

CHAPTER 280  
FIRE CONTROL ADMINISTRATION  
[Prior to 11/26/25, see Public Safety Department[661] Ch 201]

Chapter rescission date pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.7: 9/10/30

**481—280.1(10A) Fire control administration description and contact information.** Fire control is administered within the health and safety division of the department and may be contacted as provided in 481—Chapter 1 and on the department’s website: [dia.iowa.gov](http://dia.iowa.gov). The general email address for the fire safety bureau is [fire.inspections@dia.iowa.gov](mailto:fire.inspections@dia.iowa.gov). The department will collaborate with the state fire marshal division of the department of public safety in accordance with Iowa Code chapter 10A and as necessary. [ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—280.2(10A) Definitions.** The definitions set forth in Iowa Code section 10A.101 are incorporated herein by reference. The following definitions also apply:

“*Ambulatory surgical center*” means a facility or portion thereof as defined in Iowa Code section 135R.1.

“*Fire alarm system*” means a system or a portion of a combination system consisting of components and circuits arranged to monitor and annunciate the status of fire alarm or supervisory signal-initiating devices and to initiate the appropriate response to those signals.

“*Hospice*” means a facility licensed or seeking licensure pursuant to Iowa Code section 135J.2.

“*Hospital*” means a facility licensed or seeking licensure pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 135B.

“*Intermediate care facility*” means a facility licensed or seeking licensure pursuant to Iowa Code section 135C.6 as an intermediate care facility for persons with an intellectual disability or intermediate care facility for persons with mental illness as both are defined in Iowa Code section 135C.1.

“*Multiple-station smoke alarm*” means two or more single-station smoke alarm devices that are capable of interconnection such that actuation of one causes the appropriate alarm signal to operate in all interconnected alarms. Interconnection may occur wirelessly for residential smoke alarms.

“*NFPA*” means the National Fire Protection Association, available at: [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org). References to the form “NFPA xx,” where “xx” is a number, refer to the NFPA standard or pamphlet of the corresponding number.

“*Nursing facility*” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 135C.1.

“*Single-station smoke alarm*” means an assembly incorporating the detector, the control equipment and the alarm-sounding device in one unit, operated from a power supply either in the unit or obtained at the point of installation or both.

“*Smoke alarm*” means a single- or multiple-station alarm responsive to smoke. See also “single-station smoke alarm” and “multiple-station smoke alarm.”

“*Smoke detector*” means a device that senses visible or invisible particles of combustion. Smoke detectors are typically listed under Underwriters Laboratories (UL) 268.

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—280.3(10A) Building plan submission.**

**280.3(1)** Plans for initial construction or alterations, changes, additions, renovations, or remodeling of buildings requiring the approval of the director shall be submitted to the building code bureau pursuant to rule 481—300.4(103A), except that plans related to the following entities may be submitted to a local fire or building department for approval upon a determination of compliance with the rules of the department or a local fire ordinance recognized in rule 481—280.11(10A):

- a. Any educational building or facility serving kindergarten through twelfth grade,
- b. Any college or university building or facility,
- c. Any child care facility intended to serve seven or more children at one time,
- d. Any correctional facility, or
- e. Any gaming facility.

**280.3(2)** When approval of building construction projects is required by this chapter or requested by the submitter for other building construction projects covered by this chapter, one complete set of the final working plans and specifications shall be submitted to the building code bureau in accordance with Iowa Code chapters 542B and 544A and with rule 481—300.4(103A) (Note: 481—subrule 300.4(2) establishes fees for plan reviews that are paid to the building code bureau. These fees are not collected by the fire control bureau). Submittals will be examined, and the submitter will be notified of the findings. If the working plans and specifications comply with this chapter, an approval letter will be sent to the submitter.

**280.3(3)** Shop drawings, equipment specifications, and supporting documentation for fire alarm and sprinkler systems shall be submitted for review and approval and signed by a responsible managing employee licensed in accordance with Iowa Code chapter 100C. If the system is being installed as part of a project that has been designed by an engineer or architect, the submittal shall be approved by the responsible architect or engineer prior to submittal to the department. Submittals will be examined, and the submitter will be notified of the findings. Only one copy of shop drawings, equipment specifications, and supporting documentation should be submitted. The building code bureau will send a letter of approval to the submitter in lieu of returning approved shop drawings.

**280.3(4)** No changes shall be made to the approved final working plans and specifications or shop drawings unless the changes are submitted to and approved by the building code bureau.

**280.3(5)** If the blueprints and specifications are not acceptable, the building code bureau will notify the submitter of the deficiencies and request that the submitter either forward changes or request a review of the blueprints and specifications with the building code bureau. If after such review the submitter disputes the findings of the plan reviewer, the submitter may request that the disputed questions be reviewed by the chief for the building code bureau and the chief of the fire prevention bureau. If the submitter disputes the findings of the chief for the building code bureau and the chief of the fire prevention bureau, the submitter may appeal by submitting a request for a contested case hearing to the department, in writing, within 30 days of receipt or service of the order in accordance with Iowa Code section 10A.515 and chapter 17A. Contested cases are governed by 481—Chapter 9 (contested cases) and 481—Chapter 10 (rules of practice and procedure before the administrative hearings division).

**280.3(6)** The responsible design professional for a project will schedule a preliminary meeting with the building code bureau to discuss code compliance issues early in the design development phase in accordance with 481—subrule 300.4(3). Approval to bid the project will not be given unless all applicable issues identified on the checklist have been addressed to the satisfaction of the building code bureau.

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—280.4(10A,101,101A) Inspections and inspection fees.** The director, any employee of the department, or any designated subordinate or local fire department authorized by the director may enter to inspect any building or premises and the contents thereof at any reasonable time, without notice, in accordance with Iowa Code sections 10A.512 and 10A.514.

**280.4(1)** An inspection may be of a particular system in the building, facility, or installation, or the inspection may include the entire building, facility, or installation.

