

EFFECTIVE USE OF THE INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE

Effective Use of the International Residential Code

The *International Residential Code*® (IRC®) was created to serve as a complete, comprehensive code regulating the construction of single-family houses, two-family houses (duplexes) and buildings consisting of three or more townhouse units. All buildings within the scope of the IRC are limited to three stories above grade plane. For example, a four-story single-family house would fall within the scope of the *International Building Code*® (IBC®), not the IRC. The benefits of devoting a separate code to residential construction include the fact that the user need not navigate through a multitude of code provisions that do not apply to residential construction in order to locate that which is applicable. A separate code also allows for residential and nonresidential code provisions to be distinct and tailored to the structures that fall within the appropriate code's scopes.

The IRC contains coverage for all components of a house or townhouse, including structural components, fireplaces and chimneys, thermal insulation, mechanical systems, fuel gas systems, plumbing systems and electrical systems.

The IRC is a prescriptive-oriented (specification) code with some examples of performance code language. It has been said that the IRC is the complete cookbook for residential construction. Section R301.1, for example, is written in performance language, but states that the prescriptive requirements of the code will achieve such performance.

It is important to understand that the IRC contains coverage for what is conventional and common in residential construction practice. While the IRC will provide all of the needed coverage for most residential construction, it might not address construction practices and systems that are atypical or rarely encountered in the industry. Sections such as R301.1.3, R301.2.2.1.1, R320.1, M1301.1, G2401.1 and P2601.1 refer to other codes either as an alternative to the provisions of the IRC or where the IRC lacks coverage for a particular type of structure, design, system, appliance or method of construction. In other words, the IRC is meant to be all inclusive for typical residential construction and it relies on other codes only where alternatives are desired or where the code lacks coverage for the uncommon aspect of residential construction. Of course, the IRC constantly evolves to address new technologies and construction practices that were once uncommon, but now common.

The IRC is unique in that much of it, including Chapters 3 through 9 and Chapters 34 through 43, is presented in an ordered format that is consistent with the normal progression of construction, starting with the design phase and continuing through the final trim-out phase. This is consistent with the "cookbook" philosophy of the IRC.

The IRC is divided into eight main parts, specifically, Part I—Administration, Part II—Definitions, Part III—Building Planning and Construction, Part IV—Energy Conservation, Part V—Mechanical, Part VI—Fuel Gas, Part VII—Plumbing and Part VIII—Electrical.

The following provides a brief description of the content of each chapter and appendix of the IRC:

Chapter 1 Scope and Administration. This chapter contains provisions for the application, enforcement and administration of subsequent requirements of the code. In addition to establishing the scope of the code, Chapter 1 identifies which buildings and structures come under its purview. Chapter 1 is largely concerned with maintaining "due process of law" in enforcing the building criteria contained in the body of the code. Only through careful observation of the administrative provisions can the building official reasonably expect to demonstrate that "equal protection under the law" has been provided.

Chapter 2 Definitions. Terms defined in the code are listed alphabetically in Chapter 2. It is important to note that two chapters have their own definitions sections: Chapter 24 for the defined terms that are unique to fuel gas and Chapter 35 containing terms that are applicable to electrical Chapters 34 through 43. In the case where Chapter 2 and another chapter both define the same term differently, the definition found in Chapter 24 and/or 35 is intended to prevail where the term

is used in Chapter 24 and/or 35 and the definition contained in Chapter 2 is intended to prevail where the term is used in all other locations in the code. Except where Chapter 24 or 35 has a definition that will prevail therein, the definitions in Chapter 2 are applicable throughout the code.

Where understanding a term's definition is key to or necessary for understanding a particular code provision, the term is shown in italics where it appears in the code. This is true only for those terms that have a meaning that is unique to the code. In other words, the generally understood meaning of a term or phrase might not be sufficient or consistent with the meaning prescribed by the code; therefore, it is essential that the code-defined meaning be known.

Guidance regarding not only tense, gender and plurality of defined terms, but also terms not defined in this code, is provided.

