

Procedures to Implement SJ Muni Code 17.82 FIRE SAFETY DURING CONSTRUCTION

I. DEFINITIONS

1. Large Wood Frame Building Project – a building project utilizing exposed wood framing in the construction of fifteen (15) or more attached dwelling units, or construction exceeding a total of fifty thousand (50,000) square feet.
2. Major Wood Frame Building Project – a building project which will either:
 - a) Exceed three hundred fifty thousand (350,000) square-feet; or
 - b) Exceed two hundred thousand (200,000) square-feet if the project exceeds fifty feet in height. Height is defined as the vertical distance above a reference datum, measured to the highest point of the coping of a flat roof, or to the deck line of a mansard roof, or to the average height of the highest gable of a pitched or hipped roof. The reference datum shall be selected by either of the following, whichever yields the greatest height of the building: (1) the elevation of the highest natural ground surface within five foot horizontal distance of the exterior wall of the building when the highest such natural ground surface is not more than ten feet above the lowest grade; or (2) an elevation ten feet higher than the lowest grade when the natural ground surface described in (1) is more than ten feet above the lowest grade.

Note: For the purpose of measuring total square footage of wood framing, any adjacent on-going wood frame construction is considered to be within the project when adjacent structures are separated by less than sixty (60) feet of open air.

II. PLAN CHECK PROCESS

A. INTAKE

For large wood frame or major wood frame building projects, the Fire Protection Plan (FPP) is required at intake of permit application. The attached FPP form may be used for large wood frame building projects.

Note: The FPP is not required if permit application for “foundation only” is submitted.

B. FIRE PLAN CHECK

1. The fire plan checker shall enter a process for FPP review in the AMANDA plan review folder.
2. The fire plan checker will review the FPP. The FPP shall address the following:
 - Fire flow and fire hydrants;
 - Fire apparatus access roads;
 - Fire protection equipment such as portable fire extinguishers, standpipes, and related fire department connections;
 - Procedures during hot work activities;
 - Storage, use, and handling of flammable liquids;

- Removal of construction debris from project site;
- Construction sequencing and mitigating fire protection barriers (for major wood frame building projects only);
- Off-hours security barriers (for major wood frame building projects only); and
- Other requirements relating to fire safety.

When all issues are resolved, the fire plan checker will approve the FPP and close the AMANDA process.

C. BUILDING PLAN CHECK

1. The building plan checker shall ensure that the plans include adequate fire protection barriers and construction sequencing barriers for major wood frame building projects.

NOTE: On the plan check comments (both building and fire), inform the contractor/developer that wood frame construction shall not commence without the written approval of San Jose Fire Department (SJFD).

III. INSPECTION PROCESS

1. Wood frame construction shall not commence without a written approval of the SJFD. To acquire a written approval, the contractor shall be advised to:
 - a) Submit the name, qualifications, and duties & responsibilities of the Fire Safety Officer (FSO) to the SJFD, attention BFP Plan Check Engineer for the project (See Fire Plan Check Directives).
 - b) Call (408) 535-3555 to schedule a fire life safety inspection of the following:
 - All weather access roads;
 - Water flow and fire hydrants;
 - Portable fire extinguishers;
 - Horizontal standpipes and associated fire department connections (when required).

NOTE: When adequate compliance is verified, the SJFD inspector will indicate on the inspection report that wood framing may commence.

2. During regular inspections of the project, both building and fire inspectors shall check that fire safety measures are in place. The fire inspector shall have the primary responsibility and the building inspector shall assist in monitoring the project for compliance to fire safety measures. However, the building department shall be primarily responsible for monitoring required mitigating barriers.

Life safety measures shall include the following:

- If wood-framing activity has commenced, the project has been authorized to do so by the SJFD;
- During hot work activities, the FSO is present on the project site to monitor, confirm and document that there is a fire watch and that a fire extinguisher is readily available;

NOTE: The fire watch shall continue for a minimum of 30 minutes after the conclusion of the hot work activity

- Fire department apparatus access roads are maintained and clear of any debris,

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- construction material and/or construction equipment;
- Storage, use, and handling of flammable liquids conforms to all required codes and standards;
- Construction debris is promptly removed from the project site;
- All required fire protection equipment, such as fire extinguishers, fire hydrants, standpipes, etc. are in place and operational (fire inspector only);
- For barriers required for major wood frame building projects, approved construction sequencing is followed and that the mitigating fire protection barriers are in place to ensure that the “maximum allowable exposed wood-framing limit” is maintained (building inspector only).