

Highlights of the 2016

Uniform Dwelling Code Changes

Effective January 1, 2016, the Department of Safety and Professional Services has updated the Uniform Dwelling Code, ch. SPS 320-325. This is the most recent revision since 2011. These revisions update and clarify the Uniform Dwelling Code to make it consistent with contemporary construction practices, products, and materials. The rules clear up confusing and ambiguous portions of the code. They clarify language relating to stairs, ramps, and landings, and accessory guards and handrails. These rules also update references to national standards and provide flexibility in meeting exiting requirements. Further they establish safer standards for dryer exhaust and clarify ceiling height, foundation anchorage, and framing and fastening provisions. Also incorporated within the package are updates to single family deck provisions addressing materials, structural integrity as well as additional anchorage provisions.

Hyperlinks have been set up below that will take you directly to the referenced code section.

New language is included that addresses the following items:

- [SPS 320.09\(5\)\(b\)2.d.](#) Plan Submittal requirements pertaining to wall bracing
- [SPS 321.03\(1\)](#) Exit requirements on first and second floors
- [SPS 321.03\(6\)](#) Windows used for exiting (egress windows)
- [SPS 321.03\(6\)\(d\)1](#) Minimum clearance heights is for the exit path from an egress window
- [SPS 321.03\(11\)](#) Egress/ingress to/from courtyards
- [SPS 321.04\(2\)](#) Minimum depths of winder treads
- [SPS 321.04\(3\)](#) Maximum diameter allowed for spacing of balusters and cables used in guard assemblies and stairways
- [SPS 321.04\(3\)](#) Maximum diameter allowed for the triangular spacing between treads, risers and bottom rail of handrail assemblies on stairways
- [SPS 321.04\(3\)](#) Exceptions for the heights and overhangs of volutes, turnouts and transitions in stairway handrail assemblies
- [SPS 321.04\(4\)](#) Landings at the top of stairways
- [SPS 321.045\(4\)](#) Specific guard and handrail requirements for ramps used for egress/ingress from a dwelling
- [SPS 321.05\(3\)](#) Requirements for safety glass adjacent to the fixed panel of a sliding patio door and other affected areas
- [SPS 321.05\(1\)](#) Parameters for calculating net floor area for purposes of establishing minimum requirements for natural ventilation and natural light.
- [SPS 321.06\(1\)](#) Maximum allowable area of ceilings that can be less than the required 7 foot height.
- [SPS 321.06\(3\)](#) Ceiling height parameters beneath specific bathroom fixtures
- [SPS 321.08](#) Fire Table 321.08 - ratings for door and window assemblies located in walls of buildings within 5 to 10 feet of a dwelling
- [SPS 321.08\(3\)](#) Fire rating specifications for plastic pipe penetrations of required fire rated walls.
- [SPS 321.09\(2\)](#) Interconnectivity of wireless smoke detectors
- [SPS 321.10\(2\)](#) Decay resistance of sheathing and siding materials located with 2 inches of an impervious surface
- [SPS 321.12\(2\)](#) Requirements for minimal slope for drainage purposes at impervious surfaces adjacent to dwellings
- [SPS 321.12\(3\)](#) Minimum drainage requirements in areas where lot lines or obstructions prohibit the minimum 10 foot length of drainage outward from the dwelling
- [SPS 321.15\(1\)](#) Requirements for isolation joints to separate a structure supported by a floating slab or shallow foundation and a structure supported by footings that extend beneath the frost line
- [SPS 321.16\(1\)](#) Frost wall requirements for stoops, landings and ramps used for egress/ingress from a dwelling
- [SPS 321.16\(2\)](#) Footings may not be required for ramps in certain situation.
- [SPS321.18\(1\)](#) Alternate foundation anchorage is allowed through structural analysis.

- [SPS 321.22\(10\)](#) Sill plates may extend beyond the load bearing surface of the foundation wall in some situations. This also applies to “bottom plates” in SPS 321.25(2m)
- [SPS 321.25](#) Table 321.25 –A – Footnote language cleaned up when dealing with stud lengths over 10 feet to 12 feet.
- [SPS 321.25\(8\)](#) Design note created to assist in design of wall bracing for the exposed wall of walk out basements.
- [SPS Table 322.31-1](#) Increased basement wall insulation required.
- [SPS 322.37\(6\)](#) Testing/compliance issues clarified for building envelope insulation and tightness.
- [SPS 322.38\(2\)](#) No vapor retarder required when closed cell foam combined with other insulation.
- [SPS 325.01\(2\)](#) Tankless water heaters requirements added.
- [SPS 321.02\(3\)](#) Minimum Fastener schedule Table changed and updated.
- [SPS 321.225\(2\)](#) Establishes a prescriptive deck code, 321 Appendix (B) in the UDC appendix as an approved method for deck construction.
- [SPS 321.225\(2\)](#) Establishes 321 Appendix (C) which offers supplemental deck features and references including guidelines for the “[Attachment of Residential Deck Ledger to Metal Plate Connected Wood Truss Floor System](#)” by Jim Vogt, P.E.

The following chapters of the UDC Appendix can be accessed via the corresponding hyperlinks. Please note that once you have accessed the document you will need to open up the internal “pdf.” links in order to view the document in its entirety, including numerous graphical illustrations.

- [Appendix B](#) UDC Appendix B has been created to provide the option of using a prescriptive deck standard to be used in designing and constructing decks for one and two family dwellings.
- [Appendix C](#) UDC Appendix C provides supplemental guidelines and reference information related to the attachment of decks to the dwelling. Topics covered include the following:
 1. Wood preservatives for ground contact
 2. Sources of design values
 3. Joist spans for alternate wood species
 4. Alternate beam and joist spans
 5. Framing around a chimney or bay window
 6. Attachment of ledger boards to metal-plate-connected wood floor trusses

The 2016 version of SPS 320 and 321 include a variety of language changes, the bulk of which do not effectively change their application. These changes in wording include:

- “Guardrails” changed to “Guard”
- “Handrail” is defined in SPS 320
- “Stairway” definition is expanded in SPS 320