Chapter 3 Building Planning. Chapter 3 provides guidelines for a minimum level of structural integrity, life safety, fire safety and livability for inhabitants of dwelling units regulated by this code. Chapter 3 is a compilation of the code requirements specific to the building planning sector of the design and construction process. This chapter sets forth code requirements dealing with light, ventilation, sanitation, minimum room size, ceiling height and environmental comfort. Chapter 3 establishes life-safety provisions including limitations on glazing used in hazardous areas, specifications on stairways, use of guards at elevated surfaces, window and fall protection, and rules for means of egress. Snow, wind and seismic design live and dead loads and flood-resistant construction, as well as solar energy systems, and swimming pools, spas and hot tubs, are addressed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 Foundations. Chapter 4 provides the requirements for the design and construction of foundation systems for buildings regulated by this code. Provisions for seismic load, flood load and frost protection are contained in this chapter. A foundation system consists of two interdependent components: the foundation structure itself and the supporting soil.

The prescriptive provisions of this chapter provide requirements for constructing footings and walls for foundations of wood, masonry, concrete and precast concrete. In addition to a foundation's ability to support the required design loads, this chapter addresses several other factors that can affect foundation performance. These include controlling surface water and subsurface drainage, requiring soil tests where conditions warrant and evaluating proximity to slopes and minimum depth requirements. The chapter also provides requirements to minimize adverse effects of moisture, decay and pests in basements and crawl spaces.

Chapter 5 Floors. Chapter 5 provides the requirements for the design and construction of floor systems that will be capable of supporting minimum required design loads. This chapter covers four different types: wood floor framing, wood floors on the ground, cold-formed steel floor framing and concrete slabs on the ground. Allowable span tables are provided that greatly simplify the determination of joist, girder and sheathing sizes for raised floor systems of wood framing and cold-formed steel framing. This chapter also contains prescriptive requirements for wood-framed exterior decks and their attachment to the main building.

Chapter 6 Wall Construction. Chapter 6 contains provisions that regulate the design and construction of walls. The wall construction covered in Chapter 6 consists of five different types: wood framed, cold-formed steel framed, masonry, concrete and structural insulated panel (SIP). The primary concern of this chapter is the structural integrity of wall construction and transfer of all imposed loads to the supporting structure. This chapter provides the requirements for the design and construction of wall systems that are capable of supporting the minimum design vertical loads (dead, live and snow loads) and lateral loads (wind or seismic loads). This chapter contains the prescriptive requirements for wall bracing and/or shear walls to resist the imposed lateral loads due to wind and seismic.

Chapter 6 also regulates exterior windows and doors installed in walls. The chapter contains criteria for the performance of exterior windows and doors and includes provisions for testing and labeling, garage doors, wind-borne debris protection and anchorage details.

Part III—Building Planning and Construction

CHAPTER 3

BUILDING PLANNING

SECTION R301 DESIGN CRITERIA

R301.1 Application. Buildings and structures, and parts thereof, shall be constructed to safely support all loads, including dead loads, live loads, roof loads, flood loads, snow loads, wind loads and seismic loads as prescribed by this code. The construction of buildings and structures in accordance with the provisions of this code shall result in a system that provides a complete load path that meets the requirements for the transfer of loads from their point of origin through the load-resisting elements to the foundation. Buildings and structures constructed as prescribed by this code are deemed to comply with the requirements of this section.

R301.1.1 Alternative provisions. As an alternative to the requirements in Section R301.1, the following standards are permitted subject to the limitations of this code and the limitations therein. Where engineered design is used in conjunction with these standards, the design shall comply with the *International Building Code*.

1. AF&PA *Wood Frame Construction Manual* (WFCM).
2. AISI *Standard for Cold-Formed Steel Framing—Prescriptive Method for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* (AISI S230).
3. ICC *Standard on the Design and Construction of Log Structures* (ICC 400).

R301.1.2 Construction systems. The requirements of this code are based on platform and balloon-frame construction for light-frame buildings. The requirements for concrete and masonry buildings are based on a balloon framing system. Other framing systems must have equivalent detailing to ensure force transfer, continuity and compatible deformations.

