

CHAPTER 301  
STATE BUILDING CODE

[Prior to 12/21/05, see rules 661—16.1(103A) to 661—16.500(103A)]  
[Prior to 11/26/25, see Public Safety Department[661] Ch 301]

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

PART 1  
GENERAL PROVISIONS

**481—301.1(103A) Scope and applicability.** The provisions of this chapter apply to buildings and facilities subject to the state building code pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 103A, including sections 103A.10 and 103A.12, and provisions of state or federal law other than Iowa Code chapter 103A.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.2(103A) Definitions.** The definitions set forth in Iowa Code section 103A.3 are incorporated herein by reference. Additionally:

*“Appropriated by the state of Iowa”* means funds that are included in a bill enacted by the Iowa general assembly and signed by the governor or that are appropriated in a provision of the Iowa Code.

*“Board of appeals”* means the local board of appeals as created by local ordinance.

*“Building component”* means any part, subsystem, subassembly, or other system designed for use in, or as a part of, a structure, including but not limited to the following: structural, electrical, mechanical, fire protection, or plumbing systems, and including such variations thereof as are specifically permitted by regulation, and which variations are submitted as part of the building system or amendment thereof.

*“Building department”* means an agency of any governmental subdivision charged with the administration, supervision, or enforcement of building regulations, prescribed or required by state or local building regulations.

*“Building system”* means plans, specifications and documentation for a system of manufactured factory-built structures or buildings or for a type or a system of building components, including but not limited to the following: structural, electrical, mechanical, fire protection, or plumbing systems, and including such variations thereof as are specifically permitted by regulation, and which variations are submitted as part of the building system or amendment thereof.

*“Bureau”* means the building code bureau of the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing.

*“Construction cost”* means the total cost of the work to the owner of all elements of the project designed or specified by the design professional including the cost at current market rates of labor and materials furnished by the owner and equipment designed, specified or specifically provided by the design professional. Construction costs include the costs of management or supervision of construction or installation provided by a separate construction manager or contractor, plus a reasonable allowance for each construction manager’s or contractor’s overhead and profit.

*“Enforcement authority”* means any state agency or political subdivision of the state that has the authority to enforce the state building code.

*“Label”* means an approved device affixed to a factory-built structure or building, or building component, by an approved agency, evidencing code compliance.

*“Listing agency”* means an agency approved by the commissioner that is in the business of listing or labeling, that maintains a periodic inspection program on current production of listed models, and that makes available timely reports of such listing including specific information verifying that the product has been tested to approved standards and found acceptable for use in a specified manner.

*“Responsible design professional”* means a registered architect or licensed professional engineer who stamps and signs the documents submitted, pursuant to Iowa Code chapters 542B and 544A.

*“State fire code”* means administrative rules adopted by the director of the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing in consultation with the state fire marshal, pursuant to Iowa Code section 10A.511.

“*State mechanical code*” means the state mechanical code adopted by the state plumbing and mechanical systems board, pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 105.

“*State plumbing code*” means the state plumbing code adopted by the state plumbing and mechanical systems board, pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 105.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.3(103A) General provisions.** The provisions of the International Building Code, 2024 edition, published by the International Code Council, [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org), are hereby adopted by reference as the general requirements for building construction, with the following amendments:

**301.3(1)** Delete section 101.1.

**301.3(2)** Delete section 101.2 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

101.2 Scope. The provisions of this code apply to the construction, alteration, movement, enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, maintenance, removal and demolition of every building or structure or any appurtenances connected or attached to such buildings or structures.

Exception: Detached one- and two-family dwellings and multiple single-family dwellings (townhouses) not more than three stories above grade plane in height with a separate means of egress and their accessory structures shall comply with the International Residential Code, as amended by rule 481—301.8(103A).

**301.3(3)** Delete sections 101.4.1 through 101.4.6.

**301.3(4)** Delete section 102.6 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

102.6 Existing Structures. The legal occupancy of any structure existing on the date of adoption of this code is permitted to continue without change, except as specifically covered in this code or the state fire code, or as deemed necessary by the building code commissioner for the general safety and welfare of the occupants and the public.

**301.3(5)** Delete sections 103, 104, 105 and sections therein.

**301.3(6)** Delete section 106.2.

**301.3(7)** Delete section 107.1 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

107.1 General. Submittal documents consisting of construction documents, statement of special inspections, a geotechnical report and other data shall be submitted in one or more sets with each plan review application. The construction documents shall be prepared by a responsible design professional where required by the statutes of the jurisdiction in which the project is to be constructed. Where special conditions exist, the commissioner is authorized to require additional construction documents to be prepared by a responsible design professional.

Exception: The commissioner may waive the submission of construction documents and other data if it is found that the nature of the work applied for is such that review of construction documents is not necessary to obtain compliance with this code.

**301.3(8)** Delete sections 107.3, 107.4, and 107.5 and sections therein.

**301.3(9)** Delete sections 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, and 116 and sections therein.

**301.3(10)** Add the following to section 202, Definitions:

“Cabin Building.” A residential building or structure the use of which is transient in nature and which is used for sleeping purposes when not classified as an Institutional Group I or when not regulated by the International Residential Code.

**301.3(11)** Add the following to section 310.2:

Cabin buildings.

**301.3(12)** Add the following new section 408.9.1:

408.9.1 Windowed Buildings. Plans and specifications for windowed buildings or portions of windowed buildings shall include a rational analysis demonstrating a tenable environment for exiting from the smoke compartment in the area of fire origin.

**301.3(13)** Delete section 423 in its entirety and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

423 Storm Shelters.

423.1 General. Any storm shelter or weather safe room as defined by rule 481—301.38(103A) shall comply with ICC 500-2014.

423.1.1 Scope. In accordance with 481—Chapter 301, Part 6, this section applies to storm shelters and weather safe rooms constructed on or after January 1, 2011. This section does not require the construction

of a weather safe room or rooms for any construction project but does establish standards for design and construction of storm shelters and weather safe rooms when their construction is required by another statute, federal statute or regulation, or is incorporated voluntarily in a construction project.

**301.3(14)** Delete section 903.2.8, except for subsections 903.2.8.1 through 903.2.8.3, 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 in accord with 907 for R-1 occupancies.
5. No basements.
6. Maintain a fire separation of 20 feet from any other building or structure.
7. Comply with all applicable requirements of the state building code.

**301.3(15)** 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 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. Smoke detection shall be provided in corridors at a maximum spacing of 30 feet on center, and heat or smoke detection provided in any hazardous or nonoccupied areas.

Exceptions:

1. Group E occupancies with an occupant load of less than 50.
2. Manual fire alarm boxes are not necessary 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 necessary 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 necessary 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.

**301.3(16)** Add the following new section 1003.8:

1003.8 Frost Protection. Exterior landings at doors shall be provided with frost protection.

**301.3(17)** Add the following new section 1027.5.1:

1027.5.1 Exit Discharge Pathways. Exit discharge pathways shall be paved from all exits of the building to the public way.

