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## **HIRF Changes Summary – Single-family (and Duplex) Residences** (as of March 23, 2009)

On March 11, 2009, the government of Alberta announced the changes to the 2006 Alberta Building Code and 2006 Alberta Fire Code in response to the recommendations of the High Intensity Residential Fires (HIRF) working group. The complete regulation documents for the changes and the replacement pages for the Code books are available for download at [www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/1147.cfm](http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/1147.cfm).

The changes for the 2006 Alberta Building Code are in effect for building permits applied for after May 3, 2009. The changes for the 2006 Alberta Fire Code are in effect as of March 11, 2009.

In an effort to simplify the technical wording of the regulation and replacement pages, the Canadian Home Builders' Association – Alberta (CHBA-Alberta) has created this summary document as an interpretation of the most crucial changes, using plain language.

It is important to note that this summary document does not include every single detailed item and scenario in the regulation. It only covers the basic elements in the changes for single-family (and duplex) residences built 1.2 metres from the side property line, that are located in areas which are within the 10 minute fire-fighting response time, and also for those residences located in areas outside of the 10 minute fire-fighting response time.

CHBA-Alberta does not assume any responsibility or liability for the accuracy of the interpretations found in this summary document. Users are encouraged to confirm the Code change requirements with their authority having jurisdiction, and/or Alberta Municipal Affairs at 1.866.421.6929 or [safety.services@gov.ab.ca](mailto:safety.services@gov.ab.ca)

## **HIRF Changes Summary to the 2006 Alberta Building Code for a Single-family (and Duplex) Residences Being Built at 1.2 Metres From Side Property Line**

### **Scenario A: For Areas Where Fire-fighting Response Time is **Less** Than 10 Minutes**

#### **Attached Garages (Article 9.35.4.1. and Article 9.35.4.4.)**

- All walls and ceilings must be insulated, have vapour barrier, have 12.7mm thick gypsum board, and have seams taped and mudded. As a pro-active step, required electrical should also be roughed-in or installed.

#### **Soffits (Article 9.10.15.5. (8) and (10))**

- Are not allowed to project closer than 0.45m to side property line.
- Any soffit projecting into 1.2m side-yard must have no openings and be protected with materials as per 3.2.3.6. (5b) (ie: non-venting aluminum, 0.38mm sheet steel, 12.7mm thick gypsum board, 11mm thick plywood, etc).

#### **Cantilevers (Article 9.10.15.5. (7))**

- Any cantilever projecting into 1.2m side-yard must use non-combustible cladding (ie: masonry or stucco) or, if combustible cladding is used (ie: vinyl siding) then must have 12.7mm thick gypsum board under cladding.
- Are not allowed to project closer than 0.45m to side property line.
- Are not allowed to have any unprotected openings.
- If cantilever is more than 0.6m above grade, the underside of cantilever must also be protected in the same way as soffits (as noted above).

#### **Exterior Walls (Article 9.10.15.5. (1))**

- Either combustible or non-combustible cladding allowed (no change from previous Code).

#### **Windows (Article 9.10.15.4.)**

- 7% unprotected/glazed openings allowed, but with maximum individual opening not larger than 3.5% (or half the 7%). This includes egress windows (as per Article 9.10.15.4. (3)).
- Unprotected/glazed openings must be separated by a space of 2.0m horizontally and 2.0m vertically, unless if separated by a full height wall or floor system extending at least 1.5m from the interior face of the wall.

**Scenario B: For Areas Where Fire-fighting Response Time is More Than 10 Minutes**

**Attached Garages (Article 9.35.4.1. and Article 9.35.4.4.)**

- All walls and ceilings must be insulated, have vapour barrier, have 12.7mm thick gypsum board, and have seams taped and mudded. As a pro-active step, required electrical should also be roughed-in or installed.

**Soffits (Article 9.10.15.5. (8) and (10))**

- Are not allowed to project closer than 0.45m to side property line.
- Any soffit projecting into 1.2m side-yard must have no openings and be protected with materials as per 3.2.3.6. (5b) (ie: non-venting aluminum, 0.38mm sheet steel, 12.7mm thick gypsum board, 11mm thick plywood, etc)

**Cantilevers (Article 9.10.15.5. (7))**

- Any cantilever projecting into 1.2m side-yard must use non-combustible cladding (ie: masonry or stucco) or, if combustible cladding is used (ie: vinyl siding) then must have 12.7mm thick gypsum board under cladding.
- Are not allowed to project closer than 0.45m to side property line.
- Are not allowed to have any unprotected openings.
- If cantilever is more than 0.6m above grade, the underside of cantilever must also be protected in the same way as soffits (as noted above).

**Exterior Walls (Article 9.10.15.3. and Article 9.10.15.5. (1) and (3))**

- Must use non-combustible cladding (ie: masonry or stucco) with a 45 minute fire-resistance rating for wall assembly, or, if combustible cladding is used (ie: vinyl siding) then must have 12.7mm thick gypsum board under cladding AND have a 45 minute fire-resistance rating for wall assembly.

**Windows (Article 9.10.15.3. and Article 9.10.15.4.)**

- Not allowed (no change from previous Code).
- The only way windows are allowed is if the house is 2.4m from the side property line, at which time same rules apply as mentioned above (7% unprotected/glazed openings allowed, but with maximum individual opening not larger than 3.5% (or half the 7%), this includes egress windows; Unprotected/glazed openings must be separated by a space of 2.0m horizontally and 2.0m vertically, unless if separated by a full height wall or floor system extending at least 1.5m from the interior face of the wall.