



Atascosa County Fire Marshal's Office

Fire Code Amendments

2024 IFC and IBC

Effective July 27, 2026

**ATASCOSA COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE
CODE AMENDMENTS FOR 2024 IFC AND IBC**

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CHAPTER 1

SCOPE AND ADMINISTRATION

SECTION 101

SCOPE AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

[A] 101.1 Title. These regulations shall be known as the Fire Code of ATASCOSA COUNTY, Texas, hereinafter referred to as “this code,” and shall be based upon the 2024 International Fire Code as adopted and amended by Atascosa County.

[A] 101.2 Scope. This code establishes regulations affecting or relating to structures, processes, premises and safeguards regarding all of the following:

1. The hazard of fire and explosion arising from the storage, handling or use of structures, materials or devices.
2. Conditions hazardous to life, property or public welfare in the occupancy of structures or premises.
3. Fire hazards in the structure or on the premises from occupancy or operation.
4. Matters related to the construction, extension, repair, alteration or removal of fire suppression or alarm systems.
5. Conditions affecting the safety of fire fighters and emergency responders during emergency operations.

[A] 101.2.1 Appendices. Appendices A, B, C, D, E, F, H, I, P, Q, R and referenced standards in this code are also hereby adopted as part of this code.

[A] 101.2.2 Locally Adopted Standards. In addition to the standards referenced within the 2024 International Fire Code and the 2024 International Building Code, the following standard is adopted by reference and shall have the same force and effect as if fully set forth herein:

NFPA 75, Standard for the Fire Protection of Information Technology Equipment, 2023 Edition.

NFPA shall apply to all data centers, colocation facilities, cloud computing facilities, cryptocurrency mining facilities, and other information technology equipment facilities as specified in these amendments.

[A] 101.3.1 Fire Marshal Authorization. The Fire Marshal is authorized to make and enforce such rules and regulations for the prevention and control of fires and fire hazards as may be necessary from time to time to carry out the intent of this Code.

SECTION 104

DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE FIRE CODE OFFICIAL

[A] 104.1.1 Fire Marshal Review Authority. The Fire Marshal shall have authority to require additional fire protection measures when unique hazards exist that are not adequately addressed by the minimum requirements of adopted codes. Within the authority granted by applicable law, the Fire Marshal is authorized to:

1. Review plans;

2. Conduct inspections including unannounced;
3. Require documentation;
4. Require corrective action;
5. Require additional fire protection measures when conditions present an unreasonable risk to life safety or property.

[A] 104.2.2.5 Third-Party Fire Protection Reviews. Require independent review for:

- BESS exceeding 1 MWh
- Data centers exceeding 100,000 square feet
- High-hazard occupancies

[A] 104.10.2 Required Access to Information. Owners and operators of high-hazard occupancies, including data centers, battery energy storage systems, and critical infrastructure facilities, shall provide the Fire Marshal with reasonable access to operational information necessary for emergency planning, including:

- Site plans
- Emergency response plans
- Hazardous materials inventories
- Battery chemistry information
- Shutdown procedures
- Contact information for responsible personnel

[A] 104.12 Emergency Responder Training. Require owners of BESS and data centers to provide:

- Annual fire department familiarization
- Site tours
- Emergency procedures
- Updated contact information

SECTION 105 PERMITS

[A] 105.6.26 Battery Energy Storage Systems. An operational permit shall be required for installation, modification, or operation of any stationary battery energy storage system exceeding:

- 20 kWh for residential systems
- 50 kWh for commercial systems
- Any system installed outdoors or in dedicated battery rooms

SECTION 113 VIOLATIONS

[A] 113.4 Violation Penalties. Persons who shall violate a provision of this code or shall fail to comply with any of the requirements thereof or who shall erect, install, alter, repair or do work in violation of the approved construction documents or directive of the fire code official, or of a permit or certificate used under provisions of this code, shall be subject to penalties as provided by law. Each day that a violation continues after due notice has been served shall be deemed a separate offense. Violations of this code shall constitute a Class C misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500.00 per day for each violation.

SECTION 114 STOP WORK ORDER

[A] 114.4 Failure to comply. Any person who shall continue any work after having been served with a stop work order, except such work as that person is directed to perform to remove such a violation or unsafe condition, shall be subject to penalties as provided by law and as set forth in Section 113.4 of this code.

CHAPTER 2 DEFINITIONS

SECTION 202 GENERAL DEFINITIONS

FIRE CODE OFFICIAL. The Fire Marshal of Atascosa County, Texas, or his or her duly authorized representative.

CHAPTER 5

FIRE SERVICE FEATURES

SECTION 503

FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROADS

503.1.4 Critical Infrastructure Facilities. Data centers, energy storage facilities, and similar critical infrastructure shall provide:

1. Two separate approved fire apparatus access roads when:
 - The facility exceeds 100,000 square feet; or
 - The facility contains BESS exceeding 1 MWh capacity.
2. Secondary access shall be separated to prevent a single incident from blocking emergency access.
3. A statement of NFPA 75 compliance.
4. Fire protection system design.
5. Emergency response plans.
6. Fire alarm and suppression documentation.
7. Smoke detection design.
8. Emergency power shutdown procedures.

