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SECTION 903 AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEMS

(Part 2 of 2)

903.2.9.1 Repair garages. An automatic sprinkler system shall be provided throughout all buildings used as repair garages in accordance with Section 406.8 of the International Building Code, as shown:

1. Buildings having two or more stories above grade plane, including basements, with a fire area containing a repair garage exceeding 10,000 square feet (929 m²).
2. Buildings not more than one story above grade plane, with a fire area containing a repair garage exceeding

12,000 square feet (1115 m²).

3. Buildings with repair garages servicing vehicles parked in basements.

4. A Group S-1 fire area used for the repair of commercial motor vehicles where the fire area exceeds 5,000 square feet (464 m²).

903.2.9.2 Bulk storage of tires. Buildings and structures where the area for the storage of tires exceeds 20,000 cubic feet (566 m³) shall be equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1.

903.2.10 Group S-2 enclosed parking garages. An automatic sprinkler system shall be provided throughout

buildings classified as enclosed parking garages in accordance with Section 406.6 of the International Building Code where either of the following conditions exists:

1. Where the fire area of the enclosed parking garage exceeds 12,000 square feet (1115 m²).
2. Where the enclosed parking garage is located beneath other groups.

Exception: Enclosed parking garages located beneath Group R-3 occupancies.

903.2.10.1 Commercial parking garages. An automatic sprinkler system shall be provided throughout buildings used for storage of commercial motor vehicles



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where the fire area exceeds 5,000 square feet (464 m²).

903.2.11 Specific buildings areas and hazards. In all occupancies other than Group U, an automatic sprinkler system shall be installed for building design or hazards in the locations set forth in Sections 903.2.11.1 through 903.2.11.6.

903.2.11.1 Stories without openings. An automatic sprinkler system shall be installed throughout all stories, including basements, of all buildings where the floor area exceeds 1,500 square feet (139.4 m²) and where there is not provided not fewer than one of the following types of exterior wall openings:

1. Openings below grade that lead directly to ground level by an exterior stairway complying with Section 1009 or an outside ramp complying with Section 1010. Openings shall be located in each 50 linear feet (15 240 mm), or fraction thereof, of exterior wall in the story on at least one side. The required openings shall be distributed such that the lineal distance between adjacent openings does not exceed 50 feet (15 240 mm).

2. Openings entirely above the adjoining ground level totaling not less than 20 square feet (1.86 m²) in each 50 linear feet (15 240 mm), or fraction thereof, of exterior wall

in the story on at least one side. The required openings shall be distributed such that the lineal distance between adjacent openings does not exceed 50 feet (15 240 mm). The height of the bottom of the clear opening shall not exceed 44 inches (1118 mm) measured from the floor.

903.2.11.1.1 Opening dimensions and access.

Openings shall have a minimum dimension of not less than 30 inches (762 mm). Such openings shall be accessible to the fire department from the exterior and shall not be obstructed in a manner such that firefighting or rescue cannot be accomplished from the exterior.



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903.2.11.1.2 Openings on one side only.

Where openings in a story are provided on only one side and the opposite wall of such story is more than 75 feet (22 860 mm) from such openings, the story shall be equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system or openings as specified above shall be provided on not fewer than two sides of the story.

903.2.11.1.3

Basements. Where any portion of a basement is located more than 75 feet (22 860 mm) from openings required by Section 903.2.11.1, or where walls, partitions or other obstructions are installed that restrict the application of water from

hose streams, the basement shall be equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system.

903.2.11.2 Rubbish and linen chutes. An automatic sprinkler system shall be installed at the top of rubbish and linen chutes and in their terminal rooms. Chutes shall have additional sprinkler heads installed at alternate floors and at the lowest intake.

Where a rubbish chute extends through a building more than one floor below the lowest intake, the extension shall have sprinklers installed that are recessed from the drop area of the chute and protected from freezing in accordance with

Section 903.3.1.1. Such sprinklers shall be installed at alternate floors beginning with the second level below the last intake and ending with the floor above the discharge. Chute sprinklers shall be accessible for servicing.

903.2.11.3 Buildings 55 feet or more in height. An automatic sprinkler system shall be installed throughout buildings that have one or more stories with an occupant load of 30 or more located 55 feet (16 764 mm) or more above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access, measured to the finished floor.

Exceptions:



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1. Open parking structures.

2. Occupancies in Group F-2.

903.2.11.4 Ducts conveying hazardous exhausts.

Where required by the International Mechanical Code, automatic sprinklers shall be provided in ducts conveying hazardous exhaust or flammable or combustible materials.

