

CHAPTER 31

SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION

SECTION 3101 GENERAL

3101.1 Scope. The provisions of this chapter shall govern special building construction including membrane structures, temporary structures, *pedestrian walkways* and tunnels, automatic vehicular gates, *awnings* and canopies, marquees, signs, and towers and antennas.

SECTION 3102 MEMBRANE STRUCTURES

3102.1 General. The provisions of this section shall apply to air-supported, air-inflated, membrane-covered cable and membrane-covered frame structures, collectively known as membrane structures, erected for a period of 180 days or longer. Those erected for a shorter period of time shall comply with the *International Fire Code*. Membrane structures covering water storage facilities, water clarifiers, water treatment plants, sewage treatment plants, greenhouses and similar facilities not used for human occupancy are required to meet only the requirements of Sections 3102.3.1 and 3102.7. Membrane structures erected on a building, balcony, deck or other structure for any period of time shall comply with this section.

3102.2 Definitions. The following words and terms shall, for the purposes of this section and as used elsewhere in this code, have the meanings shown herein.

AIR-INFLATED STRUCTURE. A structure that uses air-pressurized membrane beams, arches or other elements to enclose space. Occupants of such a structure do not occupy the pressurized area used to support the structure.

AIR-SUPPORTED STRUCTURE. A building wherein the shape of the structure is attained by air pressure and occupants of the structure are within the elevated pressure area. Air-supported structures are of two basic types:

Double skin. Similar to a single skin, but with an attached liner that is separated from the outer skin and provides an airspace which serves for insulation, acoustic, aesthetic or similar purposes.

Single skin. Where there is only the single outer skin and the air pressure is directly against that skin.

CABLE-RESTRAINED, AIR-SUPPORTED STRUCTURE. A structure in which the uplift is resisted by cables or webbings which are anchored to either foundations or dead men. Reinforcing cable or webbing is attached by various methods to the membrane or is an integral part of the membrane. This is not a cable-supported structure.

MEMBRANE-COVERED CABLE STRUCTURE. A nonpressurized structure in which a mast and cable system provides support and tension to the membrane weather barrier and the membrane imparts stability to the structure.

MEMBRANE-COVERED FRAME STRUCTURE. A nonpressurized building wherein the structure is composed of a rigid framework to support a tensioned membrane which provides the weather barrier.

NONCOMBUSTIBLE MEMBRANE STRUCTURE. A membrane structure in which the membrane and all component parts of the structure are noncombustible.

3102.3 Type of construction. Noncombustible membrane structures shall be classified as Type IIB construction. Noncombustible frame or cable-supported structures covered by an *approved* membrane in accordance with Section 3102.3.1 shall be classified as Type IIB construction. Heavy timber frame-supported structures covered by an *approved* membrane in accordance with Section 3102.3.1 shall be classified as Type IV construction. Other membrane structures shall be classified as Type V construction.

Exception: Plastic less than 30 feet (9144 mm) above any floor used in greenhouses, where occupancy by the general public is not authorized, and for aquaculture pond covers is not required to meet the fire propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701.

3102.3.1 Membrane and interior liner material. Membranes and interior liners shall be either noncombustible as set forth in Section 703.4 or meet the fire propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701 and the manufacturer's test protocol.

Exception: Plastic less than 20 mil (0.5 mm) in thickness used in greenhouses, where occupancy by the general public is not authorized, and for aquaculture pond covers is not required to meet the fire propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701.

3102.4 Allowable floor areas. The area of a membrane structure shall not exceed the limitations set forth in Table 503, except as provided in Section 506.

3102.5 Maximum height. Membrane structures shall not exceed one *story* nor shall such structures exceed the height limitations in feet set forth in Table 503.

Exception: Noncombustible membrane structures serving as roofs only.

3102.6 Mixed construction. Membrane structures shall be permitted to be utilized as specified in this section as a portion of buildings of other types of construction. Height and area limits shall be as specified for the type of construction and occupancy of the building.

3102.6.1 Noncombustible membrane. A noncombustible membrane shall be permitted for use as the roof or as a skylight of any building or atrium of a building of any type of construction provided it is at least 20 feet (6096 mm) above any floor, balcony or gallery.

3102.6.1.1 Membrane. A membrane meeting the fire propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701 shall be permitted to be used as the roof or as a skylight on buildings of Types IIB, III, IV and V construction, provided it is at least 20 feet (6096 mm) above any floor, balcony or gallery.

