

Sprinkler System:

Sprinkler systems are designed to quickly get water to the seat of a fire. The design of a sprinkler system is enormously complex, taking into account many different factors like available water supply, construction type, potential fuel load, and the use of the space to be protected. In order to function effectively and properly, sprinkler systems must be designed and constructed to very specific standards. Once installed, the systems must be properly maintained and tested to ensure they will work when needed.

Sprinkler systems are required in some types of facilities, regardless of whether the building is new or existing. Use the chart below for baseline requirements. For more information on this requirement, review the International Building Code, International Fire Code, and Life Safety Code for the specific occupancy requirements.

Facility Type	Fire Code	System Required		Type
		New	Existing	
Education	USD	IBC/IFC (E)	Yes Yes*	13
	Private School	IBC/IFC (E)	Yes Yes*	13
	Preschool	IBC/IFC (E)	Yes Yes*	13
	Childcare Center	IBC/IFC (I)	Yes Yes*	13
	College	IBC/IFC (B)	No No	
Healthcare	Hospital	NFPA 101	Yes **	13
	Nursing Home	NFPA 101	Yes Yes (2013)	13
	Hospice	NFPA 101	Yes **	13
	Ambulatory Surgical Center	NFPA 101	No No	
	Residential Board & Care (L)	IBC/IFC (I)	Yes Yes	13
	Residential Board & Care (S)	IBC/IFC (R)	Yes Yes	13R
Other	Detention/Correctional	IBC/IFC (I)	Yes Yes	
	Hotels/Motels	IBC/IFC (R)	Yes Yes	13R
	Dormitories	IBC/IFC (R)	Yes Yes	13R

Facilities that currently do not have an automatic sprinkler system installed may continue to operate without retroactively installing a system. However, if the building undergoes major renovation, additions, or alterations to the building or licensure, then the building will be required to come up to “New” standards.

* Automatic sprinkler system is only required in levels below exit discharge and in buildings greater than 20,000 sq ft in area. An automatic sprinkler system is not required in any area below the level of exit discharge where every classroom (throughout the building) has at least one exterior exit door at ground level.

** Automatic sprinklers may or may not be required, depending upon the facility construction type and the number of stories.