**280.4(2)** An inspection to evaluate compliance with the rules of the department may be conducted by the department or by a consultant as requested by the director. A consultant will have the necessary degree of training, education, or experience to examine a system within a building required to comply with the rules of the department and determine if such system or systems comply with requirements. If a consultant is engaged to conduct an inspection, the consultant may be accompanied by an employee of the department or of a local fire department while conducting the inspection.

**280.4(3)** Inspections will be conducted without announcement and occur on a random basis, upon request, in response to a complaint, or to investigate a suspected fire hazard.

**280.4(4)** An owner or person in control of the building, facility, or installation will be advised of an inspection upon the inspector's arrival, if available, but the inspection will commence in any event. The owner or a representative may accompany an inspector throughout the inspection, provided that the inspection is not delayed.

**280.4(5)** Upon completion of an inspection, the inspector may complete a written inspection order if any violations or deficiencies are discovered. The order will be signed by the employee and, if prepared by a consultant, will also be signed by the consultant.

**280.4(6)** Upon completion of the inspection, if the building, facility, or installation does not comply with applicable laws or rules, the inspector will identify specific provisions with which the building, facility, or installation does not comply and will notify the owner. The owner may be ordered to correct or repair the deficiency. The owner may order the building, facility, or installation removed or demolished in lieu of correcting the deficiency.

*a.* The employee or consultant signing the notice of deficiency or order will retain a copy and distribute a copy to the department or fire department having jurisdiction as necessary.

*b.* The time allowed to comply with the order will be determined by the employee or consultant, who will consider the likelihood that a fire may occur; the possibility of personal injury or property loss; the cost and availability of materials and labor to correct, repair, remove, or demolish; and other relevant information.

*c.* If the owner of the building, facility, or installation does not agree with the deficiency findings and order, the owner may appeal the order by submitting a request for a contested case hearing to the department in the same manner as set forth in subrule 280.3(5).

**280.4(7)** Inspection fees are payable through the department's website or by check or money order made payable to the department. If a certificate of occupancy is required for use of the building, facility, or installation, the certificate will not be issued until the inspection fee has been paid. When an initial inspection requiring a fee pursuant to this subrule results in a finding of a deficiency requiring reinspection, the initial reinspection will be performed without an additional fee. If the original deficiency or deficiencies have not been corrected at the time of the initial reinspection, then a fee of \$125 for each additional reinspection after the initial reinspection is required until any original deficiency has been corrected. Inspection fees apply for entities licensed or seeking licensure as follows:

*a.* Hospital (Iowa Code chapter 135B) or health care facility (Iowa Code chapter 135C): \$2.50 per bed.

*b.* Elder group home (Iowa Code chapter 231B) or assisted living program (Iowa Code chapter 231C): \$10 per bed.

*c.* Adult day services (Iowa Code chapter 231D): \$75 per facility.

*d.* Child care facility (Iowa Code chapter 237A): \$25 per facility.

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—280.5(10A) Certificates for licensure.** The department will issue a certificate approving a building, facility, or installation for occupancy upon request from an owner or owner's agency if the building, facility, or installation comply with applicable rules and all fees have been paid. Denial of such a certificate is subject to appeal in the same manner as set forth in subrule 280.3(5).

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—280.6(10A) Fire drills.** Public and private schools shall conduct fire drills in all school buildings as specified in Iowa Code section 10A.522 when school is in session.

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—280.7(10A) Inspection based on complaint.**

**280.7(1) Request for inspection.** A person alleging a building, facility, or installation presents a significant fire hazard may submit a complaint to the department and should provide the following information, if known:

*a.* The address of the building, facility, or installation and name and address of its owner;

*b.* The complainant's name, address, and telephone number; and

*c.* A general description of the alleged deficiencies.

**280.7(2) Initial determination.** The department will determine whether allegations warrant an inspection. The complainant or owner of the building, facility, or installation may be advised of the determination. Inspection is likely to occur for any building, facility, or installation that:

*a.* By want of proper repair, or by reason of age and dilapidated condition, is especially liable to fire and is so situated as to endanger other buildings, facilities, installations, property, or persons, or

*b.* Contains combustibles, explosives, or flammable materials dangerous to the safety of any buildings, premises, or persons.

**280.7(3)** *Final decision.* Upon completion of the inspection:

*a.* If the building, facility, or installation complies with applicable laws or rules and no deficiencies are found, the department will accordingly notify the owner and the complainant.

*b.* If any deficiencies are found and the building, facility, or installation is within the corporate limits of a city, the department will notify the mayor and clerk of said city of the deficiencies and the need for repairs.

*c.* If any deficiencies are found and the building, facility, or installation is outside the corporate limits of any city, the department will specifically identify such deficiencies and prepare an order to correct or repair the deficiencies in accordance with Iowa Code section 10A.515. The order will be mailed to or served upon the owner of the building, facility, or installation in accordance with Iowa Code chapter 17A and may be provided, as appropriate, to any occupants, lienholders, or lessees. The order is effective upon receipt or issuance and will give the owner a reasonable time to comply with its mandate(s). The department will determine what constitutes a reasonable time by considering the likelihood of fires; possibility of personal injury or property loss; cost; availability of materials and labor to correct, repair, remove or demolish the building, facility, or installation; and any other reasonable and relevant information. The order will also notify the owner that the owner may appeal the order in accordance with Iowa Code section 10A.515 and the process described in subrule 280.3(5).

*d.* Emergency orders may be issued in accordance with Iowa Code section 10A.515.

**280.7(4)** *Reinspection.* If the owner of the building, facility, or installation elects not to challenge the department's order, the department will, at the end of the period during which compliance was required, conduct another inspection of the building, facility, or installation.

**280.7(5)** *Failure to comply.* At the request of the department, the county attorney shall institute legal proceedings to obtain compliance or enforce penalty provisions in accordance with Iowa Code section 10A.516.

