

CHAPTER 9  
FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

SECTION 903.2.7  
IFC Interpretation No. 29-03  
2003 Edition  
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**903.2.7 Group R.** An automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with Section 903.3 shall be provided throughout all buildings with a Group R fire area.

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**Q:** Do the provisions of Section 903.2.7 in the *2003 International Fire Code* require automatic sprinkler systems to be installed in all one- and two-family dwellings?

**A:** No. The provisions of the *International Fire Code* are applicable only to one- and two-family dwelling buildings constructed under the *International Building Code* and classified in Group R-3 by that code. They do not apply to detached one- and two-family dwellings and multiple single-family dwellings (townhouses) not more than three stories in height with a separate means of egress constructed under the *International Residential Code*.

The ICC Board of Directors, in originally approving the development of the *International Residential Code*, indicated that it is to be a stand-alone code for the construction of detached one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses not more than three stories in height. The provisions for new construction that affect these type buildings are regulated exclusively by the *International Residential Code* and are not to be regulated by any other International Code. Section 101.2–Scope, Exception 1 of the *International Building Code*, stipulates that “Detached one- and two-family dwellings and multiple single-family dwellings (townhouses) not more than three stories above grade ... shall comply with the *International Residential Code*.” Likewise, Section R101.2--Scope of the *International Residential Code* states that “The provisions of the *International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* shall apply to the construction...of detached one- and two-family dwellings and multiple single-family dwellings (townhouses) not more than three stories in height with a separate means of egress and their accessory structures.” Therefore, the construction of detached one- and two-family dwellings and multiple single-family dwellings within the scope of the *International Residential Code* is not required to comply with the provisions of either the *International Building Code* or the *International Fire Code*.

Where a dwelling or townhouse exceeds the allowable height in stories, does not provide individual egress for each dwelling unit, or does not conform to the prescriptive provisions of the *International Residential Code*, the structures are then beyond the scope of that code and its provisions cannot be applied. The building must then meet the provisions of the *International Building Code* for Group R-3 as well as the applicable provisions of the *International Fire Code*.

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