

April 2024: Building Code Changes



International Building Code 2021 Edition

The 2021 editions of the model codes with Washington State Amendments went into effect on March 15th, 2024.

[Click here to view the full PDF version of the International Building Code 2021 Edition](#)

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How to Contact Lakewood Development Services

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| <p>Contact the Lakewood building department for general permitting questions.</p> | <p>Email permits@cityoflakewood.us for the fastest response.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Call us at (253) 512-2261</p> <p>Your call will go to an answering machine so we can forward your inquiry to the appropriate staff.</p> <p>When leaving a message, please describe your issue, question, or reason for requesting a meeting. Please include your name and contact information.</p> <p>We check messages twice daily.</p> |
| <p>Request an in-person meeting with Development Services staff.</p> | <p>Email permits@cityoflakewood.us</p> |
| <p>Submit building or site development permits.</p> | <p>Use the Lakewood Permit Dashboard</p> <p>All documents must be submitted through the City of Lakewood Permit Dashboard.</p> <p>For more information about planning, please visit the Development Services page.</p> <p>If you need assistance with the submittal process, please reach out to permits@cityoflakewood.us</p> |

Energy & Energy Efficiency

Heat Pumps

All new housing units must include heat pumps for space and water heating. There are eight exceptions to this rule, though most new residential construction will be required to have heat pumps. This change along with -3.0 credits for natural gas furnaces means that natural gas will no longer be as viable in new construction.

Energy Code Credit Requirement Changes

Credit requirements are increased for all dwelling units, Group R-2 occupancies, and additions of 150-500 sq. ft.

| Dwelling Type | 2018 Credit Requirement | 2021 Credit Requirement |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Small Dwelling Unit (<1500 sq. ft.) | 3.0 | 5.0 |
| Medium Dwelling Unit (All other dwelling units) | 6.0 | 8.0 |
| Large Dwelling Unit (>5000 sq. ft.) | 7.0 | 9.0 |
| Group R-2 Occupancies | 4.5 | 6.5 |
| Additions (150-500 sq. ft.) | 1.5 | 2.0 |

Small Additions

Small additions less than or equal to 500 sq. ft. are required to meet a 2.0 energy code credit standard. This can be prohibitive for certain kinds of small additions. Small additions 150 sq. ft. or less are no longer required to meet energy code credit minimums.

EV Charging

All new dwelling units with attached private garages or carports must include at least one 40-ampere dedicated 208/240 volt branch circuit in the electrical panel. The branch circuit must terminate at a junction box, receptacle outlet, or electric vehicle charging equipment.

Air Leakage

Air leakage in tiny home construction must not exceed 0.30 cfm @ 50 pascals of pressure per sq. ft. of the dwelling unit enclosure area. Testing must be conducted in accordance with RESNET/ICC 380, ASTM E 779, or ASTM E 1827. Results must be reported at a pressure of 50 pascals. Where required by the code official, testing will be conducted by an approved third party.

Solar Energy Systems

The roof structure shall be deemed adequate to support the load of the rooftop solar photovoltaic system if all of the following requirements are met:

- 1. The solar photovoltaic panel system shall be designed for the wind speed of the local area, and shall be installed per the manufacturer's specifications.
- 2. The ground snow load does not exceed 70 pounds per square foot.(3.35 kPa)
- 3. The total dead load of modules, supports, mountings, raceways, and all other appurtenances weigh no more than 4 pounds per square foot (19.5 kg/m²).
- 4. Photovoltaic modules are not mounted higher than 18 inches (457 mm) above the surface of the roofing to which they are affixed.
- 5. Supports for solar modules are to be installed to spread the dead load across as many roof-framing members as needed, so that no point load exceeds 50 pounds (22.7 kg)

The total solar-ready zone area shall be not less than 300 square feet (27.87 m²) exclusive of mandatory access or set back areas as required by this code. New townhouses three stories or less in height above grade plane and with a total floor area less than or equal to 2,000 square feet (185.8 m²) per dwelling shall have a solar-ready zone area of not less than 150 square feet (13.94 m²). The solar-ready zone shall be composed of areas not less than 5 feet (1.52 m) in width and not less than 80 square feet (7.44 m²) exclusive of access or set back areas as required in this code or the applicable provisions of the International Fire Code. No portion of the solar zone shall be located on a roof slope greater than 2:12 that faces within 45 degrees of true north.

Lofts

Lofts are now considered mezzanines instead of habitable attic space. Lofts are limited to 70 sq. ft. of floor area. The ceiling height of the loft area must not exceed 7 feet for more than one half of the loft floor area. Guards are also required for open-sided walking surfaces including floors, mezzanines, lofts, stairs, ramps, and landings that are located more than 30 inches measured vertically to the floor or grade below at any point within 36 inches horizontally to the edge of the open side.

Fire Safety

Fire safety updates include fire-resistant construction, emergency escape & rescue, automatic fire sprinkler systems, smoke alarms & heat detection, and carbon monoxide alarms.

Smoke alarms must be installed in the following locations:

- 1. In each sleeping room.
- 2. Outside each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms.
- 3. On each additional story of the dwelling, including basements and habitable attics but not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics. In dwellings or dwelling units with split levels and without an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke alarm installed on the upper level shall suffice for the adjacent lower level provided that the lower level is less than one full story below the upper level.
- 4. Smoke alarms shall be installed not less than 3 feet (914 mm) horizontally from the door or opening of a bathroom that contains a bathtub or shower unless this would prevent placement of a smoke alarm required by Section R314.3.
- 5. In napping areas in a family home child care.
- 6. In the hallway and in the room open to the hallway in dwelling units where the ceiling height of a room open to a hallway serving bedrooms exceeds that of the hallway by 24 inches (610 mm) or more.
- 7. Within the room to which a loft is open, in the immediate vicinity of the loft.

Natural & Built Environments

Wildland Urban Interface

Wildland Urban Interface areas are now determined using the Washington Wildland Urban Interface Map (WA-WUI). [Click here to view the WA-WUI map.](#)

Other changes to WUI include changes to structure and vegetation density calculations, driveway & turnout changes, and fire safety updates to exterior walls and roof coverings.