

November 2, 2023

Washington State Building Code Council  
Sent via email to [sbcc@des.wa.gov](mailto:sbcc@des.wa.gov)

*Re: Amendments to the Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code*

Greetings:

On September 15, 2023, the State Building Code Council agreed to further delay the effective date of the 2021 state building codes, including the 2021 Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code (WWUIC). The new effective date for all 2021 state building codes is March 15, 2024.

We believe the delay of the WWUIC effective date is appropriate, as the WWUIC (Chapter 51-55 WAC, First Edition Effective July 1, 2023) as written is unclear and open to multiple interpretations. Further, we request that the State Building Code Council address implementation concerns, outlined in detail below.

Overall, we have concerns with the complexity, scale, and application of the Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Map; the applicability of the WWUIC to small construction projects; and WWUIC defensible space requirements.

### **1. Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Map (WA-WUI)**

As noted in the 2021 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC), the legal declaration and establishment of wildland-urban interface areas within the adopting jurisdiction by the local legislative body is the fundamental aspect of applying the Wildland Urban Interface Code.

The 2019 Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) map used to apply the WWUIC statewide is at too large of a scale to be usable for regulation in incorporated areas and does not accurately reflect existing natural and human-made features.

As we noted in our September 20, 2023, letter, the 2019 WDNR map is inconsistent with how wildfire risk is determined on a national level by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through their Wildfire Risk Index as part of their National Risk Index, or the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service Wildfire Risk to Communities process and ignores the fundamental differences in wildfire risk in different parts of the state.

Given the issues with the WDNR mapping, which are outside the control of the State Building Code Council, our proposal is to:

1. Modify an existing amendment to delete the 2021 WWUIC amendments to Chapter 3 “Wildland-Urban Interface Area” of the 2021 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) in their entirety as shown in Attachment A; and
2. Return to the original language of Chapter 3 “Wildland-Urban Interface Area” of the 2021 IWUIC as shown in Attachment B.

## **2. Exemption for Projects that Do Not Expand Structural Coverage on a Site**

Regardless of size, all building permits for projects that modify an exterior of a structure in the portions of a city subject to the WWUIC, but do not expand structural coverage on a site, such as replacing a roof or re-siding, would be required to meet the WWUIC special building construction regulations in WWUIC Chapter 5 and the WWUIC Section 603 defensible space requirements on existing lots.

We foresee significant public backlash at the combination of the WDNR maps that raise questions about accuracy and small project building permits triggering requirements for more costly building materials and removal of mature landscaping to meet defensible space requirements.

Our proposal is to:

1. Amend Section 106.3 “Work Exempt from Permit” in the 2021 IWUIC as shown in Attachment C to add the following language:

### **[A] 106.3 Work exempt from permit.**

Unless otherwise provided in the requirements of the *International Building Code* or the *International Fire Code*, a permit shall not be required for the following:

1. One-story detached accessory structures used a tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided that the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet (11.15 m<sup>2</sup>) and the structure is located more than 50 feet (15 240 mm) from the nearest adjacent structure.
2. Fences not over 6 feet (1829 mm) high.
3. Work that does not increase the square footage of structural coverage for a building or structure on a site.

Exemption from the permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of this jurisdiction.

The *code official* is authorized to stipulate conditions for permits. Permits shall not be issued where public safety would be at risk, as determined by the *code official*.

### 3. Defensible space

The defensible space requirements of 2021 IWUIC Section 603 create several conflicts with other state requirements, including regulations addressing critical areas, shorelines of the state, stormwater, climate, and water rights and conservation.

Our proposal is to:

1. Amend Section 603 “Defensible Space” in the 2021 IWUIC as shown in Attachment D to add the following language:

#### **603.1 Objective.**

Provisions of this section are intended to modify the fuel load in areas adjacent to structures to create a *defensible space*.

[...]