SECTION 507

FIRE PROTECTION WATER SUPPLIES

507.5.1.1 High-Hazard Facilities. Facilities containing BESS, generators, fuel storage, or mission-critical equipment shall provide fire flow calculations approved by the Fire Marshal. The Fire Marshal may require:

- Additional water supply
- Dedicated fire hydrants
- Fire pumps
- On-site water storage

When existing infrastructure is insufficient.

CHAPTER 9

FIRE PROTECTION AND LIFE SAFETY SYSTEMS

SECTION 901

GENERAL

901.3 Permits. Permits for fire protection systems shall be obtained from Atascosa County in accordance with the procedures established by the Commissioners' Court. Permit fees shall be as established by separate order of the Commissioners' Court.

SECTION 903

AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEMS

903.2.13 Data Centers and Energy Storage Facilities. Automatic sprinkler systems shall be required for:

- Data centers exceeding 10,000 square feet
- Battery energy storage buildings
- Generator buildings exceeding 1,000 square feet
- Critical infrastructure buildings designated by the Fire Marshal

SECTION 907

FIRE ALARM AND DETECTION SYSTEMS

907.2.24 Critical Infrastructure Fire Alarm Requirements. Data centers and BESS facilities shall provide:

- Automatic fire alarm systems
- Monitoring by an approved supervising station
- Remote notification capability
- Fire department notification procedures

CHAPTER 12

ENERGY SYSTEMS

SECTION 1207

ELECTRICAL ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS (ESS)

1207.1.9 County requirements for Battery Energy Storage Systems. All BESS installations shall submit:

- Battery Safety Management Plan
- Emergency Response Plan
- Fire protection analysis
- Manufacturer documentation
- UL 9540 certification
- UL 9540A testing documentation

1207.12 Location Separation from Protected Areas. Outdoor BESS installations shall maintain minimum separation distances approved by the Fire Marshal. Unless a greater distance is required by the Fire Marshal:

- 300 feet from residential structures
- 100 feet from property lines
- 500 feet from schools, hospitals, nursing facilities, and assembly occupancies

Alternative separation may be approved when supported by approved fire testing.

1207.13 Emergency Shutdown. BESS facilities shall provide:

- Clearly marked emergency disconnects
- Exterior shutdown controls
- Fire department access
- Lockout/tagout procedures
- Emergency responder training

CHAPTER 33

FIRE SAFETY DURING CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION

SECTION 3309

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

3309.4 Data Center Construction Safety. Large-scale data center construction projects shall submit a fire safety plan addressing:

- Temporary power
- Fuel storage
- Welding operations
- Fire watch requirements
- Construction debris
- Emergency access

2024 IFC Adoption Appendices

APPENDIX B – FIRE-FLOW REQUIREMENTS FOR BUILDINGS

B105.4 Fire-Flow Requirements for Buildings. The Fire Marshal shall have authority to require additional fire-flow requirements where necessary due to:

6. Building size;
7. Occupancy classification;
8. Hazard classification;
9. Limited water supply;
10. Rural response conditions;
11. Emergency response limitations.

APPENDIX C – FIRE HYDRANT LOCATIONS AND DISTRIBUTION

C103.1.1 Fire Marshal Approval. Fire hydrant locations shall be approved by the Fire Marshal and shall consider:

- Fire apparatus access;
- Building construction type;
- Occupancy hazard;
- Available water supply;
- Emergency response capabilities.

APPENDIX D – FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROADS

C103.7 Fire Apparatus Access Roads Required. All new developments shall provide approved fire apparatus access roads meeting the requirements of the Fire Code. Additional requirements may be imposed for:

- Rural subdivisions;
- Private roads;
- Large acreage developments;
- Industrial facilities;
- Energy facilities;
- Mission-critical facilities.

APPENDIX H – HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT PLANS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INVENTORY STATEMENTS

H105.1.1 Required Documentation. Facilities storing, handling, or processing hazardous materials shall submit required documentation to the Fire Marshal.

APPENDIX P – BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS (BESS) REQUIREMENTS

P101 Purpose. This appendix establishes minimum requirements for the installation, operation, maintenance, and emergency response planning of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

P102 Applicability. These requirements apply to stationary energy storage systems including, but not limited to:

- Lithium-ion battery systems;
- Utility-scale energy storage facilities;
- Commercial energy storage systems;
- Energy storage systems supporting data centers or critical infrastructure.

P103 Fire Marshal Review Required. Prior to construction or installation, the owner shall submit:

1. Site plans;
2. Equipment specifications;
3. Manufacturer documentation;
4. Emergency response plans;
5. Hazard Mitigation Analysis;
6. Fire protection system plans;
7. Battery chemistry information.

P104 Emergency Response Requirements. Facilities shall provide:

- 24-hour emergency contact information;
- Emergency shutdown procedures;
- Site access information;
- First responder training opportunities;
- Updated emergency response plans

P105 Separation and Location. The Fire Marshal shall review separation distances from:

- Property lines;
- Public roadways;
- Residential structures;
- Critical infrastructure;
- Other hazardous occupancies.

