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COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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TO: VA Building & Fire Code Stakeholders

FROM: Cindy L Davis, Deputy Director
Division of Building & Fire Regulations

DATE: January 15, 2019

RE: International Fire Code - Relationship to USBC and SFPC

In response to inquiries seeking clarification on the relationship of the International Fire Code to the state building and fire codes, please refer to the following information:

Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code

The Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) regulates certain operations as well as the maintenance of certain aspects of buildings, structures, equipment and systems. The SFPC incorporates portions of the International Fire Code (IFC), related to operations and the maintenance of buildings, structures, equipment, activities and systems.

Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code

The Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) regulates all work (construction, installation, addition, repair, replacement, rehabilitation, etc.) associated with buildings, structures, systems and equipment. The USBC incorporates the International Building Code (IBC), as an enforceable part of the code. There are many instances where the IBC references other codes (and standards). Those references are incorporated as an enforceable part of the USBC, to the extent that it is prescribed.

The IFC is referenced by the IBC/USBC for requirements related to hazardous materials, spray finishing, high-piled combustible storage, tents and several other items. Each time the IFC is referenced, those provisions of the IFC are incorporated as an enforceable part of the USBC.

The 2015 USBC makes very few changes or amendments to the 2015 IFC. The fire code edits that were approved for the 2015 SFPC were specific to the SFPC and have no effect on the use of the IFC when it is being utilized as part of the USBC (by incorporation)

When enforcing the USBC, it is important to remember that any references to the International Fire Code are just that, and are not a reference to the SFPC.

Additional questions or information can be obtained by emailing the State Building Codes Office at SBCO@dhcd.virginia.gov or by calling 804-371-7150.