#### **603.2.3 Ground cover.**

Deadwood and litter shall be regularly removed from trees. Where ornamental vegetative fuels or cultivated ground cover, such as green grass, ivy, succulents or similar plants are used as ground cover, they are allowed to be within the designated *defensible space*, provided that they do not form a means of transmitting fire from the native growth to any structure.

#### **603.3 Exemption.**

Within urban growth areas designated under RCW 36.70A.110, the jurisdiction’s code official may exempt buildings or structures with a conforming water supply based on either Section 402.1 or Section 404 and in conformance with 2018 *International Fire Code* Section 507 from the permit requirements of Section 603.2.

If you have any questions or would like to set up a time to discuss, please let me know.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Carl Schroeder  
Deputy Director of Government Relations  
Association of Washington Cities

Cc: Stoyan Bumbalov, Managing Director ([stoyan.bumbalov@des.wa.gov](mailto:stoyan.bumbalov@des.wa.gov))  
Dustin Curb, Code Specialist ([Dustin.Curb@des.wa.gov](mailto:Dustin.Curb@des.wa.gov))

## Attachments

1. Completed State Building Code Proposal Form
  - a. Attachment A WWUIC Chapter 3 Amendments
  - b. Attachment B IWUIC Chapter 3 Wildland-Urban Interface Areas - Mapping Amendments
  - c. Attachment C IWUIC Section 106.3 Work Exempt from Permit Amendments
  - d. Attachment D IWUIC Section 603 Defensible Space Amendments



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL**

May 2018  
Log No. \_\_\_\_\_

**1. State Building Code to be Amended:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> International Building Code          | <input type="checkbox"/> International Mechanical Code   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ICC ANSI A117.1 Accessibility Code   | <input type="checkbox"/> International Fuel Gas Code   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International Existing Building Code | <input type="checkbox"/> NFPA 54 National Fuel Gas Code  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International Residential Code       | <input type="checkbox"/> NFPA 58 Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International Fire Code              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wildland Urban Interface Code                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uniform Plumbing Code                | For the Washington State Energy Code, please see specialized <a href="#">energy code forms</a> |

**Section(s):** 2021 Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code, Chapter 3  
(e.g.: Section: R403.2)

**Title:** “Wildland-Urban Interface Area”  
(e.g.: Footings for wood foundations)

**Section(s):** 2021 Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code, Section [A] 106.3  
(e.g.: Section: R403.2)

**Title:** “Work exempt from permit”  
(e.g.: Footings for wood foundations)

**Section(s):** 2021 Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code, Section 603  
(e.g.: Section: R403.2)

**Title:** “Defensible Space and Maintenance of Defensible Space”  
(e.g.: Footings for wood foundations)

**2. Proponent Name (Specific local government, organization or individual):**

**Proponent:** Carl Schroeder, Association of Washington Cities

**Title:** Deputy Director of Government Relations

**Date:** November 3, 2023

**3. Designated Contact Person:**

**Name:** Carl Schroeder, Association of Washington Cities

**Title:** Deputy Director of Government Relations

**Address:** 076 Franklin Street SE, Olympia, WA 98501-1346

**Office Phone:** (360) 753-4137

**Cell:** (360) 485-7604

**E-Mail address:** carls@awcnet.org

- 4. Proposed Code Amendment.** Reproduce the section to be amended by underlining all added language, striking through all deleted language. Insert new sections in the appropriate place in the code in order to continue the established numbering system of the code. If more than one section is proposed for amendment or more than one page is needed for reproducing the affected section of the code, additional pages may be attached.

Clearly state if the proposal modifies an existing amendment or if a new amendment is needed. If the proposal modifies an **existing amendment**, show the modifications to the existing amendment by underlining all added language and striking through all deleted language. If a new amendment is needed, show the modifications to the **model code** by underlining all added language and striking through all deleted language.

**Code(s)** 2021 Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code

**Section(s)** Chapter 3, “Wildland-Urban Interface Area”

Enforceable code language must be used.