R301.1.3 Engineered design. Where a building of otherwise conventional construction contains structural elements exceeding the limits of Section R301 or otherwise not conforming to this code, these elements shall be designed in accordance with accepted engineering practice. The extent of such design need only demonstrate compliance of nonconventional elements with other applicable provisions and shall be compatible with the performance of the conventional framed system. Engineered design in accordance with the *International Building Code* is permitted for buildings and structures, and parts thereof, included in the scope of this code.

R301.2 Climatic and geographic design criteria. Buildings shall be constructed in accordance with the provisions of this

code as limited by the provisions of this section. Additional criteria shall be established by the local *jurisdiction* and set forth in Table R301.2(1).

R301.2.1 Wind design criteria. Buildings and portions thereof shall be constructed in accordance with the wind provisions of this code using the ultimate design wind speed in Table R301.2(1) as determined from Figure R301.2(4)A. The structural provisions of this code for wind loads are not permitted where wind design is required as specified in Section R301.2.1.1. Where different construction methods and structural materials are used for various portions of a building, the applicable requirements of this section for each portion shall apply. Where not otherwise specified, the wind loads listed in Table R301.2(2) adjusted for height and exposure using Table R301.2(3) shall be used to determine design load performance requirements for wall coverings, curtain walls, roof coverings, exterior windows, skylights, garage doors and exterior doors. Asphalt shingles shall be designed for wind speeds in accordance with Section R905.2.4. A continuous load path shall be provided to transmit the applicable uplift forces in Section R802.11.1 from the roof assembly to the foundation.

R301.2.1.1 Wind limitations and wind design required. The wind provisions of this code shall not apply to the design of buildings where wind design is required in accordance with Figure R301.2(4)B.

Exceptions:

1. For concrete construction, the wind provisions of this code shall apply in accordance with the limitations of Sections R404 and R608.
2. For structural insulated panels, the wind provisions of this code shall apply in accordance with the limitations of Section R610.
3. For cold-formed steel light-frame construction, the wind provisions of this code shall apply in accordance with the limitations of Sections R505, R603 and R804.

In regions where wind design is required in accordance with Figure R301.2(4)B, the design of buildings for wind loads shall be in accordance with one or more of the following methods:

1. AF&PA *Wood Frame Construction Manual* (WFCM).
2. ICC *Standard for Residential Construction in High-Wind Regions* (ICC 600).

SECTION R320 ACCESSIBILITY

R320.1 Scope. Where there are four or more *dwelling units* or sleeping units in a single structure, the provisions of Chapter 11 of the *International Building Code* for Group R-3 shall apply.

R320.1.1 Guestrooms. A *dwelling* with guestrooms shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 11 of the *International Building Code* for Group R-3. For the purpose of applying the requirements of Chapter 11 of the *International Building Code*, guestrooms shall be considered to be sleeping units.

Exception: Owner-occupied lodging houses with five or fewer guestrooms constructed in accordance with the *International Residential Code* are not required to be accessible.

SECTION R321 ELEVATORS AND PLATFORM LIFTS

R321.1 Elevators. Where provided, passenger elevators, limited-use and limited-application elevators or private residence elevators shall comply with ASME A17.1/CSA B44.

R321.2 Platform lifts. Where provided, platform lifts shall comply with ASME A18.1.

R321.3 Accessibility. Elevators or platform lifts that are part of an accessible route required by Chapter 11 of the *International Building Code*, shall comply with ICC A117.1.

SECTION R322 FLOOD-RESISTANT CONSTRUCTION

R322.1 General. Buildings and structures constructed in whole or in part in flood hazard areas, including A or V Zones and Coastal A Zones, as established in Table R301.2(1), and substantial improvement and restoration of substantial damage of buildings and structures in flood hazard areas, shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the provisions contained in this section. Buildings and structures that are located in more than one flood hazard area shall comply with the provisions associated with the most restrictive flood hazard area. Buildings and structures located in whole or in part in identified floodways shall be designed and constructed in accordance with ASCE 24.