**301.3(18)** 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 shall comply with ICC-300, Standard for Bleachers, Folding and Telescopic Seating, and Grandstands, 2012 edition, with the following amendments to ICC-300:

*a.* Delete section 105.2 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

105.2 Yearly inspection. 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 shall 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 restrictions 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.

*b.* Delete section 501.2 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

501.2 Inspections. All tiered seating that was installed prior to December 1, 2011, shall be inspected at least once a year. The inspection 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 restrictions on the person conducting the inspection unless otherwise provided by law. All folding and telescopic seating shall be inspected to evaluate compliance with the manufacturer's installation and operational instructions and be inspected during the opening and closing of such seating. The owner shall maintain documentation of the inspections, which show the date and name of the person conducting the inspection and are initialed by the person conducting the inspection.

**301.3(19)** Add the following new section 1100:

1100. Any building or facility in compliance with the applicable requirements of 481—Chapter 301, Part 2, is in compliance with any applicable requirements contained in the International Building Code concerning accessibility for persons with disabilities.

**301.3(20)** Delete chapter 29.

**301.3(21)** Amend section 3001.3 by adding the following new unnumbered paragraph after the introductory paragraph:

Notwithstanding the references in Chapter 35 to editions of national standards adopted in this section, any editions of these standards adopted by the elevator safety board in 481—Chapter 372 are hereby adopted by reference. If a standard is adopted by reference in this section and there is no adoption by reference of the same standard in 481—Chapter 372, the adoption by reference in this section is of the edition identified in Chapter 35.

**301.3(22)** Delete appendices A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, and P.

**301.3(23)** Retain Appendix C, Group U Agricultural Buildings.

**301.3(24)** Delete all references to the "International Plumbing Code" and insert in lieu thereof "state plumbing code".

**301.3(25)** Delete all references to the "International Fuel Gas Code" and insert in lieu thereof "rule 481—301.9(103A)".

**301.3(26)** Delete all references to the "International Mechanical Code" and insert in lieu thereof "state mechanical code".

**301.3(27)** Delete all references to the "International Residential Code" and insert in lieu thereof "rule 481—301.8(103A)".

**301.3(28)** Delete all references to the "International Energy Conservation Code" and insert in lieu thereof "481—Chapter 301, Part 3".

**301.3(29)** *Hospitals and health care facilities.*

*a.* A hospital, as defined in rule 481—280.2(10A), that is required to meet the provisions of the state building code is in compliance with the fire safety requirements of the state building code if the hospital is in compliance with the provisions of rule 481—280.14(10A). In any other case in which an applicable requirement of the Life Safety Code, adopted in 481—subrule 280.14(2), is inconsistent with an applicable requirement of the state building code, the hospital is in compliance with the state building code requirement if the Life Safety Code requirement is met.

*b.* A nursing facility or hospice, as defined in rule 481—280.2(10A), that is required to meet the provisions of the state building code is in compliance with the fire safety requirements of the state building code if the nursing facility or hospice is in compliance with the provisions of rule 481—280.14(10A). In any other case in which an applicable requirement of the Life Safety Code, adopted in 481—subrule 280.14(2), is inconsistent with an applicable requirement of the state building code, the nursing facility or hospice is in compliance with the state building code requirement if the Life Safety Code requirement is met.

*c.* An intermediate care facility, as defined in rule 481—280.2(10A), that is required to meet the provisions of the state building code is in compliance with the fire safety requirements of the state building code if the intermediate care facility is in compliance with the provisions of rule 481—280.14(10A). In any other case in which an applicable requirement of the Life Safety Code, as adopted in 481—subrule 280.14(2), is inconsistent with an applicable requirement of the state building code, the intermediate care facility is in compliance with the state building code requirement if the Life Safety Code requirement is met.

*d.* An ambulatory surgical center, as defined in rule 481—280.2(10A), that is required to meet the provisions of the state building code is in compliance with the fire safety requirements of the state building code if the ambulatory surgical center is in compliance with the provisions of rule 481—280.14(10A). In any other case in which an applicable requirement of the Life Safety Code, as adopted in 481—subrule 280.14(2), is inconsistent with an applicable requirement of the state building code, the ambulatory surgical center is in compliance with the state building code requirement if the Life Safety Code requirement is met.

*e.* A religious nonmedical health care institution that is required to meet the provisions of the state building code is in compliance with the provisions of the state building code if the institution is in compliance with the provisions of rule 481—280.14(10A). In any other case in which an applicable requirement of the Life Safety Code, as adopted in 481—subrule 280.14(2), is inconsistent with an applicable requirement of the state building code, the religious nonmedical health care institution is in compliance with the state building code requirement if the Life Safety Code requirement is met.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.4(103A) Mechanical requirements.** The provisions of the state mechanical code, 481—Chapter 426, as adopted and amended by the state plumbing and mechanical systems board pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 105 are hereby adopted by reference as the requirements for mechanical installations.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.5(103A) Electrical requirements.** The provisions of the state electrical code, as adopted and amended in 481—Chapter 404, are hereby adopted by reference as the requirements for electrical installations.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.6(103A) Plumbing requirements.**

**301.6(1)** Provisions of the state plumbing code, 481—Chapter 425, adopted by the state plumbing and mechanical systems board pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 105, apply to plumbing installations in this state.

**301.6(2)** Factory-built structures, as referenced by Iowa Code section 103A.10(3), that contain plumbing installations are allowed to comply with either the state plumbing code or with the International Plumbing Code, 2024 edition, published by the International Code Council, located at [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org). The manufacturer's data plate must indicate which plumbing code was utilized for compliance with this rule, as set forth in 481—paragraph 321.610(15) "e."

**301.6(3)** Private sewage disposal systems shall comply with 567—Chapter 69.  
[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.7(103A) Existing buildings.** The provisions of the International Existing Building Code, 2024 edition, published by the International Code Council, located at [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org), are hereby adopted by reference as the requirements for repair, alteration, change of occupancy, addition, and relocation of existing buildings, with the following amendments:

**301.7(1)** Delete section 101.1.

**301.7(2)** Delete section 101.4.2 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

101.4.2 Buildings Previously Occupied. The legal occupancy of any structure existing on the date of adoption of this code shall be permitted to continue without change, except as specifically covered in this code or the state fire code, or as deemed necessary by the commissioner for the general safety and welfare of the occupants and the public.

**301.7(3)** Delete sections 101.5 and 101.6.

**301.7(4)** Delete sections 103, 104, and 105.

**301.7(5)** Delete sections 106.1, 106.3, 106.4, 106.5, and 106.6.

**301.7(6)** Delete sections 108, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116 and 117.

**301.7(7)** Delete section 306.

**301.7(8)** Delete all references to the “International Plumbing Code” and insert in lieu thereof “state plumbing code”.

**301.7(9)** Delete all references to the “International Fuel Gas Code” and insert in lieu thereof “rule 481—301.9(103A)”.

**301.7(10)** Delete all references to the “International Mechanical Code” and insert in lieu thereof “state mechanical code”.

**301.7(11)** Delete all references to the “International Building Code” and insert in lieu thereof “rule 481—301.3(103A)”.

