

2003 International Plumbing Code Overview of Changes

The 2003 *International Plumbing Code* (IPC) contains many changes that provide clarity of content and resolve common interpretation problems. The scope of the 2003 IPC continues to encompass the initial design of the plumbing system, the installation and construction of plumbing systems, and the maintenance of operating systems. All plumbing systems which are provided for utilization by and for the general safety and well-being of the occupants of a building are intended to be governed by the code. Plumbing installations associated with one-and-two family dwellings are regulated by the *International Residential Code*.

Removed from 2000 Edition

- 107.4 – Coordination of inspections
- 502.2 – Water heaters installed in garages (required water heaters installed in garages to be installed 18” above the garage floor. The 2003 IPC requires electric water heaters to meet the electrical code and gas water heaters to meet the fuel gas code.)
- 605.1 – Water compatibility (required water pipe to be resistant to corrosion from water system)
- 802.1.1 Exception – Indirect waste connection for dishwashing machines

Added to the 2003 Edition

- 101.2 – Scope (provisions added to regulate:
 - Nonflammable medical gas inhalation anesthetic
 - Vacuum piping
 - Nonmedical oxygen systems
 - Exception #2 also added addressing plumbing systems in existing buildings)
- 202 – Definitions (new definitions for Design Flood Elevation, Fill Valve, and Flood Hazard Area)
- 301.7 – Conflicts (New text added clarifying that the product listing and manufacturer’s installation instructions prevail in the event that a code provision is less strict on the same subject, in other words, that which provides the greatest level of safety is the ruling provision)
- 307.4 – Alterations to trusses (truss members shall not be cut, drilled, notched, spliced or otherwise altered without written approval from a design professional)
- 312.1.1 – Test gauges (more sensitive test gauge required for pressure tests)
- 403.2 – Separate facilities (an exception was added to allow a single unisex restroom for retail spaces with an occupant load of 50 or less)
- 406.3 – Waste Connection (new text requires a minimum 3” fixture branch, horizontal branch drain, or drainage stack for washing machine drainage connections. This change is necessary due to an increase in the discharge rate for washing machines to 21 gpm)
- 603.2 - Separation of water service and building sewer (Two new exceptions were added allowing the water service to be in the same trench as the building sewer. The first new exception permits the water service to be located in the same trench as the building sewer provided the building sewer is constructed of materials conforming to table 702.2 - underground building drainage. The second new exception provides for the installation where water service pipe crosses the building sewer and requires the water service to be sleeved to at least 5 feet horizontally from the building sewer centerline in both directions)
- 607.2.3 – Recirculating pump (new text requires the return water line on circulating pumps to be routed to the cold water inlet pipe of the water heater)
- 701.9 – Drainage piping in food service areas (new language provides additional health and sanitation protection by prohibiting waste piping from being installed above working, storage, or eating surfaces in food service establishments)
- 702.6 - Lead Bends and Traps (new section added establishes minimum wall thickness for lead bends and traps)

706.3 - Installation of fittings (new exception allows back-to-back water closets connections to a double sanitary tee where the horizontal developed length between the outlet of the water closet and connection to the double sanitary tee is 18 inches or greater)

802.1.6 & 802.1.7– Dishwashing machines (new requirements for the connection of the dishwashing machine waste line, intended to minimize the potential for waste backflow into dishwashing machines)

909.1.1 – Vertical wet vent (an additional wet venting method allows any combination of fixtures within two bathroom groups located on the same floor level)

Changed

312.1 – Required Tests (text changed to prohibit air tests on plastic piping systems)

Table 403.1 - Minimum Number of Required Plumbing Fixtures (table changed to achieve consistency between the IPC and the IBC)

410.1 – Approval (change allows bottled water dispensers to be substituted for up to 50% of the required drinking fountains, the 2000 IPC allowed bottled water dispensers to be used in lieu of all required drinking fountains)

708.3.2 – Building Sewers (manhole spacing on sewer lines 8 inches and larger changed from a maximum of 400 feet intervals to 200 feet)