

2015 International Residential Code Significant Changes

The Cities of Montgomery and Panorama Village have adopted the 2015 International Residential Code and 2014 National Electric Code effective 1 Jan 2016. The State Energy Conservation Office is in the process of adopting the 2015 International Energy Conservation Code and the energy efficiency chapter of the 2015 International Residential Code.

(<http://seco.cpa.state.tx.us/tbec/notices.php>). These are some of the significant changes from the 2006/2009 code series or deficiencies that have been commonly observed during inspections.

1. R301.2 - Ultimate design wind speed values replace basic wind speed values for 3-sec gust wind speeds. The ATC Wind Speed website enable a user to input an address to determine wind zone. www.atcouncil.org/windspeed
2. R302.5.1 - Doors from attached garages into residences shall be equipped with self-closing devices.
3. R302.6 - Dwelling-garage fire separation not less than ½” gypsum wallboard, any penetrations (i.e. **plumbing manifold panels** or **attic access stairs**) shall comply with R302.5 and R302.11 Item 4.
4. R308.4.2 Glazing Adjacent to Doors - Glazing installed perpendicular to a door in a closed position within 24” of door requires safety glazing if the door swings in toward the glazing.
5. R315 - Carbon monoxide alarms shall be located in hallways outside sleeping rooms in homes with attached garage and/or fuel-fired appliance and now require connection to the house wiring system with battery backup.
6. R403.1.6 Foundation Anchorage - Anchor bolts are now required to be placed in the middle 1/3 of the bottom plate – spaced a maximum of 6’, at least two per plate, not more than 12” from the end of each section.
7. Tables R502.3.1(1), R502.3.1(2) and Tables R802.4, R802.5 - Changes to Southern Pine (SP), Douglas Fir-Larch (DFL), and Hemlock Fir (HF) lumber capacities have changed the joist and rafter span length in the prescriptive tables of the IRC. Span lengths for Southern Pine have decreased & lengths for DFL and HF joists have increased.
8. R507 Decks - Deck provisions have been relocated to a new section.

9. R602.10.3(1) Wall Bracing - describes wall bracing, including narrow garage door opening walls.
10. N1101.14 - Permanent Energy Certificate posting requirement.
11. N1102.2.4 - Access Hatches and Doors shall be weatherstripped and insulated to the same level as insulation on the surrounding surfaces.
12. N1102.4.1.2 - The code requires a blower door test to be performed on all dwelling units to determine compliance with the maximum air leakage rate for the applicable climate zone.
13. N1103.3.5 (R403.3.5) Building framing cavities are no longer permitted to be used for ducts or plenums.
14. N1104.1 - High-efficacy lamps are required in at least 75 percent of permanent lighting fixtures.
15. N1102.4.1.1 - Insulation at Wall Corners & Headers - shall be insulated to an R-3 minimum.
16. M1305.1.3 Appliances in attics. Attics containing appliances requiring access shall have with an opening and a clear and unobstructed passageway large enough to allow removal of the largest appliance, but not less than 30 inches (762 mm) high and 22 inches (559 mm) wide and not more than 20 feet (6096 mm) long when measured along the centerline of the passageway from the opening to the appliance. The passageway shall have continuous solid flooring in accordance with Chapter 5 not less than 24 inches (610 mm) wide. A level service space at least 30 inches (762 mm) deep and 30 inches (762 mm) wide shall be present along all sides of the appliance where access is required.
The clear access opening dimensions shall be a minimum of 20 inches by 30 inches (508 mm) by 762 mm), where such dimensions are large enough to allow removal of the largest appliance.
Exceptions:
 1. The passageway and level service space are not required where the appliance can be serviced and removed through the required opening.
 2. Where the passageway is unobstructed and not less than 6 feet (1829 mm) high and 22 inches (559 mm) wide for its entire length, the passageway shall be not more than 50 feet (15 250 mm) long. (Exception 2 allows the walkway to be up to 50' if headroom is 6 feet. Note Chapter 5 requires minimum ¾" plywood)

17. M1502.4.5.1 - The maximum length of dryer exhaust ducts has been increased to 35 feet. G2439.4 & G2439.7 Provide for dryer exhaust duct power ventilators (DEDPV or “booster fan”).
18. M1506.3 - A minimum clearance of 3 ft is required between air exhaust terminations and openings into the building.
19. G2419.4 - A new figure illustrates the correct configuration of a sediment trap. Gas-fired decorative vented appliances installed in vented fireplaces and gas fireplaces are not required to be equipped with a sediment trap.
20. P2503.5 - The head pressure for a water test on drain, waste, and vent (DWV) systems has been reduced from 10ft to 5ft.
21. E3901.9 - Garage receptacle outlets must be served by a separate branch circuit that does not supply other outlets. At least one receptacle outlet is required for each car space in a garage.
22. E3902.8-10 - Adds bathtub/shower, laundry and dishwashers to the list of required GFCI protection.
23. E3902.16 - Arc Fault protection is required in listed rooms.
24. Appendix G Swimming Pools and Spas has been removed from the IRC and is now contained in a stand-alone code.

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