



AMERICAN WOOD COUNCIL

#3

January 9, 2017

Honorable City Council
201 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Date: 10/10/17
Submitted in PLUM Committee
Council File No. 16-1165
Item No. 3
~~Deputy~~ communication
from public

Attention: Sharon Dickinson, Legislative Assistant, Planning and Land Use Management Committee

RE: Motion (Blumenfield—Wesson for Huizar) Relative to DaVinci Apartment Complex Fire- Council File 16-1165

This letter is in response to the motion by Council Member Bob Blumenfield regarding the DaVinci Apartment Complex Fire and the request to prepare a report with recommendations to address the questions posed by Council Member Blumenfield.

The American Wood Council (AWC) is the voice of the North American wood products manufacturing industry, providing information on wood design and regulations. AWC staff experts develop state-of-the-art engineering data, technology, and standards for wood products to assure their safe and efficient design. We are the developers and publishers of both the National Design Specification® (NDS®) and the Special Design Provisions for Wind and Seismic (SDPWS) that are adopted by reference and form the basis for wood structural design in both the International Building Code and the California Building Code.

Over the past two years the American Wood Council has partnered with former State Fire Marshal, Ronny Coleman, to study construction fires and develop educational resources to help builders, designers and local officials combat the potential for construction fires. Buildings under construction of all types are particularly vulnerable to fire because the finish materials that provide fire resistance are not yet installed on new projects or they may be disturbed during construction on existing projects. Also during construction, fire sprinklers and alarm systems are not yet functional. Key conclusions of the construction fire study point at a need for project site security and proper management of hot work risks. This information can be accessed at the following link: www.constructionfiresafetypractices.com

The DaVinci fire was caused by an arsonist who entered the site not once but twice to set the fire. According to news sources this was captured on the site security video. As the technical arm of the wood products industry we believe it important to share with you what pertinent changes have been made for publication in the 2018 International Building Code.

During the process leading to the publication of the 2018 International Fire Code, there have been a few code changes to assist local code officials maintain safety at construction sites. These are as follows:

F 327-16 (approved as modified) modifies the code to more appropriately deal with construction site fire hazards including reference to NFPA 241, and clarification that the fire code official has the authority to require and approve the specifics of a pre-fire plan.

F 329-16 (approved as modified) states a specific trigger in the fire code of 40 feet in height in new construction where the fire code official may require a 24-7 fire watch and site security after working hours. The ICC Fire Code Committee emphasized this is appropriate for all types of construction in their reason statement, not just combustible construction types.

F 330-16 (approved as submitted) clarifies the fire code provisions must be applied for all types of hot work, not just cutting and welding.

F 331-16 (approved as submitted) requires signs stating where cooking is allowed (and not allowed) in multiple languages on construction sites.

We hope you consider these potential solutions that have been vetted and approved through the International Code Council code development process in your effort to help prevent construction fires.

We hope this information is helpful and look forward to working with the LA Building and Safety or Fire Department staff if there is any desire to consider code changes before they are adopted by the State of California.

Sincerely,



Dennis Richardson PE, CBO, CASp
West Coast Regional Manager

Attachments

F325-16

Committee Action:

Approved as Submitted

Committee Reason: Approval is based upon the proponent's published reason. It was noted that automatic shutdown is important for emergency operations in unmanned facilities.

Assembly Action:

None

F326-16

Committee Action:

Approved as Submitted

Committee Reason: This proposal was approved based upon the proponent's reason statement.

Assembly Action:

None

F327-16

Committee Action:

Approved as Modified

Modification:

3304.5 Fire watch. ~~Where required by the fire code official or the pre-fire plan established in accordance with Section 3308.2, a fire watch shall be established provided for building demolition and maintained for building construction that is hazardous in nature, such as follows: temporary heating or hot work.~~

~~While temporary heating equipment is in operation.~~

~~Where otherwise required by the fire code official for building demolition, or building construction during working hours that is hazardous in nature.~~

3304.5.1 Fire watch personnel ~~Qualified~~ Trained personnel shall be provided to serve as an on-site fire watch. Fire watch personnel shall be provided with not less than one approved means for notification of the fire department and their sole duty shall be to perform constant patrols and watch for the occurrence of fire. The combination of fire watch duties and site security duties is acceptable. Fire watch personnel shall be trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers.

