



## CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

**FROM:** The Office of the City Manager   **DATE:** September 23, 2019  
**SUBJECT:** Consider Ordinance No. 3607, amending Chapter 98 of the North Richland Hills Code of Ordinances adopting the 2018 International Building Code with amendments.  
**PRESENTER:** David Pendley, Chief Building Official

### **SUMMARY:**

In a continuing effort to modernize the city's building codes in support of council's goal to provide quality community development and revitalization, staff recommends adoption of the 2018 International Building Code.

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION:**

The International Building 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 building code with regional and local amendments reflecting the city's unique needs as determined by local code users. These codes are reviewed by the Regional Codes Coordinating Committee appointed by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and staff; and are ultimately recommended for approval by the council-appointed Construction Code Board of Appeals, which serves as the city's Technical Code Review Committee.

The I-Codes are continuously updated and republished every three years by the International Code Council, Inc. (ICC), headquartered in Washington D.C. with organizational roots dating back to the early 20th century. It has been North Richland Hills' policy to update its codes every-other code cycle (every six years).

Adoption of the 2018 I-Codes is in the best interest of the citizens of North Richland Hills by promoting health, safety and welfare. Updated codes also benefits our citizens by:

- Establishing consistency of code adoptions with other local jurisdictions.
- Ensuring the best rating possible by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO).

ISO collects information nation-wide on building codes in effect in communities, as well as how the communities enforce their building codes. ISO analyzes the data using a Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule and assigns a grade to

each community. Insurers use this grading to determine premium rates for buildings constructed within the city.

The single most important factor used by ISO is how modern a jurisdiction's adopted codes are. Any city that is more than two code-cycles behind (which are the 2012 I-Codes), are automatically given the lowest rating possible.

- Contributes to the city's good standing in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) which enables discounted flood insurance rates for our residents.

Staff is proposing the adoption of the 2018 International Building Code to go into effect upon council's approval. However, if approved, staff intends to establish a policy providing a 45 day window to submit projects that were designed under the 2012 I-Codes; giving engineers, architects, homeowners and builders time to adjust to the requirements.

**Significant code changes include:**

- Occupant load classification and maximum number of occupants must be established for occupied roofs.
- Classification of greenhouse structures based on their use (mercantile, assembly, utility).
- New minor surgery and dental surgery centers where patients are sedated must have an emergency power supply.
- Storm shelters are required in schools and critical emergency operation buildings (i.e. 911 call stations, emergency operation centers, fire, rescue, ambulance and police stations). Additions to these buildings that do not have a shelter will be required to provide one with the project.
- Play structures over 10 feet in height OR larger than 150 square feet must be of non-combustible materials. Structures within sprinkled buildings may need to integrate fire sprinklers.
- Clarification that podium-type structures must have a 3-hour fire separation (this is typically found in buildings with parking garages beneath them).
- NCTCOG amendment requiring fire sprinklers in commercial buildings over 6,000 square feet.
- Exterior illumination required at building exits must extend to the right-of-way or safe dispersal area at least 50 feet away from a building.
- New locking arrangements to accommodate emergencies in schools.
- Elevator lobbies required in buildings with fire resistive corridors (apartments and hotels).

This action follows suit with surrounding communities that have adopted or will soon be adopting the 2018 I-Codes. The council-appointed Construction Code Appeals Board, also acting in their role as the Technical Code Review Committee, voted on August 15, 2019 to recommend approval of the 2018 International Building Code.



**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve Ordinance No. 3607.