**301.7(12)** Delete all references to the “International Residential Code” and insert in lieu thereof “rule 481—301.8(103A)”.

**301.7(13)** Delete all references to the “International Fire Code” and insert in lieu thereof “state fire code”.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.8(103A) Residential construction requirements.** The provisions of the International Residential Code, 2024 edition, published by the International Code Council, located at [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org), are hereby adopted by reference as the requirements for construction, alteration, movement, enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, removal, and demolition 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, with the following amendments:

**301.8(1)** Delete section R101.1.

**301.8(2)** Delete sections R103 through R114 and sections therein.

**301.8(3)** NOTE: The values for Table R301.2 are determined by the location of the project and referenced footnotes from Table R301.2.

**301.8(4)** Amend section R306.1.7 by striking the words “Chapter 3 of the International Private Sewage Disposal Code” and inserting in lieu thereof “567—Chapter 69”.

**301.8(5)** Delete section R309.1.

NOTE: Deletion of section R309.1, which would have required the installation of sprinklers in newly constructed townhouses, is consistent with 2010 Iowa Acts, Senate Joint Resolution 2009.

**301.8(6)** Delete section R309.2.

NOTE: Deletion of section R309.2, which would have required the installation of sprinklers in newly constructed one- and two-family residences, is consistent with 2010 Iowa Acts, Senate Joint Resolution 2009.

**301.8(7)** Delete section R319.1 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

R319.1 Emergency escape and rescue required as follows: Basements, habitable attics and every sleeping room have at least one operable emergency and rescue opening that opens directly into a public street, public alley, yard or court. Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, emergency egress and rescue openings are in each sleeping room, but are not necessary in adjoining areas of the basement. Where emergency escape and rescue openings are provided, they have a sill height of not more than 44 inches (1118 mm) above an adjacent permanent interior standing surface that is no less than 36 inches wide and 18 inches deep and no more than 24 inches high. Where a door opening having a threshold below the adjacent ground elevation serves as an emergency escape and rescue opening and is provided with a bulkhead enclosure, the bulkhead enclosure complies with section R319.3. The net clear opening dimensions are obtained by the normal operation of the emergency escape and rescue opening from the inside. Emergency escape and rescue openings with a finished sill height below the adjacent ground elevation are provided with a window well in accordance with section R319.2. Emergency escape and rescue openings open directly into a public way, or to a yard or court that opens to a public way.

Exceptions:

- Basements used only to house mechanical equipment and not exceeding total floor area of 200 square feet (18.58 m<sup>2</sup>).
- Storm shelters constructed in accordance with 481—Chapter 301, Part 2.
- Where the dwelling unit or townhouse unit is equipped with an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with section P2904, sleeping rooms in basements are not required to have emergency escape and rescue openings provided that the basement has either (1) one means of egress complying with section R318 and one emergency escape and rescue opening or (2) two means of egress complying with section R318.
- A yard is not required to open directly into a public way where the yard opens to an unobstructed path from the yard to the public way if the path has a width of not less than 36 inches (914 mm).

**301.8(8)** Delete chapter 11 and insert in lieu thereof rule 481—301.24(103A).

**301.8(9)** Delete chapter 24 and sections therein and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

All fuel gas piping installations shall comply with rule 481—301.9(103A).

**301.8(10)** Delete chapters 25 through 33 and sections therein, except for section P2904, and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

All plumbing installations shall comply with the state plumbing code as adopted by the state plumbing and mechanical systems board pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 105.

Exception: Factory-built structures, as referenced by Iowa Code section 103A.10(3), that contain plumbing installations are allowed to comply with either the state plumbing code or with the International Plumbing Code, 2024 edition, published by the International Code Council, located at [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org). The manufacturer's data plate must indicate which plumbing code was utilized for compliance with this rule, as set forth in 481—paragraph 321.610(15)“e.”

**301.8(11)** Delete chapters 34 to 43 and sections therein and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

The provisions of the state electrical code, as adopted and amended in 481—Chapter 404, are hereby adopted by reference as the requirements for electrical installations.

**301.8(12)** Delete appendices AA through CH.

**301.8(13)** Delete all references to the “International Plumbing Code” and insert in lieu thereof “state plumbing code”.

**301.8(14)** Delete all references to the “International Mechanical Code” and insert in lieu thereof “state mechanical code”.

**301.8(15)** Delete all references to the “International Fuel Gas Code” and insert in lieu thereof “rule 481—301.9(103A)”.

**301.8(16)** Delete all references to the “International Building Code” and insert in lieu thereof “rule 481—301.3(103A)”.

**301.8(17)** Delete all references to the “International Fire Code” and insert in lieu thereof “state fire code”.

**481—301.9(103A) Fuel gas piping requirements.** Fuel gas piping shall comply with the requirements of rule 481—425.3(105). Liquefied petroleum gas facilities and appliances shall comply with rule 481—286.1(101).

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.10(103A) Transition period.** A construction project subject to the provisions of any rule in Part 1 or Part 3 and commenced within 12 months after the effective date of revised standards may comply with either the newly adopted standards or the previous standards. “Commenced” means that the submitter has obtained preliminary approval from the commissioner or a local building department pursuant to rule 481—300.6(103A).

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.11 to 301.15** Reserved.

## PART 2

### ACCESSIBILITY OF BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC

**481—301.16(103A,104A) Purpose and scope.** Part 2 is intended to ensure that buildings and facilities used by the public, other than places of worship, are accessible to, and functional for, persons with disabilities. Rule 481—301.18(103A,104A) applies statewide to new construction of buildings and facilities available to the public and to renovation and rehabilitation projects on existing buildings and facilities when local or state building codes require compliance with standards for new construction. Rule 481—301.19(103A,104A) applies statewide to construction of multiunit residential buildings.

**301.16(1)** NOTE A. Although rule 481—301.18(103A,104A) is based upon the federal 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and adopts the language of the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design by reference, and rule 481—301.19(103A,104A) is based upon the requirements of the federal Fair Housing Act, determinations of state and local building officials charged with enforcement of these rules are not binding on other state or federal jurisdictions and do not prevent the federal government or another state from making a different determination under applicable law.

**301.16(2)** NOTE B. Other federal and state laws address requirements for accessibility for persons with disabilities and may be applicable to buildings and facilities subject to Part 2. Nothing in these rules should be interpreted as limiting the applicability of other provisions of state or federal law. These provisions include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Iowa Code chapter 216, the Iowa civil rights Act of 1965.
- b. Iowa Code chapter 216C, which enumerates the rights of persons who are blind or partially blind and persons with physical disabilities.
- c. Iowa Code chapter 321L and 661—Chapter 18, which relate to requirements for parking for persons with disabilities.
- d. The federal Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-480).
- e. The federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112).
- f. The federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-284); the federal Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-430); and related regulations, including 24 CFR 100, Subpart D.

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**481—301.17(103A,104A) Definitions.** The following definitions apply to Part 2:

“ADA” means the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (Public Law 101-336).

“ADAAG” means Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities, 28 CFR Part 36, Appendix A, as revised through July 1, 1994.

