

Changes to the Building and Fire Codes to help prevent High Intensity Residential Fires.

The changes to the Alberta Building and Fire Codes can be broken down into two sections:

1. Fire safety on construction sites
2. Fire safety in new buildings

1. Fire safety on construction sites

New communities under development have been at risk for high intensity fires because finished and sometimes occupied homes are often very close to active construction sites that contain materials that can catch fire easily. The new changes to the Alberta Fire Code address this risk by:

- Improving access to construction sites for fire departments, by:
 - o Ensuring fire trucks can get close enough to the site to be effective,
 - o Making sure fire fighters can access all parts of a building under construction, and
 - o Making sure that the appropriate water supply systems are in place to accommodate fire fighting.
- Ensuring buildings next to construction sites are protected from the potential spread of fire by requiring things like fences or 24/7 security on the work site.
- Clarifying where fire extinguishers should be on construction sites.
- Improving safety measures for construction processes involving heat sources, such as roofing, in order to prevent these activities from starting fires.
- Improving fire safety plans on construction sites.

2. Fire safety in new buildings

To help save lives and property, buildings should be built in a way that prevents or slows down the spread of fire to buy time for people to get out of their homes and for fire fighters to respond. The changes to the Alberta Building Code will help do this by:

- Adding new fire resistance requirements for homes built close together including:
 - o New homes with vinyl siding built close to the property lines will be required to have fire resistance material, such as gypsum board, installed under the siding.
 - o New homes built close together will have new restrictions on the size and amount of windows allowed facing their neighbours.
- Improving sprinkler or exterior siding requirements for walk-up apartment buildings.
- Adding new fire resistance requirements for the interior of attached garages.

Alberta's new fire codes are in effect immediately, and the new building codes will come into effect on May 3.