R322.1.1 Alternative provisions. As an alternative to the requirements in Section R322, ASCE 24 is permitted subject to the limitations of this code and the limitations therein.

R322.1.2 Structural systems. Structural systems of buildings and structures shall be designed, connected and anchored to resist flotation, collapse or permanent lateral movement due to structural loads and stresses from flooding equal to the design flood elevation.

R322.1.3 Flood-resistant construction. Buildings and structures erected in areas prone to flooding shall be constructed by methods and practices that minimize flood damage.

R322.1.4 Establishing the design flood elevation. The design flood elevation shall be used to define flood hazard areas. At a minimum, the design flood elevation shall be the higher of the following:

1. The base flood elevation at the depth of peak elevation of flooding, including wave height, that has a 1 percent (100-year flood) or greater chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year; or
2. The elevation of the design flood associated with the area designated on a flood hazard map adopted by the community, or otherwise legally designated.

R322.1.4.1 Determination of design flood elevations. If design flood elevations are not specified, the *building official* is authorized to require the applicant to comply with either of the following:

1. Obtain and reasonably use data available from a federal, state or other source; or
2. Determine the design flood elevation in accordance with accepted hydrologic and hydraulic engineering practices used to define special flood hazard areas. Determinations shall be undertaken by a registered *design professional* who shall document that the technical methods used reflect currently accepted engineering practice. Studies, analyses and computations shall be submitted in sufficient detail to allow thorough review and approval.

R322.1.4.2 Determination of impacts. In riverine flood hazard areas where design flood elevations are specified but floodways have not been designated, the applicant shall demonstrate that the effect of the proposed buildings and structures on design flood elevations, including fill, when combined with other existing and anticipated flood hazard area encroachments, will not increase the design flood elevation more than 1 foot (305 mm) at any point within the *jurisdiction*.

R322.1.5 Lowest floor. The lowest floor shall be the lowest floor of the lowest enclosed area, including *basement*, and excluding any unfinished flood-resistant enclosure that is useable solely for vehicle parking, building access or limited storage provided that such enclosure is not built so as to render the building or structure in violation of this section.

R322.1.6 Protection of mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems. Electrical systems, *equipment* and components; heating, ventilating, air conditioning; plumbing *appliances* and plumbing fixtures; *duct systems*; and other service *equipment* shall be located at or above the elevation required in Section R322.2 or R322.3. If replaced as part of a substantial improvement, electrical systems, *equipment* and components; heating, ventilating, air conditioning and plumbing *appliances* and plumbing fixtures; *duct systems*; and other service *equipment* shall meet the requirements of this section. Systems, fixtures, and *equipment* and components shall not be mounted on or penetrate through walls intended to break away under flood loads.

Exception: Locating electrical systems, *equipment* and components; heating, ventilating, air conditioning;

plumbing *appliances* and plumbing fixtures; *duct systems*; and other service *equipment* is permitted below the elevation required in Section R322.2 or R322.3 provided that they are designed and installed to prevent water from entering or accumulating within the components and to resist hydrostatic and hydrodynamic loads and stresses, including the effects of buoyancy, during the occurrence of flooding to the design flood elevation in accordance with ASCE 24. Electrical wiring systems are permitted to be located below the required elevation provided that they conform to the provisions of the electrical part of this code for wet locations.

R322.1.7 Protection of water supply and sanitary sewage systems. New and replacement water supply systems shall be designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration of flood waters into the systems in accordance with the plumbing provisions of this code. New and replacement sanitary sewage systems shall be designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration of floodwaters into systems and discharges from systems into floodwaters in accordance with the plumbing provisions of this code and Chapter 3 of the *International Private Sewage Disposal Code*.

R322.1.8 Flood-resistant materials. Building materials and installation methods used for flooring and interior and exterior walls and wall coverings below the elevation required in Section R322.2 or R322.3 shall be flood damage-resistant materials that conform to the provisions of FEMA TB-2.

