

Question/Comment:

Hello, in section 1203.1.1, what is the minimum outside temperature at which this is applicable? (e.g. " ... capable of maintaining a room temperature of at least 15 degrees cooler than the outside temperature*when the outside temperature is above 80 degrees (or similar reasonable number)* ..."
It does not make sense to go 15 degrees cooler if the outside temperature is 70. The bottom limit needs to be defined.

Response:

The Ordinance intent is for an owner to provide, and maintain, in operating condition, refrigerated air equipment capable of maintaining a room temperature of no greater than 85 degrees in each habitable room.

Question/Comment:

I'm very excited to see the city considering single-stair egress for MF buildings and I further appreciate the care that has clearly been put into ensuring that such buildings would be built as safely as possible. I believe that single-stair egress is better, for safety as well as the well-being of residents holistically, than the dark, cave-like, windowless multi-egress buildings that we currently mandate.

As a journeyman electrician, I take the potential of building fires very seriously and I'm highly trained in how to safeguard against them. I appreciate that this proposed code change, as currently written, does call for several levels of redundancies aimed at reducing fire threats. As an Austin resident who does require shelter, prefers multi-family living over SFHs, and if a big fan of lots of natural lights and being able to get a cross breeze going in my home on a cool day, I'm concerned that this code is requiring too many redundancies.

Again, I do appreciate the city wanting to go above and beyond in the name of safety, but all these redundancies being required to be in place for every one of these builds are both unnecessary and so incredibly cost prohibitive that it feels like they're meant to discourage any such projects from ever actually being considered.

Why have all of these measures in place, yet still restrict such buildings to five floor mid-rises?

Why have 10 ft setbacks yet still restrict this to two buildings of this type per lot?

I'm not going to advocate for getting rid of any specific safety requirement listed in the name of safety, but this does call for far too many redundancies in a single space. I would suggest making these requirements a menu of options where builders are required to accept a minimum amount of these restrictions, but not all simultaneously.

Again, I say this as someone who would love to live in one of these buildings myself and someone who does not currently work in construction, real estate development, or anything like that. I am a long-time Austinite who would love to one day own a home or at least be able to live in a home that doesn't feel like a depressing cave. Thank you!

Response:

A maximum height of 5 stories is allowable per the IBC Table 504.4 Allowable Building Heights for construction type 2-A. The City of Austin (COA) intends to minimize IBC modification and adhere to the model code everywhere possible.

Two buildings per lot is in keeping with the infill nature of these buildings. The modified IBC life safety requirements are not intended for large scale development, but rather to allow development of otherwise unfeasible properties to help create urban density. The ten-foot set back is to allow façade access for emergency services.

Question/Comment:

The IBC amendments show a new section 420.12 for buildings with one exit. 25-12-1 (b) shows the chart of deleted sections from the IBC. The chart does not delete section 1006.3.4 (1). Does that mean that buildings with one exit are required to comply with the new section 420.12 and 1006.3.4 (1)?

Response:

IBC section 102.1 – “Where there is a conflict between a general requirement and a specific requirement, the specific requirement shall be applicable”. Table 1006.3.4(1) allows three story R-2 buildings with one exit per IBC model code which is still allowable. Our amendments are specific to single-exit R-2s of 4 or 5 stories. If COA needs to amend Table 1006.3.4 (1) to bring clarity to this specific issue, and not rely on 102.1, the table will be amended.