

Seattle Fire Code Clean Up Ordinance

Date
09/09/2025

Seattle Fire
Department



City of Seattle

What the Ordinance Does

- Cleans up for Seattle Fire Code, does not introduce new policy.
- Updates references to an RCW to align with changes that re-organized the numbering of the relevant RCW statute.
- Updates other language to achieve best clarity for users of the code, including the public and our employees.



Seattle Fire Code

- Establishes standards intended to preserve lives and protect property
- Based on the Int'l Fire Code produced by the technical committees of the ICC
- As further amended by Washington State
- With Seattle amendments meeting the needs of our City, as proposed by the Executive and approved by Council
- With review by the Fire Code Adv Board
- Adopted on a 3-year cycle (2018,2021,2024)
- With additional local amendments allowed between edition years to meet local needs

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2021 Seattle Fire Code

2021 International Fire Code® as
Amended by the City of Seattle



 City of Seattle

2021



WASHINGTON STATE
FIRE CODE
BASED ON THE 2021 INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE®



RCW Reference in SFC

- RCW 9A.72.085 has been rescinded and replaced by Chapter 5.50 RCW. Same intent and effect.
- Allows properly signed statements in lieu of requiring a specific employee to personally attend a hearing and be “sworn in” prior to their report being accepted by the Court or Hearing Examiner.

Chapter 5.50 “Uniform Unsworn Declarations Act”

“If a law of this state requires or permits use of a sworn declaration, an unsworn declaration meeting the requirements of this chapter has the same effect as a sworn declaration.”

*I declare under penalty of perjury under the law of Washington
that the foregoing is true and correct.*

*Signed on the day of,,
at*



Vacant and Dangerous Buildings

- SFC provides authority to SFD to take action to ensure that vacant buildings do not cause a dangerous public nuisance in the community.
- This ordinance removes vagueness from “temporarily unoccupied”, which is not defined, by simply using “unoccupied”.
- Clarifies that use of a fence is included where the code states unoccupied buildings and premises “shall be secured and protected”.



Dangerous Building Update

- 2024 legislation created new incentives for property owners to act to fix or demolish their dangerous buildings, or else SFD could act at their expense.
- Almost all 2025 cases were closed or settled when property owners demolished or rehabbed their buildings, ending the dangerous conditions. Two court-ordered SFD-led demolitions so far in 2025.
- ~50% of the demolished buildings had one or more previous fires that put neighboring homes, businesses and first responders at risk.

Status of Buildings on SFD's Dangerous Building List 2025			
Council District	Demolished	Remodeled	Grand Total
1	8	1	9
2	4	5	9
3	9	1	10
4	6	2	8
5	5	5	10
6	1	5	6
7	0	3	3
2025 Year to Date	33	22	55



Photo by John Odegard

Clarification of Responsibility for False Alarms

- Ordinance includes two clarifications.
- Example:

“An *owner* shall be responsible for any *preventable fire alarm* occurring on the *owner's* property caused by ~~((a tenant, occupant, or guest))~~ the *owner*, or by the *owner's* contractor, employee, tenant, or guest, or by a tenant's guest or contractor, or by an occupant except if the occupant is trespassing.”

Questions?



"I think a hero is any person really intent on making this a better place for all people."

-Maya Angelou



Here to Serve