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—280.8(10A) General provisions.** The following publications or indicated portions thereof are hereby adopted by reference as general fire safety requirements and apply to all occupancies other than those to which provisions specific to an occupancy explicitly exclude these provisions or any individual provision contained therein.

**280.8(1)** International Fire Code, 2024 edition, published by the International Code Council, available at [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org), with the following amendments:

*a.* Delete section 103 and sections contained therein, section 104 and sections contained therein except section 104.2.3, section 105 and sections contained therein, section 106 and sections contained therein, section 107 and sections contained therein, section 108 and sections contained therein, section 109 and sections contained therein, section 110 and sections contained therein, section 111 and sections contained therein, section 112, section 113 and sections contained therein, section 114 and sections contained therein, and section 115 and sections contained therein.

*b.* Delete section 301.2.

*c.* Delete section 307.2.

*d.* Add the following new section 308.1.11:

**308.1.11 Open Flame Cooking Devices.** Charcoal burners and ash- or coal-producing devices shall not be operated on combustible balconies or within 10 feet of combustible construction.

Exceptions:

1. One- and two-family dwellings.

2. LP-gas burners connected to one (1) 20-pound LP-gas container.

3. Where buildings, balconies and decks are protected by an automatic sprinkler system.

*e.* Delete section 315.3.3 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

**315.3.3 Equipment Rooms.** Combustible material shall not be stored in boiler rooms, mechanical rooms, or electrical equipment rooms or in fire command centers as specified in Section 508.1.5.

Exception: In sprinklered equipment rooms that have sufficient space to allow a minimum of 10 feet between all combustible storage and the heating, mechanical or electrical equipment in the room.

*f.* Delete section 405.3 and table 405.3 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section and new table:

**405.3 Frequency.** Required emergency evacuation drills will be held at the intervals specified in Table 405.3 or more frequently where necessary to familiarize all occupants with the drill procedure.

**TABLE 405.3**

**FIRE AND EVACUATION DRILL FREQUENCY AND PARTICIPATION**

<b>GROUP OR OCCUPANCY</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PARTICIPATION</b>
Group A	Quarterly	Employees
Group B <sup>(c)</sup>	Annually	Employees
Group E	See <sup>(a)</sup> below	All occupants
Group I	Quarterly on each shift	Employees
Group I-1 <sup>(b)</sup> and Group R-4	Quarterly	All occupants
Group R-1	Quarterly on each shift	Employees
Group R-2 <sup>(d)</sup>	Four annually	All occupants
High-rise	Annually	Employees

<sup>(a)</sup> Fire and severe weather drills shall be conducted in accordance with Iowa Code section 10A.522. In severe climates, the fire code official has the authority to modify the emergency evacuation drill frequency.

<sup>(b)</sup> Fire and evacuation drills in assisted living facilities include complete evacuation of the premises in accordance with Section 405.2. Drills shall be conducted not less than six times per year on a bimonthly basis, with not less than two drills conducted during the night when residents could reasonably be expected to be sleeping. The drills may be announced in advance to the residents. Where occupants receive habilitation or rehabilitation training, fire prevention and fire safety practices shall be included as part of the training program.

<sup>(c)</sup> Group B buildings that have an occupant load of 500 or more persons or more than 100 persons above or below the lowest level of exit discharge.

<sup>(d)</sup> Applicable to Group R-2 college and university buildings in accordance with Section 408.3.

*g.* Delete section 807.5.2.1 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

**807.5.2.1 Storage in corridors and lobbies.** Clothing and personal effects will not be stored in corridors and lobbies.

Exceptions:

1. Corridors protected by an approved automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1.

2. Storage in metal lockers, provided the minimum required egress width is maintained.

*h.* Delete section 903.2.8 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

**903.2.8 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.

Exception: Cabin buildings that are located in remote areas without a sufficient municipal water supply for design of a fire sprinkler system and that meet all of the following:

1. Not more than one story.
2. Not more than 750 square feet in floor area.
3. Fuel-fired heating equipment and other fuel-fired appliances are separated from sleeping areas by a one-hour fire-rated assembly.
4. Provided with fire alarm and smoke alarm systems as required by Section 907 for R-1 occupancies.
5. Basements are not allowed.

6. Maintain a fire separation of 20 feet from any other building or structure.
7. Comply with all applicable requirements of this Code.

*i.* Delete section 907.2.3 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

**907.2.3 Group E.** In the absence of a complete automatic sprinkler system, a complete automatic detection system utilizing an emergency voice/alarm communication system shall be installed throughout the entire Group E occupancy. A Group E occupancy with a complete automatic sprinkler system will be provided with a fire alarm system utilizing an emergency voice/alarm communication system in compliance with Section 907.5.2.2 and installed in accordance with Section 907.6. As a minimum, smoke detection will be provided in corridors at a maximum spacing of 30 feet on center, and heat or smoke detection will be provided in any hazardous or nonoccupied areas in all new or existing Group E occupancies.

Exceptions:

1. Group E occupancies with an occupant load of less than 50.
2. Manual fire alarm boxes are not required in Group E occupancies where all of the following apply:
  - 2.1. Interior corridors are protected by smoke detectors with alarm verification.
  - 2.2. Auditoriums, cafeterias, gymnasiums and the like are protected by heat detectors or other approved detection devices.
  - 2.3. Shops and laboratories involving dusts or vapors are protected by heat detectors or other approved detection devices.
  - 2.4. Off-premises monitoring is provided.
  - 2.5. The capability to activate the evacuation signal from a central point is provided.
  - 2.6. In buildings where normally occupied spaces are provided with a two-way communication system between such spaces and a constantly attended receiving station from which a general evacuation alarm can be sounded, except in locations specifically designated by the fire code official.
3. Manual fire alarm boxes are not required in Group E occupancies where the building is equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system, the notification appliances will activate on sprinkler water flow, and manual activation is provided from a normally occupied location.
4. Emergency voice/alarm communication systems meeting the requirements of Section 907.5.2.2 and installed in accordance with Section 907.6 are not required in Group E occupancies with occupant loads of 100 or less, provided that activation of the fire alarm system initiates an approved occupant notification signal in accordance with Section 907.5.