“ADASAD 2010” means 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, published by the U.S. Department of Justice, September 15, 2010. Included in the publication are accessibility standards for state and local government facilities and accessibility standards for public accommodations and commercial facilities.

NOTE: Copies of ADASAD 2010 and additional explanatory material may be downloaded from [www.ada.gov/law-and-regs](http://www.ada.gov/law-and-regs).

“IBC” means the International Building Code, adopted in rule 481—301.3(103A).

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.18(103A,104A) Accessibility of buildings and facilities available to the public.** Buildings and facilities that are available to the public, other than places of worship, shall comply with one of the following:

**301.18(1)** Applicable provisions of ADASAD 2010.

**301.18(2)** IBC, Chapter 11 and applicable accessibility provisions contained in IBC.

NOTE: Approval of construction plans based upon compliance with the applicable provisions of the IBC, as provided, does not relieve the designer, builder, building owner, or building operator from responsibility under federal law to comply with all applicable provisions of the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.19(103A,104A) Making apartments accessible and functional for persons with disabilities.**

**301.19(1)** Multiple dwelling unit buildings. This rule applies to all multiple dwelling unit buildings that consist of four or more dwelling units if such buildings have one or more elevators. In such buildings without an elevator, all ground floor units must be accessible. The requirements of this rule apply to the individual dwelling units and the common use spaces that are accessible to persons with disabilities in multiple dwelling unit buildings.

EXCEPTION 1: A multiple dwelling unit building is deemed to be in compliance with this rule if it is located in a local jurisdiction that has enacted accessibility rules that have been recognized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as providing a safe harbor for compliance with the accessibility requirements established in the federal Fair Housing Act and if the building has been found to be in compliance with those requirements unless the building is required to comply with the requirements of the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards or other applicable standards that may be more restrictive than the provisions of this rule.

EXCEPTION 2: Certain multiple dwelling unit buildings are required to comply with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, published by the U.S. Access Board, 1988. Compliance with the provisions of this rule does not substitute for compliance with any applicable provision of the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards or any other applicable standards that may be more restrictive than the provisions of this rule.

NOTE: Compliance with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards is generally necessary for buildings and facilities constructed with federal financial assistance.

“*Dwelling unit*” means a single unit of residence for a household of one or more persons. Examples of a dwelling unit covered by these rules include a condominium, an apartment unit within an apartment building, and another type of dwelling in which sleeping accommodations are provided but toilet or cooking facilities are shared by occupants of more than one room or portion of the dwelling. Examples of the latter include dormitory rooms and sleeping accommodations in shelters intended for occupancy as a residence for homeless persons.

“*Ground floor*” means a floor of a building with a building entrance on an accessible route. A building may have one or more ground floors.

a. The individual dwelling units shall contain an accessible route into and through the unit, as well as meet the following:

(1) All doors intended for use as passage through the dwelling unit have a clear opening of at least 32” nominal width with the door open 90 degrees, measured between the face of the door and the stop. Openings more than 24” in depth are not considered doorways.

NOTE: A 34” door, hung in the standard manner, provides an acceptable 32” opening.

(2) Except at doorways, the minimum clear width of the accessible route is at least 36” wide.

(3) In single-story units, special features such as lofts or sunken or raised areas may be on an accessible route provided the areas do not interrupt the accessible route through the remainder of the dwelling unit.

(4) In multistory dwelling units in buildings with elevators, the story of the unit that is served by the building elevator is the primary entry to the unit and such entry/accessible floor complies with the requirements of subparagraphs (1), (2) and (3) above. The entry/accessible floor contains a bathroom or powder room that complies with paragraph "c" below.

(5) Exterior deck, patio, or balcony surfaces are no more than  $\frac{1}{2}$ " below the floor level of the interior of the dwelling unit unless they are constructed of impervious material such as concrete, brick or flagstone. In such case, the surface is no more than 4" below the floor level of the interior or lower if required by local building code.

(6) Thresholds at exterior doors, including sliding tracks, are no higher than  $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Thresholds and changes in elevations as in subparagraph (5) above are beveled with a slope no greater than 1:2.

b. Kitchens shall meet or be adaptable to meet the following:

(1) A clear floor space at least 30"  $\times$  48" that allows a parallel approach by a person in a wheelchair is provided at the range or cooktop and the sink. Either a parallel or forward approach is provided at the oven, dishwasher, refrigerator/freezer or trash compactor.

(2) Clearance between counters and all opposing base cabinets, countertops, appliances or walls are at least 40". In U-shaped kitchens with a sink or cooktop at the base of the "U," the base cabinets are removable at that location or a 60" turning radius is provided.

c. All bathrooms of covered multifamily dwelling units shall comply with provisions of subparagraph (1) of this paragraph or at least one bathroom in the dwelling unit shall comply with provisions of subparagraph (2) of this paragraph and all other bathrooms and powder rooms within the dwelling unit must be on an accessible route with usable entry doors in accordance with paragraph "a" above. "Powder room" means a room with a toilet and sink.

In multistory dwelling units, only those bathrooms on the accessible level are subject to these requirements. Where the powder room is the only facility provided on the accessible level of a multistory dwelling unit, the powder room must comply with the provisions of subparagraph (1) or (2) of this paragraph.

(1) Sufficient maneuvering space is provided within the bathroom for a person using a wheelchair or other mobility aid to enter and close the door, use the fixtures, reopen the door and exit. Doors may swing into the clear floor space provided at any fixture if the maneuvering space is provided. Maneuvering space may include any knee space or toe space available below the bathroom fixtures.

Clear floor space at fixtures may overlap.

If the shower stall is the only bathing facility provided in the covered dwelling unit, the shower stall measures at least 36"  $\times$  36".

NOTE: Cabinets under lavatories are acceptable provided the bathroom has space to allow a parallel approach by a person in a wheelchair; if parallel approach is not possible within the space, any cabinets provided would have to be removable to afford the necessary knee clearance for forward approach.

(2) Where the door swings into the bathroom, there is a clear space (2'6"  $\times$  4'0") within the room to position a wheelchair or other mobility aid clear of the path of the door as it is closed and to permit the use of the fixtures. This clear space can include any knee space and toe space available below the bathroom fixtures.

Where the door swings out, a clear space is provided within the bathroom for a person using a wheelchair or other mobility aid to position the wheelchair such that the person is allowed use of the fixtures. There is a clear space to allow persons using wheelchairs to reopen the door to exit.

When both tub and shower fixtures are provided in the bathroom, at least one fixture is made accessible. When two or more lavatories are provided in a bathroom, at least one is made accessible.

Toilets are located within bathrooms in a manner that permits a grab bar to be installed on one side of the fixture. In locations where toilets are adjacent to walls or bathtubs, the centerline of the fixture is a minimum of 1'6" from the obstacle. The nongrab bar side of the toilet fixture is a minimum of 1'3" from the finished surface of the adjoining walls, vanities, or the edge of a lavatory.

Vanities and lavatories are installed with the center line of the fixture a minimum of 1'3" horizontally from an adjoining wall or fixture. The top of the fixture rim is a maximum height of 2'10" above the

finished floor. If knee space is provided below the vanity, the bottom of the apron is at least 2'3" above the floor. If provided, full knee space (for front approach) is at least 1'5" deep.