3102.7 Engineering design. The structure shall be designed and constructed to sustain dead loads; loads due to tension or inflation; live loads including wind, snow or flood and seismic loads and in accordance with Chapter 16.

3102.8 Inflation systems. Air-supported and air-inflated structures shall be provided with primary and auxiliary inflation systems to meet the minimum requirements of Sections 3102.8.1 through 3102.8.3.

3102.8.1 Equipment requirements. This inflation system shall consist of one or more blowers and shall include provisions for automatic control to maintain the required inflation pressures. The system shall be so designed as to prevent overpressurization of the system.

3102.8.1.1 Auxiliary inflation system. In addition to the primary inflation system, in buildings exceeding 1,500 square feet (140 m²) in area, an auxiliary inflation system shall be provided with sufficient capacity to maintain the inflation of the structure in case of primary system failure. The auxiliary inflation system shall operate automatically when there is a loss of internal pressure and when the primary blower system becomes inoperative.

3102.8.1.2 Blower equipment. Blower equipment shall meet all of the following requirements:

1. Blowers shall be powered by continuous-rated motors at the maximum power required for any flow condition as required by the structural design.
2. Blowers shall be provided with inlet screens, belt guards and other protective devices as required by the *building official* to provide protection from injury.
3. Blowers shall be housed within a weather-protecting structure.
4. Blowers shall be equipped with backdraft check dampers to minimize air loss when inoperative.
5. Blower inlets shall be located to provide protection from air contamination. The location of inlets shall be *approved*.

3102.8.2 Standby power. Wherever an auxiliary inflation system is required, an *approved* standby power-generating system shall be provided. The system shall be equipped with a suitable means for automatically starting the generator set upon failure of the normal electrical service and for automatic transfer and operation of all of the required electrical functions at full power within 60 seconds of such service failure. Standby power shall be capable of operating independently for a minimum of 4 hours.

3102.8.3 Support provisions. A system capable of supporting the membrane in the event of deflation shall be provided for in air-supported and air-inflated structures having

an *occupant load* of 50 or more or where covering a swimming pool regardless of *occupant load*. The support system shall be capable of maintaining membrane structures used as a roof for Type I construction not less than 20 feet (6096 mm) above floor or seating areas. The support system shall be capable of maintaining other membranes at least 7 feet (2134 mm) above the floor, seating area or surface of the water.

SECTION 3103 TEMPORARY STRUCTURES

3103.1 General. The provisions of this section shall apply to structures erected for a period of less than 180 days. Tents and other membrane structures erected for a period of less than 180 days shall comply with the *International Fire Code*. Those erected for a longer period of time shall comply with applicable sections of this code.

3103.1.1 Permit required. Temporary structures that cover an area in excess of 120 square feet (11.16 m²), including connecting areas or spaces with a common *means of egress* or entrance which are used or intended to be used for the gathering together of 10 or more persons, shall not be erected, operated or maintained for any purpose without obtaining a *permit* from the *building official*.

3103.2 Construction documents. A *permit* application and *construction documents* shall be submitted for each installation of a temporary structure. The *construction documents* shall include a site plan indicating the location of the temporary structure and information delineating the *means of egress* and the *occupant load*.

3103.3 Location. Temporary structures shall be located in accordance with the requirements of Table 602 based on the *fire-resistance rating* of the *exterior walls* for the proposed type of construction.

3103.4 Means of egress. Temporary structures shall conform to the *means of egress* requirements of Chapter 10 and shall have a maximum *exit access* travel distance of 100 feet (30 480 mm).

SECTION 3104 PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS AND TUNNELS

3104.1 General. This section shall apply to connections between buildings such as *pedestrian walkways* or tunnels, located at, above or below grade level, that are used as a means of travel by persons. The *pedestrian walkways* shall not contribute to the *building area* or the number of *stories* or height of connected buildings.

3104.2 Separate structures. Connected buildings shall be considered to be separate structures.

Exceptions:

1. Buildings on the same lot in accordance with Section 503.1.2.
2. For purposes of calculating the number of Type B units required by Chapter 11, structurally connected

buildings and buildings with multiple wings shall be considered one structure.

3104.3 Construction. The *pedestrian walkway* shall be of noncombustible construction.

Exceptions:

1. Combustible construction shall be permitted where connected buildings are of combustible construction.
2. *Fire-retardant-treated wood*, in accordance with Section 603.1, Item 25.3, shall be permitted for the roof construction of the *pedestrian walkway* where connected buildings are a minimum of Type I or II construction.