*j.* Add the following new section 1003.8:

**1003.8 Frost protection.** Exterior landings at doors will be provided with frost protection.

*k.* Add the following new section 1028.6:

**1028.6 Exit discharge pathways.** Exit discharge pathways will be paved from all required exits of a building to a public way or parking lot.

*l.* Delete section 1030.1.1 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

**1030.1.1** Bleachers, grandstands, and folding and telescopic seating that are not building elements will comply with ICC-300, Standard for Bleachers, Folding and Telescopic Seating, and Grandstands, 2023 edition, with the following amendments to ICC-300:

(1) Delete section 105.2 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

**105.2 Yearly inspection required.** All bleachers and folding and telescopic seating installed on or after December 1, 2011, shall be inspected at least once a year in order to verify that the structure is maintained in compliance with the provisions of this standard. All folding and telescopic seating will also be inspected to evaluate compliance with the manufacturer's installation and operational instructions during the opening and closing of such seating. Any inspection conducted in compliance with this section may be conducted by any knowledgeable person including, but not limited to, a person who has been instructed by the manufacturer or installer as to procedures and standards for inspections of the structure being inspected and including, but not limited to, the owner of the structure or an employee of the owner of the structure. There are no further limitations on the identity or employment of the person conducting the inspection unless otherwise provided by law. The owner shall maintain documentation of the required annual inspections,

showing the date and name of the person conducting the inspection and initialed by the person conducting the inspection.

(2) Reserved.

*m.* Delete section 1103.5.1 Group A-2. Notwithstanding this deletion, a Group A-2 occupancy shall be equipped with an automatic sprinkler system if it was so required by another applicable section of a fire code adopted at the time of the Group A-2 occupancy's construction. Alternative means of compliance may be submitted for consideration per section 104.2.3 of the 2024 international fire code. Alternative means must be submitted to the department's fire safety bureau by a fire protection engineer for consideration of approval.

*n.* Delete section 1103.7.1 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

**1103.7.1** Existing Group E occupancies shall be provided with a fire alarm system utilizing an emergency voice/alarm communication system in compliance with Section 907.5.2.2 and installed in accordance with Section 907.6. As a minimum, smoke detection will be provided in corridors at a maximum spacing of 30 feet on center, and heat or smoke detection will be provided in any hazardous or nonoccupied areas.

Exceptions:

1. A building with a maximum area of 1,000 square feet that contains a single classroom and is located no closer than 50 feet from another building.
2. Group E occupancy with an occupant load of less than 50.
3. Emergency voice/alarm communication systems meeting the requirements of Section 907.5.2.2 and installed in accordance with Section 907.6 are not required in Group E occupancies with occupant loads of 100 or less, provided that the activation of the fire alarm system initiates an approved occupant notification signal in accordance with Section 907.5.

*o.* Delete section 1103.8 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

**1103.8 Single- and multiple-station smoke alarms.** Single- and multiple-station smoke alarms shall be installed in existing Group I-1 and R occupancies in accordance with Sections 1103.8.1 through 1103.8.4.

*p.* Add the following new section 1103.8.4:

**1103.8.4 Smoke alarm service life.** Single-station battery-operated smoke alarms will be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

**280.8(2)** The state building code in rule 481—301.8(103A) for residential construction requirements. [ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—280.9(10A) Electrical installations.** The provisions of the state electrical code in 481—Chapter 404 are hereby adopted by reference as the requirements for electrical installations. In addition to compliance with 481—Chapter 404, any installation of wiring and equipment will comply with requirements established by the manufacturer of the equipment serviced by the wiring.

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—280.10(10A) Existing buildings or structures.** Additions to any building or structure shall comply with the requirements for new construction. Additions shall comply with the height and area provisions of Chapter 5 of the International Building Code in rule 481—301.3(103A). Alterations to any building or structure shall comply with the requirements of the International Existing Building Code in rule 481—301.7(103A) for new construction. Only portions of the structure altered or affected by the alteration are required to comply with the requirements for new construction.

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—280.11(10A) Recognition of local fire ordinances and enforcement.**

**280.11(1)** With the exception of a health care facility subject to the requirements of rule 481—280.14(10A), a building, structure, or facility is deemed to comply if all of the following conditions are met:

- a.* The building, structure, or facility is in a local jurisdiction that has adopted a local fire ordinance that adopts by reference any edition of the International Fire Code, published by the International Code

Council; any edition of NFPA 1, Uniform Fire Code, published by the NFPA; or the Uniform Fire Code, 1997 edition, published by the Western Fire Chiefs Association.

*b.* The local fire ordinance is enforced through a process of review and approval of construction plans for compliance with the local fire ordinance and a process of regular inspections for compliance with the local fire ordinance.

*c.* The building, structure, or facility is subject to regular fire safety inspections.

*d.* The local jurisdiction has verified, during its most recent inspection, including any follow-up inspections, that the building, structure, or facility complies with the local fire ordinance.

**280.11(2)** Notwithstanding any conflicting provisions contained in any code adopted by reference in this chapter or by any local fire ordinance, compliance with the provisions of 481—Chapter 282 is required at any location or facility in which flammable or combustible liquids are stored, handled, or used, other than incidental use.

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

#### REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIFIC OCCUPANCIES

**481—280.12(10A) Scope of rules related to specific occupancies.** The provisions of this chapter related to a specific occupancy apply solely to buildings, structures, and facilities currently being used and those proposed to be used in the specific ways described in the rule governing that specific occupancy. All other buildings, structures, and facilities in which people congregate are subject to the provisions of rules 481—280.8(10A) through 481—280.11(10A) or rule 481—280.14(10A).