Amend section to read as follows:

1. Modify an existing amendment to delete the 2021 Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code (WWUIC) amendments (as shown in the First Edition Effective July 1, 2023) to Chapter 3 “Wildland-Urban Interface Area” of the 2021 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) as shown in Attachment A; and
2. Return to the original language of Chapter 3 “Wildland-Urban Interface Area” of the 2021 IWUIC as shown in Attachment B.

**Code(s)** 2021 Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code

**Section(s)** Section [A] 106.3, “Work exempt from permit”

Enforceable code language must be used.

Amend section to read as follows:

1. Amend Section 106.3 “Work Exempt from Permit” in the 2021 IWUIC as shown in Attachment C to add the following language:

**[A] 106.3 Work exempt from permit.**

Unless otherwise provided in the requirements of the *International Building Code* or the *International Fire Code*, a permit shall not be required for the following:

1. One-story detached accessory structures used a tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided that the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet (11.15 m<sup>2</sup>) and the structure is located more than 50 feet (15 240 mm) from the nearest adjacent structure.
2. Fences not over 6 feet (1829 mm) high.
3. Work that does not increase the square footage of structural coverage for a building or structure on a site.

Exemption from the permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of this jurisdiction.

The *code official* is authorized to stipulate conditions for permits. Permits shall not be issued where public safety would be at risk, as determined by the *code official*.

**Code(s)** 2021 Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code

**Section(s)** Section 603 “Defensible Space”

Enforceable code language must be used.

Amend section to read as follows:

1. Amend Section 603 “Defensible Space” in the 2021 IWUIC as shown in Attachment D to add the following language:

**603.1 Objective.**

Provisions of this section are intended to modify the fuel load in areas adjacent to structures to create a *defensible space*.

[...]

**603.2.3 Ground cover.**

Deadwood and litter shall be regularly removed from trees. Where ornamental vegetative fuels or cultivated ground cover, such as green grass, ivy, succulents or similar plants are used as ground cover, they are allowed to be within the designated *defensible space*, provided that they do not form a means of transmitting fire from the native growth to any structure.

**603.3 Exemptions.**

Within urban growth areas designated under RCW 36.70A.110, the jurisdiction’s *code official* may exempt buildings or structures with a conforming water supply based on either Section 402.1 or Section 404 and in conformance with 2018 *International Fire Code* Section 507 from the requirements of Section 603.2.

5. **Briefly explain your proposed amendment, including the purpose, benefits and problems addressed.** Specifically note any impacts or benefits to business, and specify construction types, industries and services that would be affected. Finally, please note any potential impact on enforcement such as special reporting requirements or additional inspections required.

1. **2021 Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code, Chapter 3, “Wildland-Urban Interface Area”**  
As noted in the 2021 IWUIC, the legal declaration and establishment of wildland-urban interface areas within the adopting jurisdiction by the local legislative body is the fundamental aspect of applying the Wildland Urban Interface Code.

The 2019 Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Map (WA-WUI) used to apply the WWUIC statewide is at too large of a scale to be usable for regulation in incorporated areas and does not accurately reflect existing natural and human-made features.

As we noted in our September 20, 2023 letter, the 2019 WDNR map is inconsistent with how wildfire risk is determined on a national level by the Federal Emergency Management Agency through their Wildfire Risk Index as part of their National Risk Index, or the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service Wildfire Risk to Communities process and ignores the fundamental differences in wildfire risk and vegetation in different parts of the state.

Our proposed amendment would benefit the general public, businesses, and cities by basing the establishment of wildland-urban interface areas on findings of fact that account for local conditions approved by the city’s legislative body.

The amendment to the WWUIC would also be in line with Section 2 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6109, which stated:

[...]

(3) In adopting and maintaining the code enumerated in subsections (1) and (2) of this section, any amendment to the code as adopted under subsections (1) and (2) of this section may not result in an International Wildland Urban Interface Code that is more than the minimum performance standards and requirements contained in the published model code.