Exception: Ducts where the largest cross-sectional diameter of the duct is less than 10 inches (254 mm).

903.2.11.5 Commercial cooking operations. An automatic sprinkler system shall be installed in commercial kitchen exhaust hood and duct

systems where an automatic sprinkler system is used to comply with Section 904.

903.2.11.6 Other required suppression systems. In addition to the requirements of Section 903.2, the provisions indicated in Table 903.2.11.6 require the installation of a fire suppression system for certain buildings and areas.

903.2.12 During construction. Automatic sprinkler systems required during construction, alteration and demolition operations shall be provided in accordance with Section 3313.

903.3 Installation requirements. Automatic sprinkler

systems shall be designed and installed in accordance with Sections 903.3.1 through 903.3.8.

903.3.1 Standards. Sprinkler systems shall be designed and installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1, unless otherwise permitted by Sections 903.3.1.2 and 903.3.1.3 and other chapters of this code, as applicable.

903.3.1.1 NFPA 13 sprinkler systems. Where the provisions of this code require that a building or portion thereof be equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with this section, sprinklers shall be installed throughout in accordance with



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NFPA 13 except as provided in Sections 903.3.1.1.1 and 903.3.1.1.2.

903.3.1.1.1 Exempt locations. Automatic sprinklers shall not be required in the following rooms or areas where such rooms or areas are protected with an approved automatic fire detection system in accordance with Section 907.2 that will respond to visible or invisible particles of combustion. Sprinklers shall not be omitted from a room merely because it is damp, of fire-resistance-rated construction or contains electrical equipment.

1. A room where the application of water, or flame and water,

**TABLE 903.2.11.6
ADDITIONAL REQUIRED FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS**

SECTION	SUBJECT
914.2.1	Covered and open mall buildings
914.3.1	High-rise buildings
914.4.1	Atriums
914.5.1	Underground structures
914.6.1	Stages
914.7.1	Special amusement buildings
914.8.2	Airport traffic control towers
914.8.3, 914.8.6	Aircraft hangars
914.9	Flammable finishes
914.10	Drying rooms
914.11.1	Ambulatory care facilities
1029.6.2.3	Smoke-protected assembly seating
1103.5.1	Pyroxylin plastic storage in existing buildings
1103.5.2	Existing Group I-2 occupancies
1103.5.3	Existing Group I-2 Condition 2 occupancies
1103.5.4	Pyroxylin plastics
2108.2	Dry cleaning plants
2108.3	Dry cleaning machines
2309.3.2.6.2	Hydrogen motor fuel-dispensing area canopies
2404.2	Spray finishing in Group A, E, I or R
2404.4	Spray booths and spray rooms
2405.2	Dip-tank rooms in Group A, I or R
2405.4.1	Dip tanks
2405.9.4	Hardening and tempering tanks
2703.10	HPM facilities
2703.10.1.1	HPM work station exhaust
2703.10.2	HPM gas cabinets and exhausted enclosures
2703.10.3	HPM exit access corridor
2703.10.4	HPM exhaust ducts
2703.10.4.1	HPM noncombustible ducts
2703.10.4.2	HPM combustible ducts
2807.3	Lumber production conveyor enclosures
2808.7	Recycling facility conveyor enclosures
3006.1	Class A and B ovens
3006.2	Class C and D ovens
Table 3206.2	Storage fire protection
3206.4	Storage
5003.8.4.1	Gas rooms
5003.8.5.3	Exhausted enclosures
5004.5	Indoor storage of hazardous materials
5005.1.8	Indoor dispensing of hazardous materials
5104.4.1	Aerosol warehouses

(continued)



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constitutes a serious life or fire hazard.

2. A room or space where sprinklers are considered undesirable because of the nature of the contents, where approved by the fire code official.

3. Generator and transformer rooms separated from the remainder of the building by walls and floor/ceiling or roof/ceiling assemblies having a fire-resistance rating of not less than 2 hours.

4. Rooms or areas that are of noncombustible construction with wholly noncombustible contents.

5. Fire service access elevator machine rooms and machinery spaces.

6. Machine rooms, machinery spaces, control rooms and control spaces associated with occupant evacuation

elevators designed in accordance with Section 3008 of the International Building Code.

