

2003 International Mechanical Code Overview of Changes

The latest code change cycle resolved common interpretation problems and provided clarity of content to the 2003 *International Mechanical Code* (IMC). The code was also changed to reflect current design, construction and inspection methods. In order to keep the IMC up to date on new technology, requirements for the ventilation of spaces containing hydrogen-generating and refueling systems have been added to assist designers, installers and inspectors as the demand for new energy sources increase.

The 2003 IMC is primarily intended to be a commercial code. Therefore, mechanical installations associated with one-and-two family dwellings are regulated by the *International Residential Code*.

Removed from 2000 Edition:

- 107.3 - Coordination of inspections
- 202 – Some definitions (Exhaust Air, Flood Zones)
- 301.14 - Prohibited location (prohibited mechanical equipment in elevator shafts)

Added to 2003 Edition:

- 106.2 (8) - Permit Not Required (added portable fuel cell appliances to the list of items not requiring a permit)
- 202 - Definitions (several new definitions were added to clarify new or existing terms)
- 302.4 - Alterations to trusses (truss members shall not be cut, drilled, notched, spliced or otherwise altered without written approval from a design professional)
- 304.4 - Hydrogen generating and refueling operations (new section added to minimize the potential for explosions by limiting the source of hydrogen gas and by requiring sufficient ventilation to dissipate any gas leakage)
- 305.5 - Protection of piping against physical damage (new section requires protection of piping installed through holes or notches in framing members)
- 306.5 - Equipment and appliances on roofs or elevated structures (added specific requirements for permanent ladders and catwalks accessing equipment on roofs and elevated structures - only applies to equipment installed over 16 feet high)
- 402 - Natural ventilation (the natural ventilation requirements of the IBC are duplicated in the IMC for ease of use)
- 504.1 – Installation (New exception allows listed condensing (ductless) clothes dryers to be installed without being ducted to the outside. Condensing clothes dryers are a relatively new technology that does not release moisture and products of combustion.)
- 506.3.6 - Grease duct clearances (new language requires a minimum of 3” clearance from grease ducts to noncombustible construction)
- 506.5 - Exhaust equipment (new section provides installation requirements for fans and other related kitchen exhaust equipment)
- 507.13 – Capacity of hoods (new method replaces the old formula for calculating hood exhaust rates. The previous method of calculating required hood exhaust capacity is replaced with a simplified table for cooking appliances ranging from light-duty to extra-heavy-duty cooking appliances.)
- 507.16.1- Commercial kitchen hoods capture and containment test (new text requires a “capture and containment” test that is performed as part of the kitchen hood field performance test)
- 514 - Energy recovery ventilation systems (new section adds requirements for ventilation systems using energy recovery systems)
- 602.2.1.5 - Foam plastic insulation (new section adds requirements for foam plastic insulation used as wall or ceiling finish in a plenum)
- 804.3.8 - Mechanical draft systems for manually fired appliances and fireplaces (new section allows the use of a mechanical draft system to assist a solid-burning fireplace or stove to draw properly)
- Table 1103.1- Refrigerant classification, amount (table updated to recognize many new refrigerants)

