

2015 International Plumbing Code Overview of Changes

The *2015 International Plumbing Code (IPC)* contains many changes that provide clarity of content and resolve common interpretation problems. The scope of the 2015 IPC continues to encompass the initial design of the plumbing system, the installation and construction of plumbing systems, and the maintenance of operating systems. All plumbing systems which are provided for utilization by and for the general safety and well-being of the occupants of a building are intended to be governed by the code. Plumbing installations associated with one-and-two family dwellings are regulated by the *International Residential Code*.

New in the 2015 Edition

403.3 Required Public Toilet Facilities. Occupancies that have limited areas for public access (300 sq ft or less), such as dry cleaners, take-out only restaurants and automated teller machine lobbies, do not require public toilet facilities.

501.3 Drain Valves. Drain valves for emptying shall be installed at the bottom of each tank-type water heater and hot water storage tank. The drain valve inlet shall be not less than $\frac{3}{4}$ inch nominal iron pipe size and the outlet shall be provided with male garden hose threads.

504.7.2 Pan Drain Termination. Where a pan drain was not previously installed, a pan drain shall not be required for a replacement water heater installation.

607.3 Thermal Expansion Control. The available method to control closed-system pressure increases caused by the heating of water has been limited to the use of thermal expansion tanks only.

705.11.2 Solvent Cementing. The application of primer to drain waste and vent PVC pipe and fittings prior to solvent cementing is not required for 4 – inch pipe size and smaller.

2015 International Plumbing Code Proposed Amendments

Note: An asterisk at the beginning of a section identifies a new amendment with the 2015 code edition.

"E. The International Plumbing Code adopted by reference in Section 101.4.3, 2012 International Building Code is hereby amended as follows:

- 1 Section 102.8 (Referenced codes and standards) is amended by adding the following exception:

'Exception: Any reference to the ICC Electrical Code shall mean the National Electrical Code, as adopted and amended by the City of College Station.'

(Reason: The City of College Station has adopted the National Electrical Code to regulate electrical installations.)

- 2 Section 106.3 (Application for permit) is amended by deleting the text in said section and replacing it with the following:

'The code official may require a permit application for work regulated by this code.'

(Reason: The code as written, requires a written application for plumbing permits. This amendment provides the flexibility of making written permit applications optional.)

- 3 Section 106.6.2 (Fee Schedule) is amended by deleting this section in its entirety.

(Reason: The City currently has a permit fee schedule that has been adopted by resolution.)

- 4 Section 106.6.3 (Fee refunds) is amended by deleting the text in said section and replacing it with the following:

'The City Manager or designee is authorized to establish a refund policy.'

(Reason: A refund policy for permit fees already exists. This amendment also makes the IPC fee refund requirement consistent with section 109.6, 2015 IBC.)

- 5 Section 108.5 (Stop work orders) is amended by inserting the following amounts in the blanks provided at the end of said section:

'twenty-five (\$25.00) in the first blank and two-thousand (\$2,000.00) in the second blank'

(Reason: The amounts above are consistent with the fines as outlined in the adopting ordinance for violations.)

- 6 Section 109 (Means of Appeal) is amended by deleting the section in its entirety.

(Reason: The City already provided for the establishment of the Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals in Section 1(A), Chapter 3, College Station Code of Ordinances.)

- 7 Section 305.4.1 (Sewer depth) is amended by inserting “twelve (12)” in both blanks and adding the following sentence to the end of said section.

‘Where conditions prohibit the required amount of cover, cast iron pipe with approved joints may be used unless other means of protecting the pipe is provided as approved by the Building Official.’

(Reason: When field conditions do not allow at least 12 inches of ground cover over a sewer line, cast iron pipe is provided as approved by the Building Official.)

- 8 Section 312.1 (Required tests) is amended by deleting the following text from said section:

‘, for piping systems other than plastic, by’

(Reason: This change allows an air test for plastic piping systems – a common practice on job sites without access to water.)

- 9 Section 312.2 (Drainage and vent water test) is amended by deleting said section in its entirety and replacing with the following:

‘312.2 Drainage water test. A water test shall be applied to the drainage system either in its entirety or in sections. If applied to the entire system, all openings in the piping shall be tightly closed, except the highest opening, and the system shall be filled with water to the point of overflow. If the system is tested in sections, each opening shall be tightly plugged except the highest opening of the section under test, and each section shall be tested with not less than a 5-foot head of water. This pressure shall be held for at least 15 minutes. The drainage system shall then be tight at all points.’