3104.4 Contents. Only materials and decorations *approved by the building official* shall be located in the *pedestrian walkway*.

3104.5 Fire barriers between pedestrian walkways and buildings. Walkways shall be separated from the interior of the building by not less than 2-hour *fire barriers* constructed in accordance with Section 707 or *horizontal assemblies* constructed in accordance with Section 712, or both. This protection shall extend vertically from a point 10 feet (3048 mm) above the walkway roof surface or the connected building roof line, whichever is lower, down to a point 10 feet (3048 mm) below the walkway and horizontally 10 feet (3048 mm) from each side of the *pedestrian walkway*. Openings within the 10-foot (3048 mm) horizontal extension of the protected walls beyond the walkway shall be equipped with devices providing a $3/4$ -hour *fire protection rating* in accordance with Section 715.

Exception: The walls separating the *pedestrian walkway* from a connected building and the openings within the 10-foot (3048 mm) horizontal extension of the protected walls beyond the walkway are not required to have a *fire-resistance rating* by this section where any of the following conditions exist:

1. The distance between the connected buildings is more than 10 feet (3048 mm). The *pedestrian walkway* and connected buildings, except for *open parking garages*, are equipped throughout with an *automatic sprinkler system* in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1. The wall is capable of resisting the passage of smoke or is constructed of a tempered, wired or laminated glass wall and doors subject to the following:
 - 1.1. The wall or glass separating the interior of the building from the *pedestrian walkway* shall be protected by an *automatic sprinkler system* in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 and the sprinkler system shall completely wet the entire surface of interior sides of the wall or glass when actuated;
 - 1.2. The glass shall be in a gasketed frame and installed in such a manner that the framing system will deflect without breaking (loading) the glass before the sprinkler operates; and
 - 1.3. Obstructions shall not be installed between the sprinkler heads and the wall or glass.

2. The distance between the connected buildings is more than 10 feet (3048 mm) and both sidewalls of the *pedestrian walkway* are at least 50 percent open with the open area uniformly distributed to prevent the accumulation of smoke and *toxic gases*.
3. Buildings are on the same lot in accordance with Section 503.1.2.
4. Where *exterior walls* of connected buildings are required by Section 705 to have a *fire-resistance rating* greater than 2 hours, the walkway shall be equipped throughout with an *automatic sprinkler system* installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1.

The previous exception shall apply to *pedestrian walkways* having a maximum height above grade of three *stories* or 40 feet (12 192 mm), or five *stories* or 55 feet (16 764 mm) where sprinklered.

3104.6 Public way. *Pedestrian walkways* over a *public way* shall also comply with Chapter 32.

3104.7 Egress. Access shall be provided at all times to a *pedestrian walkway* that serves as a required *exit*.

3104.8 Width. The unobstructed width of *pedestrian walkways* shall not be less than 36 inches (914 mm). The total width shall not exceed 30 feet (9144 mm).

3104.9 Exit access travel. The length of *exit access* travel shall not exceed 200 feet (60 960 mm).

Exceptions:

1. *Exit access* travel distance on a *pedestrian walkway* equipped throughout with an *automatic sprinkler system* in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 shall not exceed 250 feet (76 200 mm).
2. *Exit access* travel distance on a *pedestrian walkway* constructed with both sides at least 50 percent open shall not exceed 300 feet (91 440 mm).
3. *Exit access* travel distance on a *pedestrian walkway* constructed with both sides at least 50 percent open, and equipped throughout with an *automatic sprinkler system* in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1, shall not exceed 400 feet (122 m).

3104.10 Tunneled walkway. Separation between the tunneled walkway and the building to which it is connected shall not be less than 2-hour fire-resistant construction and openings therein shall be protected in accordance with Table 715.4.

SECTION 3105 AWNINGS AND CANOPIES

3105.1 General. *Awnings* or canopies shall comply with the requirements of this section and other applicable sections of this code.

3105.2 Definition. The following term shall, for the purposes of this section and as used elsewhere in this code, have the meaning shown herein.

RETRACTABLE AWNING. A retractable *awning* is a cover with a frame that retracts against a building or other structure to which it is entirely supported.