As well as Section 3 of ESSB 6109, which lay out the process for supporting cities with jurisdiction specific mapping by the “...development of findings of fact and maps establishing the wildland urban interface areas of jurisdictions in accordance with the requirements of the International Wildland Urban Interface Code.”

**2. 2021 Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code, Section [A] 106.3, “Work exempt from permit”**

Regardless of size, all building permits for projects that modify an exterior of a structure in the portions of a city subject to the WWUIC, but do not expand structural coverage on a site, such as replacing a roof or re-siding, would be required to meet the WWUIC special building construction regulations in WWUIC Chapter 5 and the WWUIC Section 603 defensible space requirements on existing lots.

We foresee significant public backlash at the combination of the WDNR maps that raise questions about accuracy and small project building permits triggering requirements for more costly building materials and removal of mature landscaping to meet defensible space requirements.

Our proposed amendment would benefit the general public, businesses, and jurisdictions by simplifying the application of the WWUIC.

**3. 2021 Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code, Section 603 “Defensible Space”**

The defensible space requirements of 2021 IWUIC Section 603 create several conflicts with other state requirements, including critical area regulations, shoreline regulations, stormwater regulations, and regulations dealing with water rights and conservation.

Our proposed amendment would benefit the general public, business, and jurisdictions by bringing the WWUIC in line with Section 2 of ESSB 6109, which identified specific sections of the IWUIC to be adopted as part of the WWUIC, but left adoption of IWUIC, including Section 603, to the discretion of individual cities.

**6. Specify what criteria this proposal meets.** You may select more than one.

- The amendment is needed to address a critical life/safety need.
- The amendment clarifies the intent or application of the code.
- The amendment is needed to address a specific state policy or statute.
- The amendment is needed for consistency with state or federal regulations.
- The amendment is needed to address a unique character of the state.
- The amendment corrects errors and omissions.

**7. Is there an economic impact:**  Yes  No



If no, state reason:

If yes, provide economic impact, costs and benefits as noted below in items a – f.

The original WWUIC update did not include an economic analysis as it was part of a legislative mandate.

- a. **Life Cycle Cost.** Use the OFM Life Cycle Cost [Analysis tool](#) to estimate the life cycle cost of the proposal using one or more typical examples. Reference these [Instructions](#); use these [Inputs](#). Webinars on the tool can be found [Here](#) and [Here](#)). If the tool is used, submit a copy of the excel file with your proposal submission. If preferred, you may submit an alternate life cycle cost analysis.

The economic impact of the proposed amendments will be positive as it would lessen the circumstances when the WWUIC requirements apply and remove requirements.

- b. **Construction Cost.** Provide your best estimate of the construction cost (or cost savings) of your code change proposal.

\$[Click here to enter text.](#)/square foot

(For residential projects, also provide \$[Click here to enter text.](#)/ dwelling unit)

Show calculations here, and list sources for costs/savings, or attach backup data pages

The economic impact of the proposed amendments will be positive as it would lessen the circumstances when the WWUIC requirements apply and remove requirements.

- c. **Code Enforcement.** List any code enforcement time for additional plan review or inspections that your proposal will require, in hours per permit application:

N/A

- d. **Small Business Impact.** Describe economic impacts to small businesses:

The economic impact of the proposed amendments will be positive as it would lessen the circumstances when the WWUIC requirements apply and remove requirements.

- e. **Housing Affordability.** Describe economic impacts on housing affordability:

The economic impact of the proposed amendments will be positive as it would lessen the circumstances when the WWUIC requirements apply and remove requirements.

- f. **Other.** Describe other qualitative cost and benefits to owners, to occupants, to the public, to the environment, and to other stakeholders that have not yet been discussed:

The economic impact of the proposed amendments will be positive as it would lessen the circumstances when the WWUIC requirements apply and remove requirements.