TABLE 903.2.11.6 – continued
ADDITIONAL REQUIRED FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS

SECTION	SUBJECT
5106.3.2	Aerosol display and merchandising areas
5204.5	Storage of more than 1,000 cubic feet of loose combustible fibers
5306.2.1	Exterior medical gas storage room
5306.2.2	Interior medical gas storage room
5306.2.3	Medical gas storage cabinet
5606.5.2.1	Storage of smokeless propellant
5606.5.2.3	Storage of small arms primers
5704.3.7.5.1	Flammable and combustible liquid storage rooms
5704.3.8.4	Flammable and combustible liquid storage warehouses
5705.3.7.3	Flammable and combustible liquid Group H-2 or H-3 areas
6004.1.2	Gas cabinets for highly toxic and toxic gas
6004.1.3	Exhausted enclosures for highly toxic and toxic gas
6004.2.2.6	Gas rooms for highly toxic and toxic gas
6004.3.3	Outdoor storage for highly toxic and toxic gas
6504.1.1	Pyroxylin plastic storage cabinets
6504.1.3	Pyroxylin plastic storage vaults
6504.2	Pyroxylin plastic storage and manufacturing

For SI: 1 cubic foot = 0.023 m³.



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903.3.1.1.2 Bathrooms. In Group R occupancies, other than Group R-4 occupancies, sprinklers shall not be required in bathrooms that do not exceed 55 square feet (5 m²) in area and are located within individual dwelling units or sleeping units, provided that walls and ceilings, including the walls and ceilings behind a shower enclosure or tub, are of noncombustible or limited-combustible materials with a 15-minute thermal barrier rating.

903.3.1.2 NFPA 13R sprinkler systems. Automatic sprinkler systems in Group R occupancies up to and including four stories in height in buildings not exceeding 60 feet (18

288 mm) in height above grade plane shall be permitted to be installed throughout in accordance with NFPA 13R.

The number of stories of Group R occupancies constructed in accordance with Sections 510.2 and 510.4 of the International Building Code shall be measured from the horizontal assembly creating separate buildings.

903.3.1.2.1 Balconies and decks. Sprinkler protection shall be provided for exterior balconies, decks and ground floor patios of dwelling units and sleeping units where the building is of Type V construction, provided there is a roof or deck above.

Sidewall sprinklers that are used to protect such areas shall be permitted to be located such that their deflectors are within 1 inch (25 mm) to 6 inches (152 mm) below the structural members and a maximum distance of 14 inches (356 mm) below the deck of the exterior balconies and decks that are constructed of open wood joist construction.

903.3.1.2.2 Open-ended corridors. Sprinkler protection shall be provided in open-ended corridors and associated exterior stairways and ramps as specified in Section 1027.6, Exception 3.

903.3.1.3 NFPA 13D sprinkler systems. Automatic sprinkler systems installed in



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one- and two-family dwellings; Group R-3; Group R-4 Condition 1 and townhouses shall be permitted to be installed throughout in accordance with NFPA 13D.

903.3.2 Quick-response and residential sprinklers.

Where automatic sprinkler systems are required by this code, quick-response or residential automatic sprinklers shall be installed in all of the following areas in accordance with Section 903.3.1 and their listings:

1. Throughout all spaces within a smoke compartment containing care recipient sleeping units in Group I-2 in

accordance with the International Building Code.

2. Throughout all spaces within a smoke compartment containing treatment rooms in ambulatory care facilities.

3. Dwelling units and sleeping units in Group I-1 and R occupancies.

4. Light-hazard occupancies as defined in NFPA 13.

903.3.3 Obstructed locations. Automatic sprinklers shall be installed with due regard to obstructions that will delay activation or obstruct the water distribution pattern. Automatic

sprinklers shall be installed in or under covered kiosks,

displays, booths, concession stands or equipment that exceeds 4 feet (1219 mm) in width. Not less than a 3-foot (914 mm) clearance shall be maintained between automatic sprinklers and the top of piles of combustible fibers.

Exception: Kitchen equipment under exhaust hoods protected with a fire-extinguishing system in accordance with Section 904.

903.3.4 Actuation. Automatic sprinkler systems shall be automatically actuated unless specifically provided for in this code.

903.3.5 Water supplies. Water supplies for automatic sprinkler



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systems shall comply with this section and the standards referenced in Section 903.3.1. The potable water supply shall be protected against backflow in accordance with the requirements of this section and the International Plumbing Code. For connections to public waterworks systems, the water supply test used for design of fire protection systems shall be adjusted to account for seasonal and daily pressure fluctuations based on information from the water supply authority and as approved by the fire code official.