(Reason: This change omits any reference to pressure testing the vent system. It is not a common practice in this area to require a pressure test on the vent system.)

- 10 Section 312.3 (Drainage and vent air test) is amended by deleting said section in its entirety and replacing with the following:

‘312.3 Drainage air test. An air test shall be applied to the drainage piping by forcing air into the system until there is uniform gauge pressure of 5 pounds per square inch (psi) or sufficient to balance a 10-inch column of mercury. This pressure shall be held for a test period of at least 15 minutes. Any adjustment to the test pressure required because of changes in ambient temperature or the seating of gaskets shall be made prior to the beginning of the test period.’

(Reason: This change omits any reference to pressure testing the vent system. It is not common practice in this area to require a pressure test on the vent system.)

- *11 Section 312.6 (Gravity sewer test) is amended by replacing “10-foot” with “5-foot”.

(Reason: This change makes for uniform testing methods of DWV and gravity sewer piping.)

12. Section 312.10 (Inspection and testing of backflow prevention assemblies.) is amended by deleting said section in its entirety and replacing with the following:

‘312.10 Inspection and testing of backflow prevention assemblies. Upon initial installation, an inspection shall be made of all backflow prevention devices and assemblies to determine whether they are operable. Testing of all backflow prevention devices and assemblies shall be in accordance with Chapter 11, Section 10, Subsection F, of the Code of Ordinances, City of College Station, Texas.’

(Reason: Consistent with City Council's direction concerning backflow prevention devices.)

13. Section 410.4 (Substitution) is amended by deleting the last sentence in said section and replacing it with the following:

‘Where bottle water dispensers are provided in other occupancies, drinking fountains shall not be required.’

(Reason: This change allows bottled water dispensers to be used in place of drinking fountains.)

14. Table 605.3 (Water Service Pipe) is amended by deleting the following materials:

Acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS) plastic pipe
Polyethylene (PE) plastic pipe
Polyethylene (PE) plastic tubing
Polyethylene/aluminum/polyethylene (PE-AL-PE) pipe

(Reason: The piping materials listed above are not commonly used in this area. Furthermore, College Station has relatively high water pressure demanding the best water service piping material.)

15. Section 606 (Installation of the Building Water Distribution System) is amended by adding section 606.8 to read as follows:

‘606.8 Materials below slab. Water distribution piping installed under concrete slabs shall be copper (minimum type K), cross-link polyethylene (PEX) tubing, or cross-linked polyethylene/aluminum/ polyethylene (PEX-AL-PEX) pipe, all installed without joints or connections. Materials subject to corrosion shall be protected when exposed to concrete or corrosive soils.’

(Reason: This amendment provides an elevated standard for water distribution piping installed under concrete slabs.)

16. Section 606 (Installation of the Building Water Distribution System) is amended by adding section 606.9 to read as follows:

‘606.9 Sleeved cross-polyethylene piping or tubing. ‘When a sleeve is provided for cross-linked polyethylene (PEX) plastic piping or tubing installed under

concrete slabs the annular space between the piping or tubing and the sleeve must be caulked, foamed, or otherwise sealed to prevent the entrance of termiticide.'

(Reason: This amendment provides added protection from liquid chemical termiticides that may enter the void between the sleeve and piping /tubing.)

17. Section 608.16.5 (Connections to lawn irrigation systems) is amended by deleting the first sentence in said section and replacing it with the following:

'The potable water supply to lawn irrigation systems shall be protected against backflow by an atmospheric vacuum breaker, a pressure vacuum breaker assembly, a reduced pressure principle backflow prevention assembly or a double check.'

(Reason: Consistent with City Council's direction concerning backflow prevention devices.)

18. Section 701.2 (Sewer required) is amended by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing with the following:

'701.2 Sewer required. Every building in which plumbing fixtures are installed and all premises having sanitary drainage piping shall be connected to an approved sewer. Private sewage systems must comply with City of College Station's Code of Ordinances (Chapter 11, Section 2). All private sewage disposal systems must comply with the latest adopted standards of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and be installed under the direction of the Brazos County Health Department. The installer shall be licensed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.'

(Reason: This change requires private sewer system installations – treatment plants, septic systems, etc. – to comply with state and county health department rules.)"

19. Section 1003.3.4 (Hydromechanical grease interceptors, fats, oils and automatic grease removal devices) is amended by deleting the first sentence in said section:

(Reason: Chapter 11, Section 6H, College Station Code of Ordinances, contains detailed provisions for sizing grease interceptors.)