3304.5.2 Fire watch location and records The fire watch shall include areas specified by the entire construction project site pre-fire plan established in accordance with Section 3308.2. The fire watch personnel shall keep a record of all time periods of duty including a log entry each time the site was patrolled and each time a structure under construction was entered and inspected. The records and log entries shall be made available for review by the fire code official upon request.

3304.5.3 Equipment ~~Individuals assigned to fire watch duty shall have fire extinguishing equipment readily available and shall be trained in the use of such equipment. Individuals assigned to fire watch duty shall be responsible for extinguishing spot fires and communicating an alarm.~~

3308.5 Fire protection devices. The fire prevention program superintendent shall determine that all fire protection equipment is maintained and serviced in accordance with this code. The quantity and type of fire protection equipment shall be approved. Fire protection equipment shall be inspected a minimum of once per day, and the findings along in accordance with any remediation measures shall be documented in the fire prevention program log.

3309.2 Immediate notification ~~Written instructions shall be posted in an approved location on the construction site and issued to staff performing guard or fire watch duties and the fire prevention program superintendent for the immediate notification of the fire department in the case of a fire~~

Committee Reason: This proposal updates the code to more appropriately deal with construction sight hazards. In addition, the proposal references NFPA 241. First the modification requires that the authority to require is the fire code official. Next, the modification ties the requirements of this section to the pre-fire plan which resulted in additional revisions. For example, the frequency of inspection of fire protection equipment is based on the pre-fire plan. Finally, instead of the fire watch addressing the entire construction site the area included can be defined by the fire safety plan.

Assembly Action:

None

F328-16

Committee Action:

Withdrawn

Committee Reason:

Assembly Action:

None

F329-16

Committee Action:

Approved as Modified

Modification:

3304.5.1 (IBC [F] 3314.1) Fire watch during combustible construction. Where required by the *fire code official*, a fire watch shall be provided during non-working hours for construction that ~~is combustible and~~ exceeds 40 feet in height above the lowest adjacent grade.

Committee Reason: This proposal provides a necessary trigger to address the need for a fire watch when construction exceeds 40 feet. This is an important tool for the fire code official. The modification more appropriately applies to all construction types and does not limit the type to combustible construction. Fire hazards still exist at construction sites regardless of the type of construction. Also, it was clarified through the addition of the word "new" that this was only intended for new construction. The fire safety plan would address existing buildings. In addition without the term "new" every small alteration could trigger a fire watch inappropriately.

Assembly Action: None

F330-16

Committee Action: Approved as Submitted

Committee Reason: This proposal was approved based upon the proponent's reason statement.

Assembly Action: None

F331-16

Committee Action: Approved as Submitted

Committee Reason: The committee felt this concept was a good tool for the fire code official to address fire safety issues on a construction site. It was suggested that potentially the sign could be a picture due to language barriers. There was some concern related to the ability to enforce this requirement.

Assembly Action: None

F332-16

Committee Action: Approved as Modified

Modification:

3308.6.1 Smoke detectors and smoke alarms. Smoke detectors and smoke alarms located in an area where airborne construction dust is expected shall be covered to prevent exposure to dust or shall be temporarily removed. ~~During the time when smoke detectors or smoke alarms are out of service, an approved fire watch or other approved alternative means of detecting a fire shall be provided.~~ Smoke detectors and alarms that were removed shall be replaced upon conclusion of dust-producing work. Smoke detectors and smoke alarms that were covered shall be inspected and cleaned, as necessary, upon conclusion of dust-producing work.

Committee Reason: This new section is necessary as the owners responsibility provisions currently only require the removal of coverings on smoke detectors and alarms and don't address the need to provide such covers to avoid unwanted alarms. The modification removes the second sentence that would require a fire watch while the smoke alarms are out of service. This was seen as an unreasonable requirement.