Bathtubs and tub/showers located in the bathroom provide a clear access aisle adjacent to the lavatory that is at least 2'6" wide and extends for a length of 4'0" measured from the head of the bathtub.

Stall showers in the bathroom may be of any size or configuration. A minimum clear floor space 2'6" wide × 4'0" deep should be available outside the stall. If the shower stall is the only bathing facility provided in the covered dwelling unit, or on the accessible level of a covered multistory unit, and measures a nominal 36" × 36", the shower stall has reinforcing to allow for installation of an optional wall-hung bench seat.

*d.* Walls in bathrooms that are to be adaptable will be reinforced to allow later installation of grab bars around toilet, tub, shower stall and shower seat where provided.

Where the toilet is not placed adjacent to a side wall, provision shall be made for floor-mounted foldaway or similar alternative grab bars. Where the powder room is the only toilet facility located on an accessible level of a multistory dwelling unit, it must comply with this requirement for reinforced walls for grab bars.

NOTE: A tub may have shelves or benches at either end, or a tub may be installed without surrounding walls, if there is provision for alternative mounting of grab bars. For example, a sunken tub placed away from walls could have reinforced areas for installation of floor-mounted grab bars. The same principle applies to shower stalls, e.g., glass-walled stalls could be planned to allow floor-mounted grab bars to be installed later.

Reinforcement for grab bars may be provided in a variety of ways (for example, by plywood or wood blocking) so long as the necessary reinforcement is placed so as to permit later installation of appropriate grab bars.

*e.* Public and common use areas shall be readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

*f.* Light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats and other environmental controls shall be located no higher than 48", and no lower than 15", above the floor. If the reach is over an obstruction between 20" and 25" in depth, the maximum height is reduced to 44" for forward approach; or 46" for side approach, provided the obstruction is no more than 24" in depth. Obstructions should not extend more than 25" from the wall beneath a control. (See ADAAG Figure 5.)

NOTE: Controls or outlets that do not satisfy these specifications are acceptable provided that comparable controls or outlets (i.e., that perform the same functions) are provided within the same area and are accessible.

**301.19(2)** Elevators. An elevator meeting the requirements established for accessible elevators in Section 4.10 of the ADAAG is required in any apartment building of four or more stories.

NOTE: Elevators are not necessary in apartment buildings of three or fewer stories; however, the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, or any other applicable standard, may require the installation of an elevator. If an elevator is not required to be installed by this rule, then the elevator is not subject to the requirements of Section 4.10 of the ADAAG.

**301.19(3)** Any covered units within a multiple unit dwelling which comply with a code or standard which has been certified as a safe harbor for compliance with the accessibility requirements of the federal Fair Housing Act by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development are in compliance with these rules unless the covered units are required to comply with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards or any other applicable requirements which may be more restrictive than the provisions of this rule.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.20 to 301.22** Reserved.

PART 3  
REQUIREMENTS FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION IN CONSTRUCTION

**481—301.23(103A) Scope and applicability of energy conservation requirements.**

**301.23(1) Scope.** Part 3 establishes thermal energy efficiency standards for the design of new buildings and structures or portions thereof, additions to existing buildings, and renovation and remodeling of existing buildings, except for residential buildings of one or two dwelling units, that are intended for human occupancy and that are heated or cooled by regulating their exterior envelopes and selection of their heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems, service water heating systems and equipment for the efficient use of energy, and lighting efficiency standards for buildings intended for human occupancy that are lighted.

**301.23(2) Applicability.** Part 3 applies to design and construction of buildings that are intended for human occupancy throughout the state of Iowa. Any construction of buildings or facilities that are intended for human occupancy and that are heated or cooled is covered, with the exception of renovation and remodeling of residential buildings of one or two dwelling units, which are not covered. Rule 481—301.24(103A) establishes standards for design and construction of residential buildings of three or fewer stories. Rule 481—301.25(103A) establishes standards for design and construction of commercial buildings and residential buildings of four or more stories. The occupancy of any building covered by this chapter shall be determined based upon the occupancy definitions in chapter 3 of the International Building Code, as adopted in rule 481—301.3(103A).

**301.23(3) Review by architect or engineer.** Plan review shall meet the following criteria:

*a.* The plans and specifications for all buildings to be constructed that exceed a total volume of 100,000 cubic feet of enclosed space that is heated or cooled are reviewed by a registered architect or licensed professional engineer for compliance with applicable energy efficiency standards. Buildings with less than 100,000 cubic feet can be reviewed by the owner or designated representative.

*b.* A statement that a review has been accomplished and that the design complies with the energy efficiency standards is signed and sealed by the responsible registered architect or licensed professional engineer. This statement is filed with the commissioner or a local building official on a form approved by the commissioner prior to construction or before obtaining any local permits. The statement is filed with the commissioner for any project that is subject to plan review by the building code bureau.

*c.* If the plans and specifications relating to energy efficiency for a specific structure have been approved, additional buildings may be constructed from those same plans and specifications without need of further approval if construction begins within five years of the date of approval. Alterations of a structure that has been previously approved do not require a review because of these changes, provided the basic structure remains unchanged and no additional energy is necessary for heating, cooling or lighting.

*d.* Prior to the completion of construction, no changes are made to any approved plan or specifications that increase the amount of energy used for heating, cooling, or lighting unless the changes are approved by the responsible registered architect or licensed professional engineer in writing and notice has been filed with the commissioner or a local building official. The commissioner or a local building official is notified of any change that is anticipated to decrease the amount of energy used. The commissioner is notified pursuant to this paragraph for any project that is subject to plan review by the bureau.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.24(103A) Residential energy code.** The International Energy Conservation Code – Residential Provisions, 2012 edition, published by the International Code Council, located at [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org), is adopted by reference as the residential energy code of the state of Iowa building code, applicable to residential construction limited to three or fewer stories throughout the state of Iowa, with the following amendments:

**301.24(1)** Delete section R101.1.

**301.24(2)** Delete section R101.2 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

R101.2 Scope. This code applies to residential buildings and the building sites and associated systems and equipment as defined pursuant to 481—subrule 301.23(2). The remodeling or renovation of one- and two-family dwelling units is not within the scope of this code.

**301.24(3)** Delete section R103.3.1.

**301.24(4)** Delete section R103.3.2.

**301.24(5)** Delete section R103.3.3.

**301.24(6)** Delete section R104.1 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

R104.1 General. Construction or other work that is required to be inspected by state law or local ordinance shall be in accordance with sections R104.2 through R104.8. The commissioner has authority to perform audits to ensure compliance with this code. When local governments conduct compliance audits, the information may be provided to the Department of Energy or to the commissioner in a timely way. Local governments may contract with the commissioner to conduct audits.

**301.24(7)** Delete sections R108 and R109 and all sections contained therein.

**301.24(8)** Delete section R402.1.1 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

R402.1.1 Insulation and fenestration criteria. The building thermal envelope shall meet the requirements of Table R402.1.1 based on the climate zone specified in chapter 3.

