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## Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRA) Agency Background Document

<b>Agency name</b>	Board of Housing and Community Development
<b>Virginia Administrative Code (VAC) Chapter citation(s)</b>	13 VAC 5 - 51
<b>VAC Chapter title(s)</b>	Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC)
<b>Action title</b>	Update of SFPC to reference 2021 edition of the International Code Council's International Fire Code
<b>Date this document prepared</b>	October 2021

This information is required for executive branch review and the Virginia Registrar of Regulations, pursuant to the Virginia Administrative Process Act (APA), Executive Order 14 (as amended, July 16, 2018), the Regulations for Filing and Publishing Agency Regulations (1VAC7-10), and the *Form and Style Requirements for the Virginia Register of Regulations and Virginia Administrative Code*.

### Brief Summary

*Provide a brief summary (preferably no more than 2 or 3 paragraphs) of the subject matter, intent, and goals of this regulatory change (i.e., new regulation, amendments to an existing regulation, or repeal of an existing regulation).*

The subject matter is the regulation of operations and processes relating to fire safety and explosion hazards and the maintenance of the fire protection features in buildings by the State Fire Marshal's Office and by local fire prevention agencies. The intent and goal of this action is to update the model codes and standards referenced in the SFPC from the 2018 editions to the 2021 editions. This action will consider amendments to administrative and enforcement provisions of the SFPC as determined necessary for the enforcement of the regulation.

### Acronyms and Definitions

*Define all acronyms or technical definitions used in this form.*

SFPC – Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code  
ICC – International Code Council  
USBC – Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code

## Mandate and Impetus

*Identify the mandate for this regulatory change and any other impetus that specifically prompted its initiation (e.g., new or modified mandate, petition for rulemaking, periodic review, or board decision). For purposes of executive branch review, “mandate” has the same meaning as defined in Executive Order 14 (as amended, July 16, 2018), “a directive from the General Assembly, the federal government, or a court that requires that a regulation be promulgated, amended, or repealed in whole or part.”*

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The 2021 edition of the national model codes were released in October 2020. As the basis for Virginia’s fire prevention code it is important to stay in sync with the national model codes. At its October 25, 2021 meeting, the Board of Housing and Community reviewed a tentative regulatory schedule and directed staff to proceed with initiating the code development process, approving publication of a NOIRA.

## Legal Basis

*Identify (1) the promulgating agency, and (2) the state and/or federal legal authority for the regulatory change, including the most relevant citations to the Code of Virginia and Acts of Assembly chapter number(s), if applicable. Your citation must include a specific provision, if any, authorizing the promulgating agency to regulate this specific subject or program, as well as a reference to the agency’s overall regulatory authority.*

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The agency is the Board of Housing and Community Development. The legal authority for amendments to the regulation is § 27-97 of the Code of Virginia.

This action is exempt from Article 2 of the Administrative Process Act in accordance with subdivision A 12 of § 2.2-4006 of the Code of Virginia.

## Purpose

*Describe the specific reasons why the agency has determined that this regulation is essential to protect the health, safety, or welfare of citizens. In addition, explain any potential issues that may need to be addressed as the regulation is developed.*

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The SFPC utilizes model codes and standards developed by the International Code Council (ICC). New editions of those model codes are available every three years. The current SFPC incorporates the 2018 editions of the International Codes. The 2021 editions of the International Codes are now completed and available from ICC. The use of the newest available model codes and standards in the SFPC assures that the statutory mandate is met to base the regulation on the latest editions of nationally-recognized model codes to assure protection of life and property from the hazards of fire or explosion and the protection of the health, safety and welfare of the occupants and users of buildings and structures at the least possible cost.

## Substance

*Briefly identify and explain the new substantive provisions that are being considered, the substantive changes to existing sections that are being considered, or both.*

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The action will update references in the regulation to the International Codes from the 2018 to the 2021 editions. In addition, any changes to the International Codes which were made in the current regulation which are no longer necessary will be deleted. Administrative and enforcement provisions of the SFPC will be updated as determined necessary by the Board in conjunction with the use of the newest editions of the International Codes and in response to proposals or comments received from interested or affected parties.

## Alternatives to Regulation

*Describe any viable alternatives to the regulatory change that were considered, and the rationale used by the agency to select the least burdensome or intrusive alternative that meets the essential purpose of the regulatory change. Also, include discussion of less intrusive or less costly alternatives for small businesses, as defined in § 2.2-4007.1 of the Code of Virginia, of achieving the purpose of the regulatory change.*

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As the use of the latest International Codes is based on statutory requirements, the agency believes this action to be the least burdensome or intrusive method of meeting the essential purpose of the action as well as assuring the least intrusive or costly impact on small businesses.

## Public Participation

*Indicate how the public should contact the agency to submit comments on this regulation, and whether a public hearing will be held, by completing the text below. In addition, as required by § 2.2-4007.02 of the Code of Virginia describe any other means that will be used to identify and notify interested parties and seek their input, such as regulatory advisory panels or general notices.*

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The Department of Housing and Community Development is seeking comments on this regulation, including but not limited to: ideas to be considered in the development of this regulation, the costs and benefits of the alternatives stated in this background document or other alternatives, and the potential impacts of the regulation. Also, the board is also seeking information on impacts on small businesses as defined in § 2.2-4007.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. Information may include: 1) projected reporting, recordkeeping, and other administrative costs; 2) the probable effect of the regulation on affected small businesses; and 3) the description of less intrusive or costly alternatives for achieving the purpose of the regulation.

Anyone wishing to submit written comments for the public comment file may do so through the Public Comment Forums feature of the Virginia Regulatory Town Hall web site at <https://www.townhall.virginia.gov>. Written comments must include the name and address of the commenter. Comments may also be submitted by mail, email or fax to Kyle Flanders; address: 600 East Main Street, Suite 300, Richmond, VA 23219; telephone number: (804) 786-6761; fax number: (804) 371-7090; email address: [kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov](mailto:kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov). In order to be considered, comments must be received by 11:59 pm on the last day of the public comment period.

A public hearing will be held prior to and following the publication of the proposed stage of this regulatory action, and notice of the hearing will be posted on the Virginia Regulatory Town Hall website (<https://www.townhall.virginia.gov>) and on the Commonwealth Calendar website (<https://commonwealthcalendar.virginia.gov>). Both oral and written comments may be submitted at that time.