



## CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

**FROM:** The Office of the City Manager   **DATE:** October 14, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Consider Ordinance No. 3616, amending Chapter 38, Article II, of the North Richland Hills Code of Ordinances adopting the 2018 International Fire Code, with amendments.

**PRESENTER:** Kenneth Rawson, Assistant Fire Chief

### **SUMMARY:**

In a continuing effort to update the city's fire codes, staff brings forth consideration of the 2018 International Fire Code. This action follows suit with surrounding communities that have adopted or will soon be adopting the 2018 I-Codes. The Council appointed Construction Code Board of Appeals (which serves as our Technical Code Review Committee) concluded its meetings on September 12, 2019, and recommends approval of the 2018 International Fire Code, with amendments.

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION:**

The International Fire Codes (I-Codes) are developed by construction industry professionals and adopted around the world as model codes based on the best, most recent building science. The I-Codes form a framework upon which the city develops a fire code with regional and local amendments reflecting the city's unique needs as determined by local code users. The I-Codes are reviewed by staff, the Regional Codes Coordinating Committee appointed by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), and ultimately approved by the Council-appointed Construction Code Board of Appeals (which serves as our Technical Code Review Committee).

Updated I-Codes are published every three years by the International Code Council, Inc. (ICC), headquartered in Washington D.C. with organizational roots dating back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 2012 edition of the I-Codes was adopted by the City of North Richland Hills in November of 2017.

Adoption of the most recent 2018 code editions, with amendments as recommended by NCTCOG, is in the best interest of North Richland Hills and will promote the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the city. Adoption of up-to-date I-Codes also benefits our citizens by:

- Establishing consistency of code adoptions with other local jurisdictions;
- Ensuring a high rating by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO). ISO collects information nation-wide on building and fire codes in effect in

communities, as well as how the communities enforce their life safety codes. Insurers can use the grade to grant premium credits for buildings constructed under strictly enforced codes. Our current ISO rating is a PPC 1;

- International Building Code and International Fire Code often mirror each other and are intended to function as a unit and not in conflict;
- Many of the amendments adopted in the 2012 code are now text in the 2018 edition;
- Many of the amendments proposed for adoption in this ordinance are already adopted by Council in the 2018 IBC;

Significant code changes include:

- Requirement for buildings over 6,000 sq. ft. to be equipped with automatic sprinklers. Applies to new buildings and to all existing buildings enlarged to be greater than 6,000 sq. ft. For the purpose of this section, fire walls shall not define separate buildings.
- Expanded definition of ambulatory care facility that renders occupants incapable of self-preservation.
- Fire alarm system definition.
  - Policy and practice since early 2000's.
  - Reflects intent of code.
    - Notification of occupants and activation of Fire Department's central monitoring system.
    - Local contractors, property and business owners accustomed to practice.
- Hydrant distance to Fire Department Connection.
  - Consistent with historical practices.
  - Allows for variance when sprinklers are retrofitted into an existing building.
- Allowance for smaller Cul-De-Sacs under certain criteria.
- Defines the minimum inside turning radius for fire department access roads to be 25 feet.

Staff is proposing the adoption of the 2018 International Fire Code, with amendments as recommended by the North Central Texas Council of Governments, to go into effect upon Council approval.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve Ordinance No. 3616.