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—280.13(10A,135C) Residential care facilities with a three- to five-bed specialized license and facilities in which foster care is provided by agencies to fewer than six children pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 237.** This rule applies to residential care facilities with a three- to five-bed specialized license pursuant to Iowa Code section 135C.2(5) and 481—Chapter 63 and facilities in which foster care is provided by agencies to fewer than six children pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 237. The following is required:

**280.13(1) Exits.**

*a.* A minimum of two approved exits from the main level of the home and from each level with resident sleeping rooms.

*b.* Interior and exterior stairways with a minimum clear width of not less than 30 inches.

**280.13(2) Windows.** For every resident sleeping room, an outside window or outside door arranged and located to permit the venting of products of combustion and access to fresh air in the event of an emergency.

*a.* In new construction, windows with a minimum net clear openable area of 5.7 square feet, minimum net clear openable height of 24 inches, minimum net clear openable width of 20 inches, and finished sill height not more than 44 inches above the floor.

*b.* In existing construction, the finished sill height not more than 44 inches above the floor or the finished sill accessible from a platform not more than 44 inches below the window sill.

**280.13(3) Interior finish.** Interior finish in an exit shall be in accordance with the IFC edition adopted in subrule 280.8(1).

**280.13(4) Doors.** A minimum of 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch solid core wood or equivalent doors to resident sleeping rooms.

**280.13(5) Vertical separations.** Basement stairs enclosed with one-hour rated partitions and 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch solid core wood doors equipped with self-closers. These doors must be kept closed unless held open by an approved electromagnetic holder, actuated by an approved smoke detection device located at the top of the stairwell and interconnected with the alarm system.

**280.13(6) Fire detection, fire alarms, and sprinklers.**

*a.* Smoke detection installed on each occupied floor, including basements, in accordance with NFPA 72, as set forth in the IFC edition adopted in subrule 280.8(1). Smoke detectors shall be interconnected

so that activation of any detector will sound an audible alarm throughout. The system must be tested by a competent person at least semiannually with date of test and name noted.

*b.* For homes in which exiting is restricted by special door-locking arrangements that prevent residents from free egress, sprinkler systems meeting the requirements of NFPA 13D, as set forth in the IFC edition adopted in subrule 280.8(1).

**280.13(7) *Fire extinguishers.*** Approved fire extinguishers provided on each floor, located so that a person will not have to travel more than 75 feet from any point to reach the nearest extinguisher and an additional extinguisher provided in, or adjacent to, each kitchen or basement storage room. The type and number of portable fire extinguishers will be determined by the department.

**280.13(8) *Mechanical, electrical, and building service equipment.***

*a.* Air conditioning, ventilating, heating, cooking, and other service equipment will be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and any pertinent state regulations, including national standards adopted therein, governing the same. All hazardous areas normally found in one- and two-family dwellings, such as laundry, kitchen, heating units and closets, need not be separated with walls if all equipment is installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

*b.* Portable comfort heating devices are not permitted.

**280.13(9) *Attendants; evacuation plan.***

*a.* Every facility in which residents are present shall have at least one staff person who is at least 18 years of age and capable of performing the required duties of evacuation on the premises at all times.

*b.* Every facility will formulate a plan for the protection of all persons in the event of fire and for their evacuation to areas of refuge and from the building when necessary. All employees will be instructed and kept informed with respect to their duties under the plan. The plan will be posted where all employees may readily study it. Fire drills will be held at least once a month, with records retained for inspection.

**280.13(10) *Smoking.***

*a.* There will be no smoking in resident sleeping areas, and smoking policies will be strictly enforced.

*b.* Any ashtrays will be constructed of noncombustible material with self-closing tops and provided in areas where smoking is permitted.

**280.13(11) *Exit illumination.*** Approved rechargeable battery-powered emergency lighting installed to provide automatic exit illumination in the event of failure of the normal lighting system.

**280.13(12) *Accessibility.*** Nonambulatory residents shall be housed only on accessible floors that have direct access to grade where the use of stairs or elevators is not required.

**280.13(13) *Maintenance.***

*a.* All fire and life safety equipment or devices are regularly and properly maintained in an operable condition at all times in accordance with nationally recognized standards adopted herein. Such equipment and devices include fire extinguishing equipment, alarm systems, doors and their appurtenances, cords and switches, heating and ventilating equipment, sprinkler systems, and exit facilities.

*b.* Storerooms are maintained in a neat and proper manner at all times.

*c.* Excessive storage of combustible materials such as papers, cartons, magazines, paints, sprays, old clothing, furniture, and similar materials is prohibited at all times.

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

#### FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

### **481—280.14(10A) Fire safety requirements for ambulatory surgical centers, hospitals, and health care facilities.**

**280.14(1) *Definitions.*** The following definitions apply to this rule:

“*Existing*” means that a facility (1) has been in continuous operation under its current classification of occupancy since before July 5, 2016, and has not undergone renovation or remodeling, including an addition, on or after July 5, 2016, or (2) received plan approval for initial construction or for its most recent renovation or remodeling project, including an addition, if any, from the building code bureau of the fire marshal division prior to July 5, 2016.

“*New*” means that a facility (1) commenced continuous operation under its current classification of occupancy on or after July 5, 2016, (2) has undergone renovation or remodeling, including an addition,

on or after July 5, 2016, or (3) received plan approval from the building code bureau of the fire marshal division for the initial construction of the facility or the most recent renovation of or addition to the facility on or after July 5, 2016.

**280.14(2)** *New hospitals.* NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapter 18, is adopted by reference as the fire safety rules for new hospitals.

**280.14(3)** *Existing hospitals.* NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapter 19, is adopted by reference as the fire safety rules for existing hospitals.

