



City of Sonoma

Building Department Informational Handout

Fire Sprinkler Requirements

Handout No: 5
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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.

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.



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 when all of the following 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.

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

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.

