



Fire Sprinkler Requirements

CA Fire Code 903.2 Where required. An automatic fire sprinkler system shall be installed in all new buildings, structures, and new factory-built housing for which a building permit is required and in existing buildings and structures upon a remodel or addition except as indicated below.

Exceptions to the Requirement to Install an Automatic Fire Sprinkler System

The following are exceptions to the requirement to install automatic fire sprinkler systems in buildings:

1. Spaces or areas in telecommunications buildings used exclusively for telecommunications equipment, associated electrical power distribution equipment, batteries and standby engines, provided those spaces or areas are equipped throughout with an automatic fire alarm system and are separated from the remainder of the building by fire barriers consisting of not less than 1-hour fire-resistance-rated walls and 2-hour fire-resistance-rated floor/ceiling assemblies.
2. Detached buildings used exclusively as a Group U Occupancy.
3. Detached buildings accessory to Group R-3 occupancies that are not classified as a dwelling unit or a Group U Occupancy and do not exceed 1,000 square feet in gross floor area.
4. Accessory Dwelling Units and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units, as defined in Sonoma Municipal Code Section 19.92.020, that meet the requirements of Sonoma Municipal Code Section 19.50.090 and the existing primary residence does not have installed and is not required to install an automatic residential sprinkler system.
5. Shipping containers used as a Group S, Division 2 Occupancy.
6. Unless otherwise required by other sections of the code, a sprinkler system shall not be required when all of the following are met:
 - a. The addition of floor area to a building result in a total floor area for the building of less than 4,000 square feet or the addition is less than ten percent (10%) of the existing floor area of the building; and
 - b. The cumulative total building permit valuation for all building permits issued for the subject building within any 36-month period, as determined by the building official, is equal to or less than \$150,000 for buildings containing residential uses or occupancies and equal to or less than \$200,000 for all other occupancies.
 - c. A change of use or occupancy of the building does not create a higher risk as indicated in Section 102.3 of the California Fire Code.
7. Alterations or additions made solely for the purpose of providing barrier removal pursuant to the requirements of the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and as further provided in exception #4 of California Building Code Section 11B-202.4.
8. In an existing multiple tenant building that requires a fire sprinkler system, the fire chief has the authority to modify the fire sprinkler requirements when the intended use does not create any increase in fire danger and the cost of installing a complete fire sprinkler system throughout the entire building creates an unreasonable financial hardship, as determined by the fire chief.

California Residential Code R313.1 - An automatic residential fire sprinkler system shall not be required where additions or alterations are made to existing townhouses that do not have an automatic residential fire sprinkler system installed unless otherwise required by the Fire Code.

California Residential Code R313.2

1. An automatic residential fire sprinkler system shall not be required for additions or alterations to existing buildings that are not already provided with an automatic residential sprinkler system unless otherwise required by the Fire Code as amended by the City of Sonoma.
2. Accessory Dwelling Unit, provided that all of the following are met:
 - 2.1. The unit meets the definition of an Accessory Dwelling Unit as defined in the Government Code Section 65852.2.
 - 2.2. The existing primary residence does not have automatic fire sprinklers.
 - 2.3. The accessory detached dwelling unit does not exceed 1,200 square feet in size.
 - 2.4. The unit is on the same lot as the primary residence.

Addition and Remodel Defined (CA Fire Code Section 202 – as amended)

ADDITION is the increase of area of an existing structure, for which a building permit has been issued, where the increase in floor area is not made exclusively for the provision of accessibility for the physically disabled.

REMODELED is work requiring a building permit including, but not limited to, cosmetic or structural repairs, renovations, restorations, alterations or additions to a structure, the total permit valuation of which, as determined by the building official, exceeds \$150,000 for buildings containing residential uses or occupancies and \$200,000 for all other occupancies over any 36-month period.

Additional Information

Please be advised that when Chlorinated Polyvinyl Chloride (CPVC) water piping and fittings (including piping for residential fire sprinkler systems) are used within residential buildings special worker safety measures, flushing and certification requirements must be met pursuant to Section 604.1 of the California Plumbing Code (CPC).

To help prevent plan review delays, applications for projects which require fire sprinkler system installation should include construction plans, design calculations and sprinkler system component data and cut sheets. Additionally, the plans should clearly indicate that a fire sprinkler system is required for the proposed project.

Questions

For questions pertaining to the requirements for fire sprinkler systems, call the Sonoma Valley Fire District at (707) 996-2102.