



# Planning & Development Services

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## Memorandum

To: Board of County Commissioners  
From: Randy Johnson, Building Official  
Re: 2023 Building Code Updates  
Date: May 25, 2023

### Summary

The State Building Code and Skagit County Building Code standards are updated every three years to ensure use of the latest safety measures and to allow use of current and available construction practices across the industry. Cities and counties may modify the building codes, except for the technical requirements of the International Residential Code. This proposed ordinance would amend Skagit County Code (SCC) Title 15 to reference the 2021 editions of the International Codes instead of the 2018 editions and proposes amendments to provide clearer direction for owners and applicants.

### Notable Changes to the State Code:

- 2021 International Residential Code and Building Code. Increase the **reuse and recycling** of construction and demolition materials by requiring separate trash and recycling containers during demolition. This will apply to projects larger than 750 square feet or with a value greater than \$75,000.00 dollars.
- Accessibility Standards ICC A117.1-2017. **Wheelchair turning radius** increased from 60" to 67" to better accommodate larger motorized units.
- 2023 NFPA 855 Standards for Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems, also known as **Battery Energy Storage Systems**.
- 2021 International **Wildland-Urban Interface Code**. The appendices from the previous version were now place into the code. There remains an allowance for local jurisdictions to submit amended maps to Department of Natural Resources for review and possible inclusion. The new regulations will require **fire resistant construction** on the exterior. Remodels of at least 50% of the square footage of the structure and reroof projects will now require the minimum of reroofing with a Class A roof.
- 2021 International **Energy Conservation Code**, known as the Washington State Energy Code. Continuous foam board exterior insulation, provisions for future solar installation, and for many houses, R-60 ceiling insulation. Additionally, natural gas or propane heat source is highly discouraged via the required Energy Credit system.

- Provides guidelines and structural requirements when constructing **storm/tsunami shelters**.
- A \$25 State Building Code Council fee will be required for commercial permits in addition to the existing \$6.50 fee for residential permits.

## **Notable changes to Skagit County Title 15:**

### International Residential Code

- **Permit expiration.** When renewing a permit, the Building Official may require remaining construction to comply with updated code requirements prior to approval of renewal/extension.
- Include structural **snow load** language in Title 15 to match adopted Ground Snow Load Map. Low lying areas shall be design to a minimum uniform roof show load of 25psf.

### International Building Code

- Revised occupancy category to reflect updated **code designation**. Replace Group LC with Group R-2.

### International Property Maintenance Code

- 2021 International Property Maintenance Code. Maximum 18” height for weeds (e.g. **blackberries**) for small lot development—smaller than 1 acre for two or more contiguous parcels. This will not apply parcels greater than one acre.

### International Fire Code

- For consistency with the Public Works Road Standards.
  - **Private roads** serve three to eight residential properties
  - **Bridges and private roads** must also meet Skagit County Road Standards as required by the Skagit County Public Works Depart and the International Fire Code

## **Process**

The public notice is published in the Skagit Valley Herald and posted online 14 days prior to the public hearing. A public work session was held with the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners on May 8, 2023. The proposal will receive at least one public hearing and a written comment period before the Board of County Commissioners, which must approve the final adoption.

### **Public Notices**

Skagit County issued a Notice of Availability for this proposal on May 25, 2023.

### **For More Information**

Read the Notice of Availability for deadlines and hearing details. This is available at the project website, [www.skagitcounty.net/2023BuildingCode](http://www.skagitcounty.net/2023BuildingCode)