Table R402.1.1

Table R402.1.1 Insulation and Fenestration Requirements by Component<sup>a</sup>

Climate Zone	Fenestration U-Factor <sup>b</sup>	Skylight U-Factor <sup>b</sup>	Glazed Fenestration SHGC <sup>b,e</sup>	Ceiling R-Value	Wood Frame Wall R-Value	Mass Wall R-Value <sup>i</sup>	Floor R-Value	Basement Wall R-Value <sup>c</sup>	Slab R-Value & Depth <sup>d</sup>	Crawl Space <sup>e</sup> Wall R-Value
1	NR	.75	.25	30	13	3/4	13	0	0	0
2	.40	.65	.25	38	13	4/6	13	0	0	0
3	.35	.55	.25	38	20 or 13+5 <sup>h</sup>	8/13	19	5/13 <sup>f</sup>	0	5/13
4	.35	.55	.40	49	20 or 13+5 <sup>h</sup>	8/13	19	10/13	10, 2ft	10/13
5	.32	.55	NR	49	20 or 13+5 <sup>h</sup>	13/17	30 <sup>g</sup>	15/19	10, 2ft	15/19
6	.32	.55	NR	49	20 or 13+5 <sup>h</sup>	15/20	30 <sup>g</sup>	15/19	10, 4ft	15/19
7 & 8	.32	.55	NR	49	20+5 or 13+10 <sup>h</sup>	19/21	38 <sup>g</sup>	15/19	10, 4ft	15/19

<sup>a</sup> R-values are minimums. U-factors and SHGC are maximums. When insulation is installed in a cavity that is less than the label or design thickness of the insulation, the installed R-value of the insulation shall not be less than the R-value specified in the table.

<sup>b</sup> The fenestration U-factor column excludes skylights. The SHGC column applies to all glazed fenestration. Exception: Skylights may be excluded from glazed fenestration SHGC requirements in Climate Zones 1 through 3 where the SHGC for such skylights does not exceed .30.

<sup>c</sup> “15/19” means R-15 continuous insulation on the interior or exterior of the home or R-19 cavity insulation at the interior of the basement wall. “15/19” shall be permitted to be met with R-13 cavity insulation on the interior of the basement wall plus R-5 continuous insulation on the interior or exterior of the home. “10/13” means R-10 continuous insulation on the interior or exterior of the home or R-13 cavity insulation at the interior of the basement wall.

<sup>d</sup> R-5 shall be added to the slab edge R-values for heated slabs. Insulation depth shall be the depth of the footing or 2 feet, whichever is less in Climate Zones 1 through 3 for heated slabs.

<sup>e</sup> There are no SHGC requirements in the Marine Zone.

<sup>f</sup> Basement wall insulation is not necessary in warm-humid locations as defined by Figure R301.1 and Table R301.1.

<sup>g</sup> Or insulation sufficient to fill the framing cavity, R-19 minimum.

<sup>h</sup> First value is cavity insulation; second value is continuous insulation or insulated siding. Therefore, “13+5” means R-13 cavity insulation plus R-5 continuous insulation or insulated siding. If structural sheathing covers 40 percent or less of the exterior, continuous insulation R-value shall be permitted to be reduced by no more than R-3 in the locations where structural sheathing is used – to maintain a consistent total sheathing thickness.

<sup>i</sup> The second R-value applies when more than half the insulation is on the interior of the mass wall.

**301.24(9)** Delete section R402.4.1.2 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

R402.4.1.2 Testing shall meet the following requirements: The building or dwelling unit is tested and verified as having an air leakage rate not exceeding 5 air changes per hour in Climate Zones 1 and 2, and 4 air changes per hour in Climate Zones 3 through 8. Testing is conducted with a blower door at a pressure of 0.2 inches w.g. (50 pascals). Where required by the code official, testing is conducted by an approved third party and a written report of the results is signed by the party conducting the test and provided to the code official. Testing is performed at any time after creation of all penetrations of the building thermal envelope.

During testing:

1. Exterior windows and doors, fireplace and stove doors are closed, but not sealed beyond the intended weatherstripping or other infiltration control measures;
2. Dampers including exhaust, intake, makeup air, backdraft and flue dampers are closed, but not sealed beyond intended infiltration control measures;
3. Interior doors, if installed at the time of the test, are open;
4. Exterior doors for continuous ventilation systems and heat recovery ventilators are closed and sealed;
5. Heating and cooling systems, if installed at the time of the test, are turned off; and
6. Supply and return registers, if installed at the time of the test, are fully open.

**301.24(10)** Delete section R403.2.2 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

R403.2.2 Sealing is mandatory and shall meet the following requirements: Ducts, air handlers, and filter boxes are sealed. Joints and seams comply with either the International Mechanical Code or International Residential Code, as applicable.

Exceptions:

1. Air-impermeable spray foam products may be applied without additional joint seals.
2. Where a duct connection is made that is partially inaccessible, three screws or rivets are equally spaced on the exposed portion of the joint so as to prevent a hinge effect.
3. Continuously welded and locking-type longitudinal joints and seams in ducts operating at static pressures less than 2 inches of water column (500 Pa) pressure classification do not require additional closure systems.

Duct tightness is verified by either of the following:

1. Postconstruction test: Leakage to outdoors is less than or equal to 4 cfm (113.3 L/min) per 100 square feet (9.29 m<sup>2</sup>) of conditioned floor area or total leakage is less than or equal to 6 cfm (170 L/min) per 100 square feet (9.29 m<sup>2</sup>) of conditioned floor area when tested at a pressure differential of 0.1 inches w.g. (25 Pa) across the entire system, including the manufacturer's air handler enclosure. All register boots are taped or otherwise sealed during the test.
2. Rough-in test: Total leakage is less than or equal to 6 cfm (170 L/min) per 100 square feet (9.29 m<sup>2</sup>) of conditioned floor area when tested at a pressure differential of 0.1 inches w.g. (25 Pa) across the system, including the manufacturer's air handler enclosure. All registers are taped or otherwise sealed during the test. If the air handler is not installed at the time of the test, total leakage is less than or equal to 3 cfm (85 L/min) per 100 square feet (9.29 m<sup>2</sup>) of conditioned floor area.

Testing is conducted by an approved third party and a written report of the results is signed by the party conducting the test and provided to the code official.

Exception: The duct leakage test is not needed for ducts and air handlers located entirely within the building thermal envelope unless cavities are used for returns.

**301.24(11)** Delete section R403.2.3 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

R403.2.3 Building cavities (mandatory). Building framing cavities cannot be used as supply ducts. Building framing cavities may be used as return ducts if both of the following conditions exist:

1. Ducts must be tested for duct leakage in accordance with section R403.2.2.
2. Exterior wall cavities cannot be used for return ducts.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.25(103A) Adoption of nonresidential energy code.** The International Energy Conservation Code – Commercial Provisions, 2012 edition, published by the International Code Council, located at

[www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org), is hereby adopted by reference as the nonresidential energy code of the state building code, applicable to commercial construction or residential construction of four or more stories within the state of Iowa, with the following amendments:

**301.25(1)** Delete section C101.1.

**301.25(2)** Delete section C101.2 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

C101.2 Scope. This code applies to commercial buildings and the buildings' sites and associated systems and equipment as defined pursuant to 481—subrule 301.23(2).

