



**RESIDENTIAL CODE MANUAL  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
BUILDING AND SAFETY DIVISION  
Based on the 2011 LACRC**

**#1006  
R313.2  
Article 1  
10-09-12  
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**AUTOMATIC FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS**

The purpose of this policy is to highlight the fire sprinkler system requirement pursuant to Section R313.2 of the Residential Code (RC) and a recent interpretation of its applicability by the Office of the State Fire Marshal (SFM) with concurrence by the Department of Housing Community Development (HCD) in certain situations. RC Section R313.2 states as follows:

R313.2 One- and two-family dwellings automatic fire systems. An automatic residential fire sprinkler system shall be installed in one- and two- family dwellings.

Exception: An automatic residential fire sprinkler system shall not be required for additions or alterations to existing buