SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO THE

INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE®

2018 EDITION

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Kevin H. Scott, Author

Additional contributions by Robert A. Neale

International Code Council

ICC Staff :

Executive Vice President and Director of Business Development: Mark A. Johnson

Senior Vice President, Business and Product Development: Hamid Naderi

Vice President and Technical Director of Products and Services: Doug Thornburg

Senior Marketing Specialist: Dianna Hallmark

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Cover Design: Lisa Triska
Project Head: Steve Van Note
Publications Manager: Mary Lou Luif

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Preface

The purpose of *Significant Changes to the International Fire Code®*, 2018 Edition, is to familiarize fire officials, building officials, plans examiners, fire inspectors, design professionals and others with many of the important changes in the 2018 *International Fire Code®* (IFC®). This publication is designed to assist code users in identifying the specific code changes that have occurred and, more important, in understanding the reasons behind the changes. It is also a valuable resource for jurisdictions in order to help them explain the significance and impact of the changes as they go through their code adoption process.

Only a portion of the total number of code changes to the IFC are discussed in this book. The changes selected were identified for a number of reasons, including their frequency of application, special significance or change in application. However, the importance of the changes not included is not to be diminished. Further information on all code changes can be found in the Complete Revision History, available from the International Code Council® (ICC®) in 2018, through the online store at http://shop.iccsafe.org. This resource collection provides the published documentation for each successful code change contained in the 2018 IFC since the 2015 edition.

Significant Changes to the International Fire Code, 2018 Edition, is arranged to follow the general layout of the IFC, including code sections and section number format. The table of contents, in addition to providing guidance in the use of this publication, allows for a quick identification of those significant code changes that occur in the 2018 IFC.

Throughout the book, each change is accompanied by a photograph or an illustration to assist in and enhance the reader's understanding of the specific change. A summary and a discussion of the significance of the change are also provided. Each code change is identified by type, be it an addition, modification, clarification or deletion.

The code change itself is presented in a legislative format similar to the style utilized for code change proposals. Deleted code language is shown with a strikethrough, and new code text is indicated by underlining. As a result, the actual 2018 code language is provided as well as

a comparison with the 2015 language, so the user can easily determine changes to the specific code text.

As with any code change text, *Significant Changes to the International Fire Code,* 2018 Edition, is best used as a companion to the 2018 IFC. Because only a limited discussion of each change is provided, the reader should reference the code itself in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the code change and its application.

The commentary and opinions set forth in this text are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of ICC. In addition, they may not represent the views of any enforcing agency because such agencies have the sole authority to render interpretations of the IFC. In many cases, the explanatory material is derived from the reasoning expressed by code change proponents.

Comments concerning this publication are encouraged and may be directed to ICC at significantchanges@iccsafe.org.

About the *International Fire Code*

Fire code officials, fire inspectors, building officials, design professionals, contractors and others involved in the field of fire safety recognize the need for a modern, up-to-date fire code. The *International Fire Code* (IFC), 2018 Edition, is intended to meet these needs through model code regulations that safeguard the public health and safety in all communities, large and small. The IFC is kept up to date through ICC's open code development process. The provisions of the 2015 edition, along with those code changes approved through 2016, make up the 2018 edition.

One in a family of International Codes® published by ICC, the IFC is a model code that establishes minimum fire safety requirements for new and existing buildings, facilities, storage and processes. It addresses fire prevention, fire protection, life safety and safe storage and use of hazardous materials. The IFC provides a total approach of controlling hazards in all buildings and sites, regardless of the hazard being indoors or outdoors.

The IFC is a design document. For example, before a building is constructed, the site must be provided with an adequate water supply for fire-fighting operations and a means of building access for emergency responders in the event of a medical emergency, fire or natural or technological disaster. Depending on the building's occupancy and uses, the IFC regulates the various hazards that may be housed within the building, including refrigeration systems, application of flammable finishes, fueling of motor vehicles, high-piled combustible storage and the storage and use of hazardous materials. The IFC sets forth minimum requirements for these and other hazards and contains requirements for maintaining the life safety of building occupants, the protection of emergency responders, and to limit the damage to a building and its contents as the result of a fire, explosion or unauthorized hazardous material discharge and electrical systems. The IFC is available for adoption and use by jurisdictions internationally. Its use within a governmental jurisdiction is intended to be accomplished through adoption by reference, in accordance with proceedings establishing the jurisdiction's laws.