**301.25(3)** Delete section C103.3.1.

**301.25(4)** Delete section C104.1 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section:

C104.1 General. Construction or other work that is to be inspected by state law or local ordinance shall be in accordance with sections C104.2 through C104.8.

**301.25(5)** Delete sections C108 and C109 and all sections contained therein.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.26 and 301.27** Reserved.

#### PART 4

#### LIFE CYCLE COST ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC FACILITIES

#### **481—301.28(470) Life cycle cost analysis.**

**301.28(1)** *Submission.* Any public agency as defined by Iowa Code section 470.1 will prepare a life cycle cost analysis in compliance with Iowa Code chapter 470 and submit the analysis to the commissioner before construction commences.

**301.28(2)** *Notification by state agency.* Any public agency that is a state agency as defined in Iowa Code section 7D.34 will, within 60 days of final selection of a design architect or engineer, notify the commissioner and the Iowa energy office in the economic development authority of the methodology to be used to perform the life cycle cost analysis. Notice will be given on the forms provided by the Iowa office of energy for this purpose. A life cycle cost analysis prepared by a state agency will be submitted in sufficient time ahead of the release of plans for bids to allow for revisions or additions that may be made to the plans. Public funds will not be used for the construction or renovation of a facility unless the design for the work is prepared in accordance with Iowa Code chapter 470 and the actual construction or renovation is consistent with the design.

**301.28(3)** *Exemptions from implementation.*

*a.* A public agency responsible for construction or renovation of a public facility may apply to the commissioner for exemption from any recommendation of the life cycle cost analysis.

*b.* The public agency will implement all recommendations of the life cycle cost analysis except those that have been approved for exemption by the commissioner and the director of the office of energy independence.

EXCEPTION: The public agency is not required to implement any recommendation that would result in a violation of any other provision of law. If the public agency determines that compliance with any recommendation of the life cycle cost analysis would result in a violation of law, the public agency will so notify the commissioner.

*c.* The commissioner and the director of the economic development authority will evaluate each request for an exemption on a case-by-case basis, considering the following factors:

- (1) The purpose of the facility or renovation;
- (2) Preservation of historic architectural features;
- (3) Site considerations;
- (4) Health and safety concerns;
- (5) Compliance with any other provisions of law; and
- (6) The technical feasibility of implementing the recommendation. “Technical feasibility” means that a recommendation may be implemented without altering major structural features of an existing facility.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.29** Reserved.

PART 5  
SUSTAINABLE DESIGN STANDARDS

**481—301.30(103A) Scope and purpose.**

**301.30(1) Scope.** The standards established in Part 5 apply to building construction projects in Iowa and are based upon state or federal statutory requirements; administrative rules adopted by state agencies that own, manage, regulate, or finance building construction projects; or federal regulations.

**301.30(2) Purpose.** The purpose of the standards in Part 5 is to promote sustainable design in building construction, which is defined as construction that meets current needs while not compromising the needs of future generations. Sustainable design standards are intended to minimize the adverse environmental impacts of construction and the built environment.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.31(103A) Definitions.** The following definitions apply to Part 5:

*“Commercial”* means a building construction project that is not residential.

*“Residential”* means a building construction project that involves a building or buildings, each of which is a detached one- or two-family dwelling or which consists of townhouses not more than three stories above grade in height with a separate means of egress to the exterior of the building for each dwelling unit and consisting entirely of dwelling units and their accessory structures.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.32(103A) Submission of projects.**

**301.32(1) Approval of building code commissioner.** Approval of a construction project as sustainably designed pursuant to these rules may be granted only by the commissioner. All requests for approval of a project as sustainably designed must be submitted to the bureau at 6200 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Des Moines, Iowa 50321.

**301.32(2) Building code approval.** No building construction project will be approved as a sustainably designed project pursuant to these rules unless construction plans for the project have been approved by the commissioner as meeting the state building code or by a local building department as meeting the applicable local building code.

**301.32(3) Projects subject to state building code.** If approval as a sustainably designed project is requested for a project that is otherwise subject to the state building code, approval may be requested by including a statement in the materials submitted pursuant to 481—Chapter 300 that approval for the project as sustainably designed is being requested.

**301.32(4) Projects subject to local building codes.** If approval from the commissioner is sought for a project that is subject to a local building code and code enforcement, approval may be sought by submitting construction plans to the bureau as provided in 481—Chapter 300, with a cover letter stating that approval of the project as a sustainably designed project is being requested and that the project has been submitted for review to the local building department. The commissioner will not issue approval of the project as a sustainably designed project until evidence of approval of the construction plans by the local building department are submitted to the bureau.

**301.32(5) Projects not otherwise subject to state or local building codes.** If approval as a sustainably designed project is sought for a building construction project that is otherwise not subject to the state building code or a local building code, approval may be sought by submitting construction plans for the project to the bureau as provided in 481—Chapter 300, with a cover letter stating that approval as a sustainably designed project is being requested and that the project is not subject to a local building code enforced by a local jurisdiction. The project will be subject to the state building code and to procedures and fees for review of construction plans and inspections as provided in 481—Chapter 300.

**301.32(6) *Application form.*** A completed application form prescribed by the commissioner shall be included with the submission of the construction plans for review of any project for which approval as a sustainably designed project is requested.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.33(103A) Sustainable design criteria for residential projects.** A residential building construction project will be approved as sustainably designed if it meets any of the following requirements:

**301.33(1)** Satisfaction of all of the mandatory criteria of the economic development authority's Iowa green streets criteria; or

**301.33(2)** Compliance with ICC 700 National Green Building Standard®, (ICC 700-2008 NGBS) published by the International Code Council, at the bronze level; or

**301.33(3)** Certification from the United States Green Building Council at the certified level or better in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building rating system for residential projects; or

**301.33(4)** Satisfaction of any alternative set of criteria submitted in advance to and approved by the commissioner as equivalent to the requirements of 481—subrules 300.33(1) through 300.33(3).

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.34(103A) Sustainable design criteria for commercial projects.** A commercial building construction project will be approved as sustainably designed if it meets the following applicable requirements:

**301.34(1)** If approval as a sustainably designed project is being sought in order to qualify for a tax credit or tax refund, the project will be approved as sustainably designed if the building receives certification from the United States Green Building Council at the Certified level or better in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building rating system and if the building complies with the requirements of ASHRAE 90.1 2007, Energy Standard for Buildings Except Low-Rise Residential Buildings, published by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).

**301.34(2)** If the project includes only the following commercial structures, satisfaction of all of the mandatory criteria of the Iowa green streets criteria:

- a. Day care centers.
- b. Vocational rehabilitation centers.
- c. Community centers.
- d. Senior centers.