**280.14(4)** *New nursing facilities and hospices.* NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapter 18, is adopted by reference as the fire safety rules for new nursing facilities and hospices that provide inpatient care directly.

**280.14(5)** *Existing nursing facilities and hospices.* NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapter 19, is adopted by reference as the fire safety rules for existing nursing facilities and hospices that provide inpatient care directly.

**280.14(6)** *New intermediate care facilities.* New intermediate care facilities shall comply with the provisions of one of the following:

a. NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapter 18.

b. NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapter 32.

**280.14(7)** *Existing intermediate care facilities.* Existing intermediate care facilities shall comply with the provisions of one of the following:

a. NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapter 19.

b. NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapter 33.

**280.14(8)** *New ambulatory surgical centers.* NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapter 20, is adopted by reference as the fire safety rules for new ambulatory surgical centers.

**280.14(9)** *Existing ambulatory surgical centers.* NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapter 21, is adopted by reference as the fire safety rules for existing ambulatory surgical centers.

**280.14(10)** *New religious nonmedical health care institutions.* NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapter 18, is adopted by reference as the fire safety rules for new religious nonmedical health care institutions as defined by 42 CFR Part 403 (effective as of September 1, 2024).

**280.14(11)** *Existing religious nonmedical health care institutions.* NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapter 19, is adopted by reference as the fire safety rules for existing religious nonmedical health care institutions as defined by 42 CFR Part 403 (effective as of September 1, 2024).

**280.14(12)** *Evacuation capability.* Any requirement contained in NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, Chapters 32 or 33, that is determined on a rating of evacuation capability shall be “impractical.”

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

#### SMOKE ALARMS/DETECTORS

#### **481—280.15(10A) Scope, definitions, and requirements for smoke alarms and smoke detectors.**

**280.15(1)** This rule applies to single-family and two-family residences, townhouses, and all other residential occupancies in commercial buildings unless otherwise provided herein or by another provision of law. This rule does not apply to nonresidential occupancies.

**280.15(2)** For purposes of this rule, the following definition applies:

“*Approved*” means that the equipment has been approved by the department or listed for a specific use by an independent testing laboratory or organization of national reputation.

**280.15(3)** Residential smoke alarms are required to be listed under UL 217 edition 8 or 9. Approved single-station smoke alarms are acceptable in all areas covered by this chapter unless other fire warning equipment or materials are required by any provision of rules 481—280.8(10A) through 481—280.10(10A), rules 481—280.12(10A) and 481—280.13(10A,135C), or rule 481—280.14(10A) or if a fire alarm system with smoke detection listed under UL 268 edition 8-2023 has been installed. Any single-station smoke alarm or multiple-station smoke alarm installed on or after April 1, 2010, in compliance with this subrule, including a replacement of an existing smoke alarm, shall be listed under UL 217 edition 8 or 9.

**280.15(4)** All devices, combinations of devices, and equipment to be installed in conformity with this chapter shall be approved and used for the purposes for which they are intended and installed in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Any devices, combinations of devices, and equipment installed on or after April 1, 2010, in compliance with this chapter, including a replacement of an existing smoke alarm, will be listed in accordance with UL 217 edition 8 or 9. Existing dual sensor smoke alarms may be maintained until replacement is recommended by the manufacturer or upon failure.

**280.15(5)** A combination system, such as a household fire warning system whose components may be used in whole or in part, in common with a non-fire emergency signaling system, such as a burglar alarm system or an intercom system, is not permitted or approved, except for one- or two-family dwellings.

**280.15(6)** Single-station battery-operated or battery backup smoke alarms shall be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

**280.15(7)** Power supplies shall be sufficient to operate the smoke detector alarm for at least four continuous minutes. Additionally:

*a.* In new buildings and additions constructed after July 1, 1991, required smoke alarms will receive their primary power from the building wiring when such wiring is served from a commercial source. Wiring will be permanent and without a disconnecting switch other than that required for overcurrent protection. Smoke alarms may be solely battery-powered when installed in existing buildings; in buildings without commercial power; or in buildings presently undergoing alterations, repairs, or additions subject to 481—Chapter 404.

*b.* New and replacement smoke alarms installed after May 1, 1993, that receive their primary power from the building wiring will be equipped with a battery backup.

*c.* New and replacement smoke alarms installed after July 1, 2016, that receive their primary power from the building wiring where more than one smoke alarm is required to be installed will be interconnected in such a manner that the activation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms.

*d.* After June 30, 2021, a battery-powered smoke alarm listed in accordance with UL 217 edition 8 that is newly installed or replaces an existing battery-powered smoke alarm must be powered by a nonremovable, nonreplaceable battery that powers the alarm for at least ten years. The battery requirements of this subrule do not apply to a fire alarm, smoke detector, smoke alarm, or ancillary component that is electronically connected as a part of a centrally monitored or supervised alarm system or that uses a low-power, radio frequency wireless communication signal.

**280.15(8)** The failure of any nonreliable or short-life component that renders the alarm inoperative shall be readily apparent to the occupant of the sleeping unit without the need for a test. Each smoke alarm shall detect abnormal quantities of smoke and properly operate under normal environmental conditions.

**280.15(9)** Installed fire warning equipment shall be mounted so as to be supported independently of its attachment to wires.

**280.15(10)** All apparatus shall be restored to normal immediately after each alarm or test.

**280.15(11)** Smoke alarms shall be located on the ceiling or wall outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of bedrooms; in each room used for sleeping purposes; and in each story within a dwelling unit, including basements but not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics. In dwellings or dwelling units with split levels and without an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke alarm installed on the upper level suffices for the adjacent lower level, provided that the lower level is less than one full story below the upper level.

**280.15(12)** A person who files for a homestead tax credit pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 425 shall certify that the single-family dwelling unit for which the credit is filed has a smoke alarm(s) installed in accordance with subrules 280.15(6) and 280.15(11) or that such smoke alarm(s) will be installed within 30 days of the date of filing for credit.

