

# 2018 SEATTLE FIRE CODE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

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The Seattle Fire Code is updated (replaced) every three years in line with updated International Fire Code, Washington State Fire Code, and the other construction codes adopted in Seattle such as Building Code, Mechanical Code, Electrical Code, etc. The updates incorporate current technologies, designs, and the latest evaluations of what is an acceptable level of safety.

The following are provisions contained in the 2018 Seattle Fire Code that are a significant change from requirements contained in the 2015 Seattle Fire Code.

## **Section 314.4 Vehicles.**

The Seattle Fire Code allows the display of vehicles inside of buildings when several conditions are applied. One of those conditions was to disconnect the battery. This was problematic for gaseous-fueled vehicles such as hydrogen, LNG or CNG. These types of alternative fueled vehicles have built-in sensors to detect leaks or overpressure and these devices would be disabled if the batteries were disconnected. The Seattle Fire Code now allows the Fire Code Official to determine which method of safeguarding is most appropriate for the vehicle in question. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to leave the batteries connected and the safety systems in operation.

## **Section 315.3.1 Ceiling Clearance for Indoor Storage**

New exceptions have been added which will now eliminate the need for clearance from the ceiling or sprinkler heads for storage along walls in buildings. Previously, storage along walls had to be maintained two feet or more below ceilings in non-sprinklered areas and 18 inches below sprinkler heads in sprinklered buildings. This will allow more flexibility for businesses to store materials.

## **Section 901.6.2 Integrated testing**

The SFC now requires when two or more fire protection or life safety systems are interconnected in High-Rise buildings that an integrated test be performed at intervals not exceeding 10 years. It is very important that these systems be maintained in the life of a building. They are often complex in design. A fire alarm system initiating a complex combination of door closures, damper operations, elevator captures, and fan activations in a high-rise building, is an example of an integration that can be highly complex and in most cases it involves the coordination of many different trades, control units and systems. This code revision is created to ensure that required testing of integrated features is accomplished and that buildings and their occupants are protected.

## **Chapter 12 Energy Systems**

This new chapter has been added to the SFC to address all configurations of energy systems. This chapter contains the emergency power, standby power, and stationary battery storage system requirements from Chapter 6 of the 2015 SFC along with new requirements for other methods of energy generation and storage such as fuel cell power systems and capacitor energy storage systems. The installation of large electrical energy storage systems into existing buildings poses significant hazards to occupants and emergency responders because of the nature of the technologies involved and the large amounts of energy being stored. These systems were largely unregulated by the 2015 editions of the Seattle Fire and Building codes, especially capacitors energy storage systems (CESS) which have the potential to be a significant energy storage source. The 2018 Seattle Fire Code now establishes basic protection requirements that were previously absent.

## **5707 Mobile Fueling Operations**

A new industry, On-demand mobile fueling, now has prescriptive code requirements that did not exist in the 2015 Seattle Fire Code. The previous code edition did not allow tank vehicles to fuel gasoline passenger vehicles unless it was an emergency. The 2018 Seattle Fire Code now addresses this new industry and allows the fire code official to allow this activity under certain conditions. Fueling is not allowed on public streets, but it may be allowed in designated areas such as parking lots that meet certain requirements.