3105.3 Design and construction. *Awnings* and canopies shall be designed and constructed to withstand wind or other lateral loads and live loads as required by Chapter 16 with due allowance for shape, open construction and similar features that relieve the pressures or loads. Structural members shall be protected to prevent deterioration. *Awnings* shall have frames of noncombustible material, *fire-retardant-treated wood*, wood of Type IV size, or I-hour construction with combustible or noncombustible covers and shall be either fixed, retractable, folding or collapsible.

3105.4 Canopy materials. Canopies shall be constructed of a rigid framework with an *approved* covering that meets the fire propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701 or has a *flame spread index* not greater than 25 when tested in accordance with ASTM E 84 or UL 723.

SECTION 3106 MARQUEES

3106.1 General. Marquees shall comply with this section and other applicable sections of this code.

3106.2 Thickness. The maximum height or thickness of a marquee measured vertically from its lowest to its highest point shall not exceed 3 feet (914 mm) where the marquee projects more than two-thirds of the distance from the property line to the curb line, and shall not exceed 9 feet (2743 mm) where the marquee is less than two-thirds of the distance from the property line to the curb line.

3106.3 Roof construction. Where the roof or any part thereof is a skylight, the skylight shall comply with the requirements of Chapter 24. Every roof and skylight of a marquee shall be sloped to downspouts that shall conduct any drainage from the marquee in such a manner so as not to spill over the sidewalk.

3106.4 Location prohibited. Every marquee shall be so located as not to interfere with the operation of any exterior standpipe, and such that the marquee does not obstruct the clear passage of *stairways* or *exit discharge* from the building or the installation or maintenance of street lighting.

3106.5 Construction. A marquee shall be supported entirely from the building and constructed of noncombustible materials. Marquees shall be designed as required in Chapter 16. Structural members shall be protected to prevent deterioration.

SECTION 3107 SIGNS

3107.1 General. Signs shall be designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with this code.

SECTION 3108 TELECOMMUNICATION AND BROADCAST TOWERS

3108.1 General. Towers shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the provisions of TIA-222.

Exception: Single free-standing poles used to support antennas not greater than 75 feet (22 860 mm), measured

from the top of the pole to grade, shall not be required to be noncombustible.

3108.2 Location and access. Towers shall be located such that guy wires and other accessories shall not cross or encroach upon any street or other public space, or over above-ground electric utility lines, or encroach upon any privately owned property without the written consent of the owner of the encroached-upon property, space or above-ground electric utility lines. Towers shall be equipped with climbing and working facilities in compliance with TIA-222. Access to the tower sites shall be limited as required by applicable OSHA, FCC and EPA regulations.

SECTION 3109 SWIMMING POOL ENCLOSURES AND SAFETY DEVICES

3109.1 General. Swimming pools shall comply with the requirements of this section and other applicable sections of this code.

3109.2 Definition. The following word and term shall, for the purposes of this section and as used elsewhere in this code, have the meaning shown herein.

SWIMMING POOLS. Any structure intended for swimming, recreational bathing or wading that contains water over 24 inches (610 mm) deep. This includes in-ground, above-ground and on-ground pools; hot tubs; spas and fixed-in-place wading pools.

3109.3 Public swimming pools. Public swimming pools shall be completely enclosed by a fence at least 4 feet (1290 mm) in height or a screen enclosure. Openings in the fence shall not *permitted* the passage of a 4-inch-diameter (102 mm) sphere. The fence or screen enclosure shall be equipped with self-closing and self-latching gates.

3109.4 Residential swimming pools. Residential swimming pools shall comply with Sections 3109.4.1 through 3109.4.3.

Exception: A swimming pool with a power safety cover or a spa with a safety cover complying with ASTM F 1346.

3109.4.1 Barrier height and clearances. The top of the barrier shall be at least 48 inches (1219 mm) above grade measured on the side of the barrier that faces away from the swimming pool. The maximum vertical clearance between grade and the bottom of the barrier shall be 2 inches (51 mm) measured on the side of the barrier that faces away from the swimming pool. Where the top of the pool structure is above grade, the barrier is authorized to be at ground level or mounted on top of the pool structure, and the maximum vertical clearance between the top of the pool structure and the bottom of the barrier shall be 4 inches (102 mm).

3109.4.1.1 Openings. Openings in the barrier shall not allow passage of a 4-inch-diameter (102 mm) sphere.

3109.4.1.2 Solid barrier surfaces. Solid barriers which do not have openings shall not contain indentations or protrusions except for normal construction tolerances and tooled masonry joints.