R322.1.9 Manufactured homes. The bottom of the frame of new and replacement *manufactured homes* on foundations that conform to the requirements of Section R322.2 or R322.3, as applicable, shall be elevated to or above the elevations specified in Section R322.2 (flood hazard areas including A Zones) or R322.3 in coastal high-hazard areas (V Zones and Coastal A Zones). The anchor and tie-down requirements of the applicable state or federal requirements shall apply. The foundation and anchorage of *manufactured homes* to be located in identified floodways shall be designed and constructed in accordance with ASCE 24.

R322.1.10 As-built elevation documentation. A registered *design professional* shall prepare and seal documentation of the elevations specified in Section R322.2 or R322.3.

R322.2 Flood hazard areas (including A Zones). Areas that have been determined to be prone to flooding and that are not subject to high-velocity wave action shall be designated as flood hazard areas. Flood hazard areas that have been delineated as subject to wave heights between 1½ feet (457 mm) and 3 feet (914 mm) or otherwise designated by the jurisdiction shall be designated as Coastal A Zones and are subject to the requirements of Section R322.3. Buildings and structures constructed in whole or in part in flood hazard areas shall be designed and constructed in accordance with Sections R322.2.1 through R322.2.3.

R322.2.1 Elevation requirements.

1. Buildings and structures in flood hazard areas, including flood hazard areas designated as Coastal

A Zones, shall have the lowest floors elevated to or above the base flood elevation plus 1 foot (305 mm), or the design flood elevation.

2. In areas of shallow flooding (AO Zones), buildings and structures shall have the lowest floor (including *basement*) elevated to a height of not less than the highest adjacent *grade* as the depth number specified in feet (mm) on the FIRM plus 1 foot (305 mm), or not less than 3 feet (15 mm) if a depth number is not specified.
3. Basement floors that are below *grade* on all sides shall be elevated to or above base flood elevation plus 1 foot (305 mm), or the design flood elevation, whichever is higher.

Exception: Enclosed areas below the design flood elevation, including *basements* with floors that are not below *grade* on all sides, shall meet the requirements of Section R322.2.2.

R322.2.2 Enclosed area below design flood elevation. Enclosed areas, including crawl spaces, that are below the design flood elevation shall:

1. Be used solely for parking of vehicles, building access or storage.
2. Be provided with flood openings that meet the following criteria and are installed in accordance with Section R322.2.2.1:

- 2.1. The total net area of openings shall be not less than 1 square inch (645 mm²) for each square foot (0.093 m²) of enclosed area where the enclosed area is measured on the exterior of the enclosure walls, or the openings shall be designed as engineered openings and the *construction documents* shall include a statement by a registered *design professional* that the design of the openings will provide for equalization of hydrostatic flood forces on *exterior walls* by allowing for the automatic entry and exit of floodwaters as specified in Section 2.6.2.2 of ASCE 24.

- 2.2. Openings shall be not less than 3 inches (76 mm) in any direction in the plane of the wall.

R322.2.2.1 Installation of openings. The walls of enclosed areas shall have openings installed such that:

1. There shall be not less than two openings on different sides of each enclosed area; if a building has more than one enclosed area below the design flood elevation, each area shall have openings on *exterior walls*.
2. The bottom of each opening shall be not more than 1 foot (305 mm) above the higher of the final interior grade or floor and the finished exterior grade immediately under each opening.
3. Openings shall be permitted to be installed in doors and windows; doors and windows without

installed openings do not meet the requirements of this section.

R322.2.3 Foundation design and construction. Foundation walls for buildings and structures erected in flood hazard areas shall meet the requirements of Chapter 4.

Exception: Unless designed in accordance with Section R404:

1. The unsupported height of 6-inch (152 mm) plain masonry walls shall be not more than 3 feet (914 mm).
2. The unsupported height of 8-inch (203 mm) plain masonry walls shall be not more than 4 feet (1219 mm).
3. The unsupported height of 8-inch (203 mm) reinforced masonry walls shall be not more than 8 feet (2438 mm).

For the purpose of this exception, unsupported height is the distance from the finished *grade* of the under-floor space to the top of the wall.