Please send your completed proposal to: [sbcc@des.wa.gov](mailto:sbcc@des.wa.gov)

**All questions must be answered to be considered complete. Incomplete proposals will not be accepted.**

Note: All 2021 Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code Amendments to IWUC Chapter 3 "Wildland-Urban Interface Areas" are to be deleted.

~~**301.1 Scope.** Wildland urban interface areas shall be determined using the Washington wildland urban interface map (WA-WUI). WA-WUI designations are permitted to be modified, upon approval of a finding of fact in accordance with Section 302.~~

~~User note: The WA-WUI map is available at <https://data-wadnr.opendata.arcgis.com/apps/wildland-urban-interface-viewing-app/explore>.~~

~~**301.2 Construction in wildland urban interface or intermix areas.** Where a structure is proposed to be constructed in an area designated by the WA-WUI map as wildland urban interface or intermix, the construction shall comply with the provisions of this code.~~

~~**301.3 Construction in wildlands areas.** Where a structure is proposed to be constructed in an area designated by the WA-WUI map as wildlands, the applicable wildland urban interface area designation shall be based on a finding of fact in accordance with Section 302.~~

~~**302.1 General.** Wildland urban interface area designations are permitted to be established in accordance with this section.~~

~~**302.2 Finding of fact.** The applicable wildland urban interface designation shall be based on a finding of fact. The finding of fact shall comply with the provisions of Appendix E or is permitted to be based on the worksheet and procedures in Section 302.3.~~

~~**302.3 Simplified wildland urban interface designation worksheet.** The wildland urban interface designation is permitted to be established using the procedure outlined in Figure 302(1), using the worksheet in Figure 302(2).~~

~~**302.3.1 Area to be evaluated.** For the purposes of establishing structure and vegetation densities, the area covered by a square of 1320 feet on a side (40 acres) shall be evaluated. The square area shall be located such that the site under consideration is in its center, except where the square would overlap a water body shown on the WA-WUI map with a surface area greater than 200,000 square feet, the location shall be adjusted such that no part of the square overlaps the water body.~~

~~**302.3.2 Structure density category.** The structure density category shall be determined by counting the number of structures within the area to be evaluated per Section 302.3.1. The structure density category shall be determined as follows:~~

<del>UNINHABITED:</del>	<del>0 structures</del>
<del>VERY LOW:</del>	<del>1 structure</del>
<del>LOW:</del>	<del>2 to 8 structures</del>
<del>MEDIUM:</del>	<del>9 to 120 structures</del>
<del>HIGH:</del>	<del>more than 120 structures</del>

~~**302.3.3 Vegetation density category.** Vegetation coverage within the area to be evaluated per Section~~

~~**302.3.1 shall be determined in accordance with Chapter 9.** Vegetation density shall be determined by dividing the vegetation coverage by 1,742,400 square feet (40 acres). Where the vegetation density is less than 50 percent, the vegetation density category for the site shall be non-vegetated. Where the vegetation density is 50 percent or more, the vegetation density category for the site shall be vegetated.~~

~~**302.3.4 Proximity category.** The distance from the site being evaluated to a high-density vegetated area shall be measured from the closest edge of the site boundary to the closest edge of the nearest high-density vegetated area. Where the distance is less than 1.5 miles, the proximity category shall be near. Where the distance is 1.5 miles or more, the proximity category shall be distant.~~

~~302.3.5 WUIC applicability.~~ The WUIC shall apply, and the site shall be designated as intermix or interface in accordance with Section 302.3.6 under either of the following conditions:

- ~~1. The structure density category is very low to high, and the vegetation density category is vegetated.~~
- ~~2. The structure density category is very low to high, and the proximity category is near.~~

The WUIC shall not apply under either of the following conditions:

- ~~1. The structure density category is uninhabited, and the site is not located within an area designated as intermix or interface on the WA-WUI map.~~
- ~~2. The structure density category is uninhabited to high, the vegetation density category is non-vegetated, and the proximity category is distant.~~

~~302.3.6 Wildland urban interface area designation.~~ Where required by Section 302.3.5, the site shall be designated as intermix or interface in accordance with Section 302.3.6.1 or 302.3.6.2.