**280.15(13)** All multiple-unit residential buildings and single-family dwellings that are constructed after July 1, 1991, shall include the installation of smoke alarms meeting the requirements of this rule. All existing single-family units and multiple-unit residential buildings shall be equipped with smoke alarms or detectors as required in subrule 280.15(11).

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

## CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

**481—280.16(10A) Scope and definitions.** The provisions of this part (rules 481—280.16(10A) and 481—280.17(10A)) apply to new and existing single-family residences, single-family rental units, and multiple-unit residential buildings. The provisions of this part do not apply to nonresidential occupancies, including but not limited to Group I and Group E occupancies. The following definitions apply to this part:

*“Building”* means a combination of materials, whether portable or fixed, to form a structure affording facilities or shelter for persons, animals, or property. “Building” includes any part of a building or an addition to a building.

*“Carbon monoxide alarm”* means one or more devices, including but not limited to combination carbon monoxide alarm/smoke alarms, that detect carbon monoxide gas for the purpose of alerting occupants by a distinct audible signal; that incorporate a sensor, control components, and an alarm notification appliance in a single unit operated from a power source either in the unit or obtained at the point of installation; and that meet the standards established by the UL.

*“Carbon monoxide detection system”* means a system or portion of a combination system that consists of a control unit, components, and circuits arranged to monitor and annunciate the status of carbon monoxide alarm initiating devices and to initiate the appropriate response to those signals and that meets the standards established by the UL.

*“Communicating opening”* means a door, window, or any other opening that allows air to be exchanged between a fuel-burning appliance or garage and a sleeping unit or dwelling unit.

*“Dwelling unit”* means a room or suite of rooms used for human habitation that provides complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation.

*“Existing”* means buildings, facilities, or conditions that are already in existence, constructed or officially authorized prior to July 1, 2018.

*“Fuel”* means coal, kerosene, oil, fuel gases, or other petroleum products or hydrocarbon products such as wood that emit carbon monoxide as a byproduct of combustion.

*“Fuel-burning”* or *“fuel-fired”* means an appliance, heater, furnace, or fireplace that uses and combusts fuel as part of its designed use.

*“Garage”* or *“attached garage”* means a building or portion of a building in which motor vehicles are stored or kept.

*“Listed”* means equipment, materials, products, or services included in a list published by an organization acceptable to the department or local fire code official and concerned with evaluation of products or services that maintains periodic inspection of production of listed equipment or materials or periodic evaluation of services and whose listing states either that the equipment, material, product or service meets identified standards or has been tested and found suitable for a specified purpose.

*“Multiple-unit residential building”* means a building that contains more than two dwelling units or sleeping units. “Multiple-unit residential building” includes but is not limited to condominiums, townhouses, co-ops, apartment houses or portions of a building or an apartment house, hotels, motels, dormitories, or rooming houses.

*“Open-ended corridor”* means an interior corridor that is open on each end and connects to an exterior stairway or ramp at each end with no intervening doors or separation from the corridor.

*“Single-family rental unit”* means a building that contains not more than two dwelling units or sleeping units that are rented or leased for living purposes.

*“Single-family residence”* or *“single-family dwelling”* means a building that contains not more than two dwelling units that are used, or intended or designed to be used, for living purposes.

*“Sleeping unit”* means a room or space in a building in which people sleep, which can also include permanent provisions for living, eating, and either sanitation or kitchen facilities but not both. Such rooms and spaces that are also part of a dwelling unit are not sleeping units.

[ARC 9472C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—280.17(10A) Requirements for carbon monoxide alarms and detection systems.**

**280.17(1)** *Standards for carbon monoxide alarms and carbon monoxide detection systems.* All carbon monoxide alarms installed prior to July 1, 2025, shall meet the requirements of the NFPA Standard 720, 2012 edition, and be UL listed in accordance with UL 2034 edition 5 as revised August 7, 2024. All carbon monoxide alarms installed after July 1, 2025, shall meet the requirements of the NFPA Standard 72, 2022 edition. All carbon monoxide detection systems installed prior to July 1, 2025, shall meet the requirements for the NFPA Standard 720, 2012 edition; display a label or other identification issued by an approved testing agency; and be UL listed in accordance with UL 2075 edition 2 as revised August 4, 2023. All carbon monoxide detection systems installed after July 1, 2025, shall meet the requirements of the NFPA Standard 72, 2022 edition. All carbon monoxide alarms, combination carbon monoxide alarm/smoke alarms, and carbon monoxide detection systems installed under these rules must be listed with the UL.

**280.17(2)** *Carbon monoxide alarms required.* Carbon monoxide alarms are required in the following buildings if the building is served by a fuel-burning heater, fuel-burning furnace, fuel-burning appliance, or fuel-burning fireplace or has an attached garage.

a. Multiple-unit residential buildings and single-family residences for which construction began on or after July 1, 2018.

b. Existing single-family rental units, single-family residences, and multiple-unit residential buildings.

**280.17(3)** *Location.* A carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed in the following building locations:

a. In the immediate vicinity of every room used for sleeping purposes in each dwelling unit.

b. In each bedroom where a fuel-burning heater or furnace, fuel-burning appliance, or fireplace is located within the bedroom or its attached bathroom.

c. In each sleeping unit, if the sleeping unit or its attached bathroom contains a fuel-burning appliance, fuel-burning heater or furnace, or fireplace.

d. In the immediate vicinity of each sleeping unit where the sleeping unit or its attached bathroom does not contain a fuel-burning appliance, fuel-burning heater, or fireplace and is not served by a forced-air furnace.