R322.2.4 Tanks. Underground tanks shall be anchored to prevent flotation, collapse and lateral movement under conditions of the base flood. Above-ground tanks shall be installed at or above the elevation required in Section R322.2.1 or shall be anchored to prevent flotation, collapse and lateral movement under conditions of the base flood.

R322.3 Coastal high-hazard areas (including V Zones and Coastal A Zones, where designated). Areas that have been determined to be subject to wave heights in excess of 3 feet (914 mm) or subject to high-velocity wave action or wave-induced erosion shall be designated as coastal high-hazard areas. Flood hazard areas that have been designated as subject to wave heights between 1½ feet (457 mm) and 3 feet (914 mm) or otherwise designated by the jurisdiction shall be designated as Coastal A Zones. Buildings and structures constructed in whole or in part in coastal high-hazard areas and coastal A Zones, where designated, shall be designed and constructed in accordance with Sections R322.3.1 through R322.3.7.

R322.3.1 Location and site preparation.

1. New buildings and buildings that are determined to be substantially improved pursuant to Section R105.3.1.1 shall be located landward of the reach of mean high tide.
2. For any alteration of sand dunes and mangrove stands, the *building official* shall require submission of an engineering analysis that demonstrates that the proposed *alteration* will not increase the potential for flood damage.

R322.3.2 Elevation requirements.

1. Buildings and structures erected within coastal high-hazard areas and Coastal A Zones, shall be elevated so that the bottom of the lowest portion of horizontal structural members supporting the lowest floor, with the exception of piling, pile caps, columns, grade beams and bracing, is elevated to or above the base

flood elevation plus 1 foot (305 mm) or the design flood elevation, whichever is higher.

2. Basement floors that are below *grade* on all sides are prohibited.
3. The use of fill for structural support is prohibited.
4. Minor grading, and the placement of minor quantities of fill, shall be permitted for landscaping and for drainage purposes under and around buildings and for support of parking slabs, pool decks, patios and walkways.
5. Walls and partitions enclosing areas below the design flood elevation shall meet the requirements of Sections R322.3.4 and R322.3.5.

R322.3.3 Foundations. Buildings and structures erected in coastal high-hazard areas and Coastal A Zones shall be supported on pilings or columns and shall be adequately anchored to such pilings or columns. The space below the elevated building shall be either free of obstruction or, if enclosed with walls, the walls shall meet the requirements of Section R322.3.4. Pilings shall have adequate soil penetrations to resist the combined wave and wind loads (lateral and uplift). Water-loading values used shall be those associated with the design flood. Wind-loading values shall be those required by this code. Pile embedment shall include consideration of decreased resistance capacity caused by scour of soil strata surrounding the piling. Pile systems design and installation shall be certified in accordance with Section R322.3.6. Spread footing, mat, raft or other foundations that support columns shall not be permitted where soil investigations that are required in accordance with Section R401.4 indicate that soil material under the spread footing, mat, raft or other foundation is subject to scour or erosion from wave-velocity flow conditions. If permitted, spread footing, mat, raft or other foundations that support columns shall be designed in accordance with ASCE 24. Slabs, pools, pool decks and walkways shall be located and constructed to be structurally independent of buildings and structures and their foundations to prevent transfer of flood loads to the buildings and structures during conditions of flooding, scour or erosion from wave-velocity flow conditions, unless the buildings and structures and their foundations are designed to resist the additional flood load.

Exception: In Coastal A Zones, stem wall foundations supporting a floor system above and backfilled with soil or gravel to the underside of the floor system shall be permitted provided the foundations are designed to account for wave action, debris impact, erosion and local scour. Where soils are susceptible to erosion and local scour, stem wall foundations shall have deep footings to account for the loss of soil.