~~302.3.6.1 Intermix designation.~~ The site shall be designated as intermix where the structure density category is very low to high, and the vegetation density category is vegetated.

~~302.3.6.2 Interface designation.~~ The site shall be designated as interface where the structure density category is very low to high, and the proximity category is near.

~~For the area to be evaluated in Section 302.3.1:~~

- ~~1. Determine structure density category (uninhabited, very low, low, medium, or high).~~
- ~~2. Determine vegetation density category (non-vegetated or vegetated).~~
- ~~3. Determine proximity category (near or distant).~~
- ~~4. Based on structure density, vegetation density, and proximity categories, determine if compliance with this code is required (WUIC applies, WUIC does not apply).~~
- ~~5. Where compliance with this code is required, determine wildland urban interface area designation (intermix or interface).~~

~~Figure 302(1).~~

~~Outline of simplified procedure for determining wildland interface designation~~

~~1. Determine structure density category in accordance with Section 302.3.2. Numbers in table are the number of structures within the area determined by Section 302.3.1~~

<del>UNINHABITED</del>	<del>VERY LOW</del>	<del>LOW</del>	<del>MEDIUM</del>	<del>HIGH</del>
<del>0</del>	<del>1</del>	<del>2 TO 8</del>	<del>9 TO 120</del>	<del>MORE THAN 120</del>

~~2. Determine vegetation density category within the area determined by Section 302.3.1.~~

<del>NONVEGETATED</del>	<del>VEGETATED</del>
<del>Less than 50% vegetated</del>	<del>50% or more vegetated</del>

~~3. Determine proximity category to the nearest high-density vegetated area.~~

<del>NEAR</del>	<del>DISTANT</del>
<del>Less than 1.5 mi (2.414 km)</del>	<del>1.5 mi (2.414 km) or more</del>

~~4. Use structure density, vegetation density, and proximity categories from above to determine if WUIC applies.~~

<del>WUIC Applies</del>	<del>WUIC Does Not Apply</del>
<del>• Structure density category is very low to high; and</del>	<del>• Structure density category is uninhabited; and</del>
<del>• Vegetation density category is vegetated.</del>	<del>• The site is not located within an area designated as intermix or interface on the WA-WUI map.</del>
<del>• Structure density category is very low to high; and</del>	<del>• Structure density category is uninhabited to high; and</del>
<del>• Proximity category is near.</del>	<del>• Vegetation density category is non-vegetated; and</del>
	<del>• Proximity category is distant.</del>

~~5. Where WUIC applies, the site shall be designated as intermix or interface as follows:~~

<del>INTERMIX</del>	<del>INTERFACE</del>
<del>• Structure density category is very low to high; and</del>	<del>• Structure density category is very low to high; and</del>
<del>• Vegetation density category is vegetated.</del>	<del>• Proximity category is near.</del>

~~Figure 302(2).~~

~~Worksheet for simplified procedure for determining wildland interface designation~~

~~302.4 Review of wildland-urban interface areas. The code official shall review for approval evaluated areas for new or modified findings of fact. Where a new or modified findings of fact are approved, the code official shall recommend to WADNR a modification to the wildland-urban interface areas mapping.~~

**401.1 Scope.** *Wildland-urban interface areas* shall be provided with emergency vehicle access and water supply in accordance with this chapter.