Acknowledgements

Significant Changes to the International Fire Code, 2018 Edition, is the result of a collaborative effort, and the author is grateful for the assistance and contributions by the following talented staff of ICC Business and Product Development: Hamid Naderi, P.E., C.B.O., Senior Vice President; Doug Thornburg, A.I.A., C.B.O., Vice President, Director of Education and Certification; and Jay Woodward, A.I.A, Senior Staff Architect. The author would also like to thank Bob Davidson, Davidson Code Concepts, LLC; Howard Hopper, Regulatory Services Program Coordinator with Underwriters Laboratories LLC; and Pat McLaughlin, McLaughlin & Associates for their insight and assistance with application of some of the technical requirements.

A special thank you is extended to Robert Neale, Vice President, ICC Government Relations. Rob spent many hours working on the content, sharing his knowledge, and providing peer review.

About the Author

Kevin H. Scott
President
KH Scott & Associates LLC

Kevin Scott is President of KH Scott & Associates LLC. Kevin has extensive experience in the development of fire safety, building safety and hazardous materials regulations. Kevin has actively worked for over 25 years in the development of fire code, building code and fire safety regulations at the local, state, national and international levels. Kevin previously worked as a Senior Regional Manager with the International Code Council, and before that, he was Deputy Chief for the Kern County Fire Department, California, where he worked for 30 years. He has developed and presented many seminars on a variety of technical subjects including means of egress, high-piled combustible storage, hazardous materials, and plan review and inspection practices.

Kevin was a member of the original IFC Drafting Committee that worked to create the first edition of the IFC. He served for seven years on the IFC Code Development Committee and was chairperson for the committee from 2001 to 2004. Kevin has actively participated in numerous technical committees to evaluate specific hazards and technologies, and to create regulations specific to those hazards.

Some of the more significant committees are:

- High-piled Combustible Storage Committee
- Hydrogen Gas Ad Hoc Committee
- Task Group 400
- Technical Advisory Committee on Retail Storage of Group 'A' Plastic Commodities
- Underwriters Laboratories Fire Council.

Kevin's constant work to improve fire and life safety has been recognized on many levels. His contributions have been acknowledged by various organizations when they presented him with the following awards:

- Mary Eriksen-Rattan Award in 2013—presented by the Southern California State Fire Prevention Officers' Association
- William Goss Award in 2009—presented by the California State Firefighters Association
- Fire Official of the Year Award in 2005—presented by the California Building Officials
- Robert W. Gain Award in 2003—presented by the International Fire Code Institute.

About the Contributor

Robert A. Neale

Vice President

Governement Relations: National Fire Service Activities

Rob currently serves as the International Code Council Vice President for Government Relations: National Fire Service Activities. He is responsible for strategic guidance to help local fire organizations adopt and enforce the most recent version of the model codes and build relationships among code enforcement entities.

In 2015, Rob retired as Deputy Superintendent for the United States Fire Administration National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. He led the development of curriculum aimed at improving the professionalism of America's fire service.

In 2012, he received the FEMA Administrator's Award for Innovation in training for his development of the popular Coffee Break Training series. Rob was awarded the International Society for Performance Improvement award for the National Fire Academy class "Evaluating Performance-Based Designs" in 2004.

He has more than 30 years of experience in Washington state municipal fire protection as a fire chief, fire marshal and fire fighter.

Rob has a master's degree from the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School and a bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies from Western Washington University.

Rob has been published regularly in national fire protection trade journals, and for many years has been content developer and platform instructor on codes, standards and fire protection systems.

About the International Code Council

The International Code Council is a member-focused association. It is dedicated to developing model codes and standards used in the design, build and compliance process to construct safe, sustainable, affordable and resilient structures. Most U.S. communities and many global markets choose the International Codes. ICC Evaluation Service® (ICC-ES®) is the industry leader in performing technical evaluations for code compliance fostering safe and sustainable design and construction.

ICC Headquarters:
500 New Jersey Avenue, NW, 6th Floor,
Washington, DC 20001

Regional Offices:
Birmingham, AL • Chicago, IL • Los Angeles, CA

1-888-422-7233 (ICC-SAFE)
www.iccsafe.org