**280.17(4)** *Location exceptions.* A carbon monoxide alarm is not required in the locations specified by subrule 280.17(3) when:

a. There are no communicating openings between the fuel-burning heater or furnace, fuel-burning appliance, fireplace, or attached garage and a dwelling unit or sleeping unit.

b. There are no communicating openings between the fuel-burning heater or furnace, fuel-burning appliance or fireplace and a dwelling unit or sleeping unit and when a dwelling unit or sleeping unit is located more than one story above or below an attached garage.

c. There are no communicating openings between the fuel-burning heater or furnace, fuel-burning appliance, or fireplace and a sleeping unit or dwelling unit and the attached garage connects to the building through an open-ended corridor.

d. A carbon monoxide alarm is located on the ceiling of the room containing the fuel-burning heater, fuel-burning appliance or fireplace, or in the first room or area between the fuel-burning heater, fuel-burning appliance or fireplace and the dwelling unit or sleeping unit.

**280.17(5)** *Forced-air furnace—exception.* A carbon monoxide alarm is not required in a dwelling unit or sleeping unit that is served by a fuel-burning forced-air furnace when a carbon monoxide alarm is located on the ceiling of the room containing the forced-air furnace or in the first room or area served by each main duct leaving the forced-air furnace and the carbon monoxide alarm signals are automatically transmitted to the occupants of each dwelling unit or sleeping unit served by the forced-air furnace.

**280.17(6)** *Carbon monoxide detection systems.* Commercially installed carbon monoxide detection systems that have the capability of notifying all occupants of dwelling units or sleeping units within a building are an acceptable alternative to the installation of carbon monoxide alarms and are deemed compliant with this chapter.

**280.17(7)** *Combination alarms.* The carbon monoxide alarm may be combined with smoke detecting devices provided that the combined unit complies with pertinent provisions of this chapter regarding smoke detectors in addition to carbon monoxide alarm standards. A combined carbon monoxide alarm/

smoke alarm shall emit different alarm signals for carbon monoxide and for smoke. Combination carbon monoxide alarm/smoke alarms are an acceptable alternative to carbon monoxide alarms.

**280.17(8)** *New construction—power source.* In buildings for which construction is begun on or after July 1, 2018, carbon monoxide alarms will receive their primary power from the building wiring when such wiring is served from a commercial source. Wiring will be permanent and without a disconnecting switch other than that required for overcurrent protection and will be equipped with a battery backup.

**280.17(9)** *Existing buildings—power source.* New and replacement carbon monoxide alarms installed in existing buildings may be solely battery operated or may plug into an electrical socket and have a battery backup.

**280.17(10)** *Responsibility for installation and maintenance of carbon monoxide alarms.* It is the responsibility of the owner, owner's agent, or manager of a multiple-unit residential building, single-family residence, or single-family rental unit to install carbon monoxide alarms in accordance with this chapter. However, if a dwelling unit in a multiple-unit residential building qualifies for a homestead credit pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 425, only the owner-occupant of the dwelling unit has the responsibility to install and maintain carbon monoxide alarms in accordance with this chapter.

**280.17(11)** *Maintenance of carbon monoxide alarms.*

*a.* It is the responsibility of the owner of a multiple-unit residential building, single-family rental unit, or dwelling unit to supply and install all required carbon monoxide alarms and to ensure that the batteries are in operating condition at the time the lessee, tenant, guest, or roomer takes possession of the dwelling unit or sleeping unit. The owner is responsible for providing written information regarding carbon monoxide alarm testing and maintenance to one lessee, tenant, guest, or roomer per dwelling unit or sleeping unit.

*b.* An owner or manager may require a lessee, tenant, guest, or roomer who has a residency longer than 30 days to be responsible for general maintenance, including but not limited to replacement of any required batteries of the carbon monoxide alarms and testing the carbon monoxide alarms in the lessee's, tenant's, guest's, or roomer's dwelling unit or sleeping unit. The lessee, tenant, guest, or roomer is responsible for notifying the owner or manager in writing of any deficiencies that the lessee, tenant, guest, or roomer cannot correct and providing the owner or manager access to the dwelling unit or sleeping unit so that deficiencies can be corrected.

**280.17(12)** *Deaf or hard-of-hearing tenant.* Upon request of a tenant who is deaf or hard of hearing, an owner of a multiple-unit residential building or a single-family rental unit that has a fuel-fired heater or appliance, a fireplace, or an attached garage, or the owner's agent, shall install light-emitting carbon monoxide alarms.

**280.17(13)** *Certification of installation required.* A person who files for a homestead credit pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 425 will certify that the dwelling unit that has a fuel-fired heater or furnace, a fuel-fired appliance, a fireplace, or an attached garage has carbon monoxide alarms installed in compliance with this chapter or that such alarms will be installed within 30 days of the date the filing for the credit is made.

**280.17(14)** *Inspections authorized.* Inspections may be conducted by the director; the director's subordinates; chiefs of local fire departments; state or local building inspectors; or other fire, building, or safety officials authorized by the director. Any inspections authorized under this rule are limited to the placement, repair, and operability of carbon monoxide alarms and carbon monoxide detection systems.

**280.17(15)** *Inoperable carbon monoxide alarms and corrective action.* Upon receiving written notification by a lessee, tenant, guest, or roomer or by the director; director's subordinates; state fire marshal; fire marshal's subordinates; a chief of a local fire department; a building inspector; or other fire, building or safety official that a carbon monoxide alarm is inoperable, the owner or manager of the multiple-unit residential building or single-family rental unit shall repair or replace the carbon monoxide alarm within 30 days. If the owner or manager fails to correct the situation within the 30 days after receipt of written notice, the tenant, guest, or roomer may cause the carbon monoxide alarm to be repaired or may purchase and install a carbon monoxide alarm required under this chapter and may deduct the repair cost or purchase price from the next rental payment or payments made by the tenant, guest, or roomer in accordance with Iowa Code section 10A.518(7).

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These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 10A.511 through 10A.525 and chapters 135B, 135C, 135J, 231C, and 237.

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