R322.3.4 Walls below design flood elevation. Walls and partitions are permitted below the elevated floor, provided that such walls and partitions are not part of the structural support of the building or structure and:

1. Electrical, mechanical and plumbing system components are not to be mounted on or penetrate through

walls that are designed to break away under flood loads; and

2. Are constructed with insect screening or open lattice; or
3. Are designed to break away or collapse without causing collapse, displacement or other structural damage to the elevated portion of the building or supporting foundation system. Such walls, framing and connections shall have a resistance of not less than 10 (479 Pa) and not more than 20 pounds per square foot (958 Pa) as determined using allowable stress design; or
4. Where wind loading values of this code exceed 20 pounds per square foot (958 Pa), the *construction documents* shall include documentation prepared and sealed by a registered *design professional* that:
 - 4.1. The walls and partitions below the design flood elevation have been designed to collapse from a water load less than that which would occur during the base flood.
 - 4.2. The elevated portion of the building and supporting foundation system have been designed to withstand the effects of wind and flood loads acting simultaneously on structural and nonstructural building components. Water-loading values used shall be those associated with the design flood. Wind-loading values shall be those required by this code.
5. Walls intended to break away under flood loads as specified in Item 3 or 4 have flood openings that meet the criteria in Section R322.2.2, Item 2.
6. In Coastal A Zones, walls shall be provided with flood openings that meet the criteria of Section R322.2.2.

R322.3.5 Enclosed areas below design flood elevation. Enclosed areas below the design flood elevation shall be used solely for parking of vehicles, building access or storage.

R322.3.5.1 Protection of building envelope. An exterior door that meets the requirements of Section R609 shall be installed at the top of stairs that provide access to the building and that are enclosed with walls designed to break away in accordance with Section R322.3.4.

R322.3.6 Construction documents. The *construction documents* shall include documentation that is prepared and sealed by a registered *design professional* that the design and methods of construction to be used meet the applicable criteria of this section.

R322.3.7 Tanks. Underground tanks shall be anchored to prevent flotation, collapse and lateral movement under conditions of the base flood. Above-ground tanks shall be installed at or above the elevation required in Section R322.3.2. Where elevated on platforms, the platforms shall be cantilevered from or knee braced to the building

or shall be supported on foundations that conform to the requirements of Section R322.3.

SECTION R323 STORM SHELTERS

R323.1 General. This section applies to storm shelters where constructed as separate detached buildings or where constructed as safe rooms within buildings for the purpose of providing refuge from storms that produce high winds, such as tornados and hurricanes. In addition to other applicable requirements in this code, storm shelters shall be constructed in accordance with ICC/NSSA-500.

SECTION 324 SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

R324.1 General. Solar energy systems shall comply with the provisions of this section.

R324.2 Solar thermal systems. Solar thermal systems shall be designed and installed in accordance with Chapter 23 and the *International Fire Code*.

R324.3 Photovoltaic systems. Photovoltaic systems shall be designed and installed in accordance with Sections R324.3.1 through R324.7.2.5 and NFPA 70. Inverters shall be *listed* and *labeled* in accordance with UL 1741. Systems connected to the utility grid shall use inverters listed for utility interaction.

R324.3.1 Equipment listings. Photovoltaic panels and modules shall be listed and labeled in accordance with UL 1703.

R324.4 Rooftop-mounted photovoltaic systems. Rooftop-mounted photovoltaic panel systems installed on or above the roof covering shall be designed and installed in accordance with Section R907.

R324.4.1 Roof live load. Roof structures that provide support for photovoltaic panel systems shall be designed for applicable roof live load. The design of roof structures need not include roof live load in the areas covered by photovoltaic panel systems. Portions of roof structures not covered by photovoltaic panels shall be designed for roof live load. Roof structures that provide support for photovoltaic panel systems shall be designed for live load, L_R , for the load case where the photovoltaic panel system is not present.

R324.5 Building-integrated photovoltaic systems. Building-integrated photovoltaic systems that serve as roof coverings shall be designed and installed in accordance with Section R905.

R324.5.1 Photovoltaic shingles. Photovoltaic shingles shall comply with Section R905.16.

R324.6 Ground-mounted photovoltaic systems. Ground-mounted photovoltaic systems shall be designed and installed in accordance with Section R301.

R324.6.1 Fire separation distances. Ground-mounted photovoltaic systems shall be subject to the *fire separation distance* requirements determined by the local *jurisdiction*.