**401.2 Objective.** This section is not adopted.

**401.3 General safety precautions.** This section is not adopted.

**402.1 Subdivisions.** Subdivisions shall comply with locally adopted standards.

**402.1.1 Access.** This section is not adopted.

**402.1.2 Water supply.** This section is not adopted.

**402.2 Individual structures.** Individual structures shall comply with Sections 402.2.1 and 402.2.2.

**402.2.1 Access.** Individual structures hereafter constructed or relocated into or within *wildland-urban interface areas* shall be provided with fire apparatus access in accordance with the International Fire Code and driveways in accordance with Section 403.2 and locally adopted standards. Marking of fire protection equipment shall be provided in accordance with Section 403.5 and address markers shall be provided in accordance with Section 403.6.

**402.2.2 Water supply.** Individual structures hereafter constructed or relocated into or within *wildland-urban interface areas* shall be provided with a conforming water supply in accordance with locally adopted standards Section 404.

EXCEPTIONS: Not Adopted

**402.3 Existing conditions.** This section is not adopted.





**403.2.1 Dimensions.** This section is not adopted.

**403.2.2 Length.** This section is not adopted.

CHAPTER 3 WILDLAND-URBAN | x +

https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IWUIC2021P2/chapter-3-wildland-urban-interface-areas

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Legend Information

SECTIONS NOTES

2021 INTERNATIONAL WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE CODE (IWUIC)

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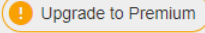
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EDITORIAL CHANGES – SECOND PRINTING

2021 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) Second Version: Aug 2021

BASIC 

CHAPTER 3 WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE AREAS

## CHAPTER 3 WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE AREAS

**User note:**

**About this chapter:** Chapter 3 provides for the fundamental aspect of applying the code—the legal declaration and establishment of wildland-urban interface areas within the adopting jurisdiction by the local legislative body. The provisions cover area analysis and declaration based on findings of fact (located in Appendix E), mapping of the area, legal recordation of the maps with the local keeper of records and the periodic review and reevaluation of the declared areas on a regular basis. If needed, revisions can be directed by the legislative body of the jurisdiction.

### SECTION 301 GENERAL

**301.1 Scope.**

The provisions of this chapter provide methodology to establish and record wildland-urban interface areas based on the findings of fact.

**301.2 Objective.**

The objective of this chapter is to provide simple baseline criteria for determining wildland-urban interface areas.

### SECTION 302 WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE AREA DESIGNATIONS

**302.1 Declaration.**

The legislative body shall declare the *wildland-urban interface areas* within the jurisdiction. The *wildland-urban interface areas* shall be based on the findings of fact. The *wildland-urban interface area* boundary shall correspond to natural or man-made features.

**302.2 Mapping.**

The *wildland-urban interface areas* shall be recorded on maps available for inspection by the public.

**302.3 Review of wildland-urban interface areas.**

The *code official* shall reevaluate and recommend modification to the *wildland-urban interface areas* in accordance with Section 302.1 on a 3-year basis or more frequently as deemed necessary by the legislative body.

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PREFACE

ARRANGEMENT AND FORMAT OF THE 2021 IWUIC

CHAPTER 1 SCOPE AND ADMINISTRATION

PART 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

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BASIC Upgrade to Premium

CHAPTER 1 SCOPE AND ADMINISTRATION

Where the alternative material, design or method is not *approved*, the *building official* shall respond in writing, stating the reasons why the alternative was not *approved*.

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## SECTION 106 PERMITS

**[A] 106.1 General.**  
Where not otherwise provided in the requirements of the *International Building Code* or *International Fire Code*, permits are required in accordance with Sections 106.2 through 106.10.

**[A] 106.2 Permits required.**  
Unless otherwise exempted, buildings or structures regulated by this code shall not be erected, constructed, altered, repaired, moved, removed, converted, demolished or changed in use or occupancy unless a separate permit for each building or structure has first been obtained from the *code official*.

For buildings or structures erected for temporary uses, see Section A108.3.

