



# Fire Sprinkler Requirements

An automatic fire sprinkler system shall be installed in all new buildings for which a building permit is required and in existing buildings upon a remodel or addition to a building (see exceptions below).



## Exceptions

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 one-hour fire-resistance-rated walls and two-hour fire-resistance-rated floor/ceiling assemblies.
2. Detached structures used exclusively as a Group U Occupancy (i.e. small tool sheds, playhouses, garages, carports, barns, greenhouses, agricultural buildings).
3. Shipping containers used as a Group S, Division 2 Occupancy (i.e. low-hazard storage).
4. Unless otherwise required by other sections of the code, a sprinkler system shall not be required for an addition when both a) and b) below<sup>1</sup> are met:
  - a. The addition of floor area to a building results in a total floor area for the building of less than 4,000 square feet or the addition is less than ten percent 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 \$100,000 for buildings containing residential uses or occupancies and equal to or less than \$150,000 for all other occupancies.
5. 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.
6. Pursuant to CA Govt. Code Section 65852.2(c) & (e) [Effective 1/1/17], CA State Fire Marshal Information Bulletin 17-001 and Chapter 14.10.045 of the Sonoma Municipal Code (SMC), an automatic fire sprinkler system shall be required for:
  - 1) Newly constructed detached Accessory Dwelling Units<sup>2</sup> (ADU) when:

<sup>1</sup> If either of the criteria in exception 4.a are met and the criteria in exception 4.b. is met, a fire sprinkler system is not triggered for an addition.

<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to CA Govt. Code Section 65852.2(j)(4) "Accessory dwelling unit" means an attached or a detached residential dwelling unit which provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons. It shall include permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation on the same parcel as the single-family dwelling is situated. An accessory dwelling unit also includes the following:

- a) The primary dwelling on the property has or will have (as a result of remodeling or addition to the primary dwelling), an automatic fire sprinkler system installed; or
  - b) The detached dwelling unit floor area exceeds 850 sq. ft. (*pursuant to SMC 19.50.090.2.b. dwelling units exceeding 850 sq. ft. are not ADU's*)
- 2) New attached Accessory Dwelling Units constructed within or added to an existing primary residence when:
- a) The existing primary dwelling on the property already has an automatic fire sprinkler system installed; or
  - b) The addition to or alteration of the existing primary dwelling to facilitate an attached Accessory Dwelling Unit triggers the local code amendment (SMC 14.10.045 - 2016 California Fire Code amendment of section 903.2) requiring automatic fire sprinklers. Fire sprinklers are not required for ADU's when :
    - i) The cumulative total valuation for all building permits for the property, including the subject ADU project and any alterations or additions, is less than \$100,000 over any 36-month period; and
    - ii) The addition of floor area to the primary residence results in a total floor area for the building of less than 4,000 square feet; or
    - iii) The addition to the primary residence is less than ten percent (10%) of the existing floor area of the primary residence.

### **Addition and Remodel Defined**

**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 building permit valuation of which, as determined by the Building Official, exceeds \$100,000 for buildings containing residential uses or occupancies and \$150,000 for all other occupancies over any 36-month period.

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

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 be accompanied by three (3) sets of construction plans, design calculations and sprinkler head data. Additionally, the plans should clearly indicate that a fire sprinkler system is required for the proposed project. If plans for the fire sprinkler system are not submitted with the original permit application, a separate permit must be obtained for the fire sprinkler system.

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(A) An efficiency unit, as defined in Section 17958.1 of Health and Safety Code.

(B) A manufactured home, as defined in Section 18007 of the Health and Safety Code.