EXCEPTION: Application may be made to the commissioner to accept satisfaction of all of the mandatory criteria of the Iowa green streets criteria as the basis for approval of other commercial projects as sustainably designed. Such submission should be limited to smaller commercial projects, and approval as a sustainably designed project is at the discretion of the commissioner, who will award such approval only if the commissioner is convinced that the Iowa green streets criteria are applicable to the project. Written approval for use of the Iowa green streets criteria pursuant to this exception shall be sought and obtained prior to submission of an application for approval as a sustainably designed project.

**301.34(3)** If a project involves the construction of a building or a portion of a building intended to host a data center or operations of a web portal business, it will be approved as sustainably designed if the project receives certification at the certified level from the United States Green Building Council in the LEED green building rating system and complies with the requirements of ASHRAE 90.1 2007, Energy Standard for Buildings Except Low-Rise Residential Buildings, published by the ASHRAE.

**301.34(4)** Satisfaction of any alternative set of criteria submitted in advance to and approved by the commissioner as equivalent to the requirements set forth in subrule 301.34(1).

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.35(103A) Fees.**

**301.35(1) *Projects subject to the state building code.*** For any project for which approval as a sustainably designed project is requested from the commissioner and which is otherwise subject to the

state building code, the additional fee for review for compliance with sustainable design standards is \$100, due prior to review of the application.

**301.35(2)** *Projects subject to local building codes and code enforcement.* For any project approved by a local building department as compliant with the local building code and for which approval as a sustainably designed project is requested, a fee of \$250 is due prior to the commissioner's review of the application for approval as a sustainably designed project.

**301.35(3)** *Projects not otherwise subject to a building code.* For any project for which approval as a sustainably designed project is requested and which is not otherwise subject to a building code, the plan review fee is the same as the plan review fee for the project established in 481—subrule 300.4(2). An additional fee of \$100 for review for compliance with the requirements set forth in Part 5 applies and is due prior to review of the plan.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.36** Reserved.

PART 6  
WEATHER SAFE ROOMS

**481—301.37(103A) Scope.** The standards adopted in Part 6 apply to the design and construction of weather safe rooms. This chapter does not require the construction of a weather safe room or rooms for any construction project but does establish standards for design and construction of weather safe rooms when their construction is necessary under another provision of law or is incorporated voluntarily in a construction project.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.38(103A) Definition.** The following definition applies to Part 6:

*“Weather safe room”* means a building, structure, or portion of a building or structure designated for use during a severe windstorm event.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.39(103A) Standards.** Any weather safe room shall be designed and constructed in compliance with the provisions of ICC 500-2014, ICC/NSSA Standard for the Design and Construction of Storm Shelters, published by the International Code Council, located at [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org). Any provision that would apply to a hurricane safe structure but not to a tornado safe structure does not apply. For any provision for which a distinction is made between a tornado safe structure and a hurricane safe structure, the requirement for a tornado safe structure applies.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.40** Reserved.

PART 7  
STATE HISTORIC BUILDING CODE

**481—301.41(103A) Scope and definition.** Part 7 applies to historic buildings and is an alternative to the state building code or local building codes for the buildings to which it applies.

*“Historic building”* means any building or structure that is listed in the state or National Register of Historic Places, that is designated as a historic property under local or state designation law or survey, that is certified as a contributing resource within a National Register-listed or locally designated historic district, or that has an opinion or certification that the property is eligible to be listed on the state or National Register of Historic Places either individually or as a contributing building to a historic district by the state historic preservation officer pursuant to Iowa Code section 103A.42 or the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

**481—301.42(103A) Adoption.** The provisions of the International Existing Building Code, 2024 edition, published by the International Code Council, located at [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org), are adopted as the alternative requirements for rehabilitation, preservation, restoration, repair, alteration, change of occupancy and relocation of and addition to historic buildings, with the following amendments:

**301.42(1)** Delete the definition of “historic building”.

**301.42(2)** Delete section 101.1.

**301.42(3)** Delete section 101.4.2 and insert in lieu thereof the following new section: 101.4.2 Buildings previously occupied. The legal occupancy of any structure existing on the date of adoption of this code is permitted to continue without change, except as specifically covered in this code or the state fire code, or as deemed necessary by the commissioner for the general safety and welfare of the occupants and the public.

**301.42(4)** Delete sections 101.5 and 101.6.

**301.42(5)** Delete sections 103, 104, and 105.

**301.42(6)** Delete sections 106.1, 106.3, 106.4, 106.5, and 106.6.

**301.42(7)** Delete sections 108, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116 and 117.

**301.42(8)** Delete section 306.

**301.42(9)** Delete appendix B and insert in lieu thereof:

“Any building or facility subject to Part 7 shall comply with the provisions of 481—Chapter 301, Part 2.”

**301.42(10)** Delete all references to the “International Fuel Gas Code” and insert in lieu thereof “rule 481—301.9(103A)”.

**301.42(11)** Delete all references to the “International Plumbing Code” and insert in lieu thereof “state plumbing code”.

**301.42(12)** Delete all references to the “International Mechanical Code” and insert in lieu thereof “state mechanical code”.

**301.42(13)** Delete all references to the “International Building Code” and insert in lieu thereof “rule 481—301.3(103A)”.

**301.42(14)** Delete all references to the “International Residential Code” and insert in lieu thereof “rule 481—301.8(103A)”.

**301.42(15)** Delete all references to the “International Fire Code” and insert in lieu thereof “state fire code”.

NOTE 1: International Existing Building Code, as adopted by rule 481—301.7(103A), Resource A, provides guidelines for evaluating fire ratings of archaic materials and assemblies that may be used by designers and code officials when evaluating compliance with provisions of this chapter.

NOTE 2: Except for elevators excluded from the jurisdiction of the department by the provisions of Iowa Code section 89A.2, each elevator is to comply with any applicable requirements established by the department and is subject to enforcement of any applicable regulation.

NOTE 3: Except for boilers and pressure vessels excluded from the jurisdiction of the department by the provisions of Iowa Code section 89.4, each boiler or pressure vessel is to comply with any applicable requirements established by the department and is subject to enforcement of any applicable regulations.

Any boiler that is subject to requirements established by the department of natural resources is to comply with any such requirements and is subject to enforcement of any applicable regulations by the department of natural resources.

[ARC 9474C, IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapters 103A, 104A, and 470.

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[Editorial change: IAC Supplement 12/30/09]

[Filed Emergency ARC 8771B, IAB 5/19/10, effective 5/1/10]

[Filed Emergency ARC 9627B, IAB 7/27/11, effective 7/8/11]  
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[Filed ARC 1301C (Notice ARC 1198C, IAB 11/27/13), IAB 2/5/14, effective 3/12/14]  
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[Filed ARC 9474C (Notice ARC 9052C, IAB 4/2/25), IAB 8/6/25, effective 9/10/25]  
[Editorial change: IAC Supplement 11/26/25]

<sup>1</sup> January 1, 2010, effective date of the portions of 661—301.8(103A) pertaining to Sections R313.1 and R313.2 delayed until the adjournment of the 2010 Session of the General Assembly by the Administrative Rules Review Committee at its meeting held December 8, 2009.