant change involving sprinklers is the reduction of fire areas in Group M Mercantile, F-1 Factory, and S-1 Storage Occupancies used for the storage or display and sale of upholstered furniture and mattresses. F-1 and S-1 Occupancies would reduce from 12,000 square feet to 2,500 square feet. And, M Mercantile Occupancies would reduce from 12,000 square feet to 5,000 square feet. Once again, while the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Revision Committee did not recommend any modification to this requirement, it is prudent to adopt the more stringent change to achieve better protection of Arkansas residents in connection with hazardous fire loads. It should also be noted that provisions within the code allow owners, architects, and engineers to use fire barriers to divide larger buildings into smaller fire areas as an alternative to sprinklers.

The previous 2009 rule omitting the residential sprinkler requirement from one and two family dwellings and townhouses was continued as adopted in this version of the code. There will be no residential sprinkler requirement for these structures.

The provisions addressing Additions, Alterations, Repairs, and Changes of Occupancy to existing buildings have been modified with language similar to the old Standard Building Code which allows the building official to address standards and hazards in existing buildings when changes occur within fifty (50) percent of the original structure.

This item will address vacant buildings intended for occupancy and non-compliant conditions in existing structures undergoing major renovations.

The Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Revision Committee proposes that provisions currently found in the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code, Volume II, 2007 Edition, Chapter 1 (Administration) be used in the appropriate section of Chapter 1 (Administration), 2007 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code, Volume II. This is not actually a change to our currently adopted Code; but is a change from the 2012 International Building Code.

This narrative Summary is intended to provide an overview of the differences in the **2007** Arkansas Fire Prevention Code and the proposed **2012** Arkansas Fire Prevention Code and significant proposed changes.

Prepared by:

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