Assembly Motion: Disapprove

Online Vote Results: Failed

Support: 25.51% (149) Oppose: 74.49% (435)

Assembly Action: None

F333-16

Committee Action: Disapproved

Committee Reason: This proposal was disapproved for several reasons. The requirements take away discretion from the fire code officials. Also, there was a concern that additional language was necessary from NFPA 241. Finally the proposal inappropriately penalizes combustible construction.

Assembly Action: None

F334-16

Committee Action: Disapproved

Committee Reason: This proposal was disapproved based upon the fact that the access requirements would be more restrictive than for the finished requirement as required by Chapter 5. In addition, there are no provisions within the IFC or NFPA 13 dealing with temporary automatic sprinkler systems.

Assembly Action: None

F330-16

IFC: 3304.6.

Proponent : Michael O'Brian representing the Fire Code Action Committee (FCAC@iccsafe.org)

2015 International Fire Code

Revise as follows:

3304.6 Cutting and welding. ~~Operations involving the use of~~
Welding, cutting, open torches and welding other hot work operations and equipment shall be
~~done in accordance-~~ comply with Chapter 35.

Reason: The current provisions in 3304.6 are limited to cutting and welding, yet the scope of Chapter 35 also includes the use of torches and other hot work operations and equipment. It is appropriate that these additional hot work operations, which might occur during construction, also be cross-referenced from 3304.6 to Chapter 35. This proposal is submitted by the ICC Fire Code Action Committee (FCAC). The FCAC was established by the ICC Board of Directors to pursue opportunities to improve and enhance assigned International Codes with regard to fire safety and hazardous materials in new and existing buildings and facilities and the protection of life and property in wildland urban interface areas. In 2014 and 2015 the Fire-CAC has held 5 open meetings. In addition, there were numerous conference calls, Regional Work Group and Task Group meetings for the current code development cycle, which included members of the committees as well as any interested parties, to discuss and debate the proposed changes. Related documentation and reports are posted on the FCAC website at: [FCAC](#)

Cost Impact: Will increase the cost of construction

This proposal does not introduce new construction requirements, but may result in a modest increase in the cost of construction to cover these additional operations.

F330-16 : 3304.6-O'BRIAN10727

F331-16

IFC: 3304.8 (New).

Proponent : Jeffrey Shapiro, representing National Multifamily Housing Council
(jeff.shapiro@intlcodeconsultants.com)

2015 International Fire Code

Add new text as follows:

3304.8 Cooking. Cooking shall be prohibited except in approved designated cooking areas. Signs with a minimum letter height of 3 inches and a minimum brush stroke of 1/2 inch shall be posted in a conspicuous location in designated cooking areas stating:

DESIGNATED COOKING AREA

COOKING OUTSIDE OF A DESIGNATED COOKING AREA IS PROHIBITED

Reason: In 2014, a report entitled *Fires in Residential Properties Under Construction or Undergoing Major Renovation Other Than One- or Two-Family Homes* was published by NFPA in response to recent construction fires involving multifamily housing projects. The data analysis presented in this report revealed that cooking is a statistically significant source of ignition, and this finding was confirmed as plausible based on discussions with numerous construction managers for major multifamily developers regarding their personal experience. Although most of these fires were contained, the frequency of ignition and the risk of occasional large losses warrants a response by the industry and fire codes to establish reasonable control on cooking at construction sites. Requiring cooking to be located in a designated approved area will facilitate more effective oversight of cooking equipment, individuals performing cooking and exposed combustible materials where cooking equipment is used. The prescribed sign lettering dimensions match those already prescribed for other signs in Sections 5604.6.5 and 5703.5.1 .

Cost Impact: Will increase the cost of construction

Requiring that cooking be located in a designated area and the cost of posting signs will have an insignificant impact on increasing construction costs.

F331-16 : 3304.8 (NEW)-
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