Additional separation may be required based on risk assessment.

APPENDIX Q – DATA CENTER AND MISSION CRITICAL FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

Q101 Applicability. This appendix applies to:

- Data centers;
- Server farms;
- Cloud computing facilities;
- Mission-critical electrical facilities;
- Similar high-availability facilities.

Q102 Fire Protection Review. Facilities shall submit:

- Fire protection plans;
- Emergency response plans;
- Electrical system documentation;
- Generator information;
- Fuel storage documentation;
- Battery backup system information.

Q103 Emergency Responder Safety. Facilities shall provide:

- Emergency responder access;
- Fire department orientation;
- Facility emergency contact information;
- Required emergency responder communication systems where applicable.

APPENDIX R – RURAL DEVELOPMENT FIRE PROTECTION STANDARDS

R101 Applicability. Applies to new subdivisions, residential developments, commercial developments, and large-acreage properties.

R102 Address Identification. All structures shall have approved address identification visible from the roadway.

R103 Access Roads. Private access roads shall provide:

- Adequate width;
- Emergency vehicle access;
- Turnaround capability where required;
- Maintenance sufficient for emergency response.

R104 Water Supply. Where municipal water supply is unavailable, alternative fire protection measures may be required, including:

- Fire ponds;
- Storage tanks;
- Dry hydrants;
- Other approved water sources.

The following Sections of the 2024 International Building Code shall read as follows:

2024 International Building Code Rules and Regulations: Changes affecting any code section will be displayed under the appropriate section.

CHAPTER 1

SCOPE AND ADMINISTRATION

SECTION 101

SCOPE AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

[A] 101.1 Title. These regulations shall be known as the Building Code of ATASCOSA COUNTY, Texas, hereinafter referred to as “this code,” and shall be based upon the 2024 International Building Code as adopted and amended by Atascosa County.

[A] 101.2 Scope. This code shall apply only to the following buildings and structures constructed, altered, repaired, or substantially improved in the unincorporated areas of Atascosa County:

1. Commercial establishments;
2. Public buildings; and
3. Multifamily residential dwellings consisting of four or more units.

This code shall not apply to single-family dwellings, duplexes, or triplexes, or to industrial facilities having a fire brigade that conforms to requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

SECTION 105

PERMITS

[A] 105.1 Required. Any person, firm, or corporation intending to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure subject to this code, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical, or plumbing system, or to cause any such work to be done, shall first make application to the building official and obtain the required permit. A building permit shall not be required for structures or systems specifically exempted under Section 105.2 of this code.

SECTION 114

VIOLATIONS

[A] 114.4 Violation Penalties. Any person who violates a provision of this code or fails to comply with any of the requirements thereof or who erects, constructs, alters or repairs a building or structure in violation of the approved construction documents or directive of the building official, or of a permit or certificate issues under the provisions of this code, shall be subject to penalties as provided by law. Violations of this code shall constitute a Class C misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500.00 per day for each violation. Each day that a violation continues after due notice has been served shall be deemed a separate offense.

CHAPTER 2

DEFINITIONS

SECTION 202

DEFINITIONS

[A] BUILDING OFFICIAL. The Fire Marshal of Atascosa County, Texas, or his or her duly authorized representative charged with the administration and enforcement of this code.

CHAPTER 5

GENERAL BUILDING HEIGHTS AND AREAS

SECTION 508

MIXED USE AND OCCUPANCY

508.4.4.2 Critical Infrastructure Separation. Data centers and BESS facilities shall not be classified as accessory occupancies when the associated hazards create a separate fire risk.

CHAPTER 9

FIRE PROTECTION AND LIFE SAFETY SYSTEMS

SECTION 903

AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEMS

[F] 903.3.1.4 Data Center Protection. Data centers shall provide:

- Automatic sprinkler protection
- Pre-action systems where required
- Fire alarm monitoring
- Smoke detection systems

CHAPTER 10

MEANS OF EGRESS

SECTION 1001

ADMINISTRATION

1001.3 Critical Infrastructure Occupancies. Large data centers shall provide emergency evacuation plans and maintain clear emergency exits during all operations.

CHAPTER 12

INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT

SECTION 1202

VENTILATION

1202.1.1 Equipment Rooms. Battery rooms and electrical equipment rooms shall maintain environmental controls necessary to prevent thermal runaway conditions.

CHAPTER 13

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

SECTION 1301

GENERAL

1301.2 Critical Infrastructure Energy Systems. Emergency power systems shall comply with applicable fire protection requirements and shall not create additional hazards to emergency responders.

CHAPTER 16

STRUCTURAL DESIGN

SECTION 1607

LIVE LOADS

1607.23 Battery Energy Storage Loads. Structural design shall account for:

- Battery equipment loads
- Fire suppression equipment
- Impact protection
- Equipment anchorage

CHAPTER 33

SAFEGUARDS DURING CONSTRUCTION

SECTION 3302

OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR FIRE PROTECTION

3302.4 Large Scale Data Center Construction. Projects exceeding:

- 100,000 square feet; or
- \$25 million construction value

Shall provide phased inspections and construction fire safety reviews.