903.3.5.1 Domestic services. Where the domestic service provides the water

supply for the automatic sprinkler system, the supply shall be in accordance with this section.

903.3.5.2 Residential combination services. A single combination water supply shall be allowed provided that the domestic demand is added to the sprinkler demand as required by NFPA 13R.

903.3.6 Hose threads. Fire hose threads and fittings used in connection with automatic sprinkler systems shall be as prescribed by the fire code official.

903.3.7 Fire department connections. Fire department connections for automatic sprinkler systems shall be

installed in accordance with Section 912.

903.3.8 Limited area sprinkler systems. Limited area sprinkler systems shall be in accordance with the standards listed in Section 903.3.1 except as provided in Sections 903.3.8.1 through 903.3.8.5.

903.3.8.1 Number of sprinklers. Limited area sprinkler systems shall not exceed six sprinklers in any single fire area.

903.3.8.2 Occupancy hazard classification. Only areas classified by NFPA 13 as Light Hazard or Ordinary Hazard Group 1 shall be permitted to be protected by limited area sprinkler systems.



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903.3.8.3 Piping arrangement. Where a limited area sprinkler system is installed in a building with an automatic wet standpipe system, sprinklers shall be supplied by the standpipe system. Where a limited area sprinkler system is installed in a building without an automatic wet standpipe system, water shall be permitted to be supplied by the plumbing system provided that the plumbing system is capable of simultaneously supplying domestic and sprinkler demands.

903.3.8.4 Supervision. Control valves shall not be installed between the water supply and

sprinklers unless the valves are of an approved indicating type that are supervised or secured in the open position.

903.3.8.5 Calculations. Hydraulic calculations in accordance with NFPA 13 shall be provided to demonstrate that the available water flow and pressure are adequate to supply all sprinklers installed in any single fire area with discharge densities corresponding to the hazard classification.

903.4 Sprinkler system supervision and alarms. Valves controlling the water supply for automatic sprinkler systems, pumps, tanks, water levels and temperatures, critical air pressures and

waterflow switches on all sprinkler systems shall be electrically supervised by a listed fire alarm control unit.

Exceptions:

1. Automatic sprinkler systems protecting one- and two-family dwellings.
2. Limited area sprinkler systems in accordance with Section 903.3.8.
3. Automatic sprinkler systems installed in accordance with NFPA 13R where a common supply main is used to supply both domestic water and the automatic sprinkler system, and a separate shutoff valve for the automatic sprinkler system is not provided.



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4. Jockey pump control valves that are sealed or locked in the open position.

5. Control valves to commercial kitchen hoods, paint spray booths or dip tanks that are sealed or locked in the open position.

6. Valves controlling the fuel supply to fire pump engines that are sealed or locked in the open position.

7. Trim valves to pressure switches in dry, pre-action and deluge sprinkler systems that are sealed or locked in the open position.

903.4.1 Monitoring. Alarm, supervisory and trouble signals shall be distinctly different and shall be automatically transmitted to an

approved supervising station or, where approved by the fire code official, shall sound an audible signal at a constantly attended location.

Exceptions:

1. Underground key or hub valves in roadway boxes provided by the municipality or public utility are not required to be monitored.

2. Backflow prevention device test valves located in limited area sprinkler system supply piping shall be locked in the open position. In occupancies required to be equipped with a fire alarm system, the backflow preventer valves shall be electrically supervised by a tamper switch installed in accordance

with NFPA 72 and separately annunciated.

903.4.2 Alarms. An approved audible device, located on the exterior of the building in an approved location, shall be connected to each automatic sprinkler system. Such sprinkler waterflow alarm devices shall be activated by water flow equivalent to the flow of a single sprinkler of the smallest orifice size installed in the system. Where a fire alarm system is installed, actuation of the automatic sprinkler system shall actuate the building fire alarm system.

903.4.3 Floor control valves. Approved supervised indicating control valves shall be provided at the point of



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connection to the riser on each floor in high-rise buildings.

903.5 Testing and maintenance. Sprinkler systems shall be tested and maintained in accordance with Section 901.

903.6 Where required in existing buildings and structures.

An automatic sprinkler system shall be provided in existing buildings and structures where required in Chapter 11.

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SECTION 904
ALTERNATIVE
AUTOMATIC
FIRE-EXTINGUISHING
SYSTEMS



The International Code Council, a membership association dedicated to building safety and fire prevention, develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Most U.S. cities, counties and states that adopt codes choose the International Codes developed by the International Code Council.



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