

CHAPTER 15.06

Automatic Fire Sprinkler and Alarm Systems

Section

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15.06.010 PURPOSE.

A. The California Fire Code, California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 9, 2022 Edition, as modified and amended from time to time, establishes certain standards for automatic fire extinguishing systems. A copy of the code, in its latest form, is on file in the office of the Fire Chief.

B. The purpose of this chapter is to provide regulations establishing minimum standards for automatic fire sprinkler systems where the standards are not specifically covered by the California Fire Code. Where specific standards are provided by the California Fire Code and provide a greater degree of fire protection than the provisions of this chapter, those standards shall apply. In those cases where the California Fire Code does not provide specific standards, the terms of this chapter shall apply.

C. The intent of this chapter is to apply those fire protection standards which will provide the residents and property owners of the City the greatest degree of fire protection which is reasonable under the circumstances. All buildings are subject to the provisions of this chapter.

(Ord. 990, § 2, passed 05-13-2024)

15.06.020 DEFINITIONS IN GENERAL.

Definitions contained in the California Fire Code, California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 9, 2022 Edition, shall apply to this chapter unless specifically amended. Whenever any of the following names or terms are used in any of the compilations adopted by reference by this chapter such names or terms shall have the following meanings:

APPEAL AUTHORITY. As defined in Chapter 1.06.

BUILDING. Any building or group of buildings that requires a sprinkler under this chapter or the California Fire Code, California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 9, 2022 Edition.

BUILDING PERMIT VALUATION. The value of repairs, maintenance and remodel work as determined by the Mendocino County Planning and Building Department through their plan review process. The building permit valuation will include the total of all active building permits for the building at the same location, excluding separate permits to install automatic fire sprinkler systems.

(Ord. 990, § 2, passed 05-13-2024)

15.06.030 AUTOMATIC FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS – REQUIRED.

A. All new buildings shall have an automatic fire sprinkler system installed, unless specifically exempted in accordance with § 15.06.050.

B. Buildings in existence prior to the adoption of this code shall be subject to the requirements for automatic fire sprinkler systems upon the change of occupancy to a higher hazard level as defined by the Fire Marshal.

1. Existing commercial and multifamily buildings which are remodeled, added to, or altered, including maintenance and repair activities, ~~when the valuation of the cost of such work within any 36-month period exceeds \$120,000~~, shall have an automatic fire sprinkler system installed when any of the following thresholds are met:

- a) A substantial remodel that includes the removal or demolition of more than 50% of the exterior or interior weight-bearing walls, or removal of the roof structure or ceiling thereby permitting installation of overhead piping; or removal of interior tenant improvements reducing the building to a “shell” condition shall require the future build-out to comply with fire sprinkler requirements.
- b) A substantial new addition: an increase of floor area by more than 25% of the existing floor area or than 2,500 square feet, whichever is less
- c) Additions that result in additional guest rooms or dwelling units.
- d) Regardless of size, an automatic fire sprinkler system is required to be installed in any addition when the existing building is already provided with an automatic sprinkler system.
- e) All new buildings.

The sprinkler system shall be connected with the City’s water service as determined by the Director of Public Works. Roof replacement costs will not be calculated in the \$120,000 limit. The \$120,000 valuation will be determined by the Mendocino County Planning and Building Department through their plan review process and completed on the application for any building permit. The \$120,000 valuation is in 2024 dollars; the actual valuation amount shall be calculated based on the California Construction Cost Index adjustment for the year the permit is issued.

2. The Fire Marshal shall: (a) review the building permit, plans and building permit valuation at the time of the building permit application submittal; and (b) review the building permit, any applicable building permit application and plans upon any change in scope of work or modification to the building permit application to determine if the building permit ~~meets the above valuation of the proposed work and all work completed on the building for all active building permits exceeds the adjusted \$120,000~~ threshold.

3. If the building permit valuation exceeds the threshold, the Fire Marshal shall require installation of fire sprinklers per this chapter prior to approval of the building permit or final inspection.

4. A state-of-the-art fire monitoring alarm system is required for all other commercial remodels projects.

(Ord. 990, § 2, passed 05-13-2024)

15.06.050 EXEMPTIONS AND WAIVERS.

A. All 1- and 2-family dwellings and detached utility (“U” occupancy) buildings are exempted from the requirement to install automatic fire sprinkler systems. All residential projects that are exempted by Stat law are also exempted from the requirement to install automatic sprinkler systems.

B. The Fire Chief may grant exemptions for the automatic fire sprinkler system requirements for new construction by placing such conditions upon construction and/or use of the building so as to reduce the fire risk to a diminished level and by making a finding that the use of structure would present low or no fire risk. Examples:

1. Portable fire extinguisher or Class 2 standpipe installation;
2. Providing 1-hour resistive occupancy separation for equipment rooms;
3. Sprinklers undesirable because of nature of the contents in the room/area, the items being noncombustible or not exposed to other rooms/areas.

(Ord. 990, § 2, passed 05-13-2024)

15.06.060 ANNUAL INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE.

The owner of any building in which automatic fire alarm systems or fire sprinkler systems have been installed shall have the systems inspected and maintained per NFPA 25 and shall provide a report of the inspection to the Fire Chief.

(Ord. 990, § 2, passed 05-13-2024)

15.06.070 [RESERVED].

(Ord. 990, § 2, passed 05-13-2024)

15.06.080 FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS DEFINED AND REQUIRED.

A. ***FIRE ALARM SYSTEM*** means all devices, controls, and circuits, together with the energy necessary to sound the alarm, electrically supervise the system, and activate the alarm bells, trouble bells or trouble signals.

B. Every new building shall have installed an approved, automatically operated fire alarm system designed to warn all occupants simultaneously. In addition, the Fire Chief may require that this system be monitored in the manager's quarters and/or by a supervising station as defined in NFPA 72. The Fire Chief may also require the installation of a manually operated fire alarm system.

C. All required fire alarm systems shall be installed in accordance with NFPA 72.

D. Exceptions to this section are all "U" occupancies. These exceptions do not apply to 1- and 2-family dwellings within a building that otherwise requires an alarm system (i.e., commercial occupancy below a dwelling).

(Ord. 990, § 2, passed 05-13-2024)

15.06.090 VIOLATIONS.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this chapter is hereby declared to be unlawful and a public nuisance, and shall be subject to the remedies and penalties established by Chapter 6.12.

(Ord. 990, § 2, passed 05-13-2024)