Where required by the *code official*, a permit shall be obtained for the following activities, operations, practices or functions within a *wildland-urban interface area*:

1. Automobile wrecking yard.
2. Candles and open flames in assembly areas.
3. Explosives or blasting agents.
4. Fireworks.
5. Flammable or combustible liquids.
6. Hazardous materials.
7. Liquefied petroleum gases.
8. Lumberyards.
9. Motor vehicle fuel-dispensing stations.
10. Open burning.
11. Pyrotechnical special effects material.
12. Tents, canopies and temporary membrane structures.
13. Tire storage.
14. Welding and cutting operations.

**[A] 106.3 Work exempt from permit.**  
Unless otherwise provided in the requirements of the *International Building Code* or *International Fire Code*, a permit shall not be required for the following:

1. One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided that the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet (11.15 m<sup>2</sup>) and the structure is located more than 50 feet (15 240 mm) from the nearest adjacent structure.
2. Fences not over 6 feet (1829 mm) high. 

Exemption from the permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of this jurisdiction.

The *code official* is authorized to stipulate conditions for permits. Permits shall not be issued where public safety would be at risk, as determined by the *code official*.

**[A] 106.4 Permit application.**  
To obtain a permit, the applicant shall first file an application therefor in writing on a form furnished by the code enforcement agency for that purpose. Every such application shall:

1. Identify and describe the work, activity, operation, practice or function to be covered by the permit for which application is made.
2. Describe the land on which the proposed work, activity, operation, practice or function is to be done by legal description, street address or similar description that will readily identify and definitely locate the proposed building, work, activity, operation, practice or function.
3. Indicate the use or occupancy for which the proposed work, activity, operation,

FEEDBACK

LIVE CHAT

Add new exemption #3

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### SECTION 603 DEFENSIBLE SPACE

**603.1 Objective.**  
Provisions of this section are intended to modify the fuel load in areas adjacent to structures to create a *defensible space*.

**603.2 Fuel modification.**  
Buildings or structures, constructed in compliance with the conforming *defensible space* category of Table 503.1, shall comply with the *fuel modification* distances contained in Table 603.2. For all other purposes the *fuel modification* distance shall be not less than 30 feet (9144 mm) or to the lot line, whichever is less. Distances specified in Table 603.2 shall be measured on a horizontal plane from the perimeter or projection of the building or structure as shown in Figure 603.2. Distances specified in Table 603.2 are allowed to be increased by the *code official* because of a site-specific analysis based on local conditions and the *fire protection plan*.

**TABLE 603.2 REQUIRED DEFENSIBLE SPACE**

WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE AREA	FUEL MODIFICATION DISTANCE (feet) <sup>a</sup>
Moderate hazard	30
High hazard	50
Extreme hazard	100

For SI: 1 foot = 304.8 mm.  
a. Distances are allowed to be increased due to site-specific analysis based on local conditions and the fire protection plan.

**FIGURE 603.2 MEASUREMENTS OF FUEL MODIFICATION DISTANCE**

**603.2.1 Responsible party.**  
Persons owning, leasing, controlling, operating or maintaining buildings or structures requiring defensible spaces are responsible for modifying or removing nonfire-resistive vegetation on the property owned, leased or controlled by said person.

**603.2.2 Trees.**  
Trees are allowed within the *defensible space*, provided that the horizontal distance between crowns of adjacent trees and crowns of trees and structures, overhead electrical facilities or unmodified fuel is not less than 10 feet (3048 mm).

**603.2.3 Ground cover.**  
Deadwood and litter shall be regularly removed from trees. Where ornamental vegetative fuels or cultivated ground cover, such as green grass, ivy, succulents or similar plants are used as ground cover, they are allowed to be within the designated *defensible space*, provided that they do not form a means of transmitting fire from the native growth to any structure.

**604.1 General.**  
Defensible spaces required by Section 603 shall be maintained in accordance with Section 604.

**SECTION 604 MAINTENANCE OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE**

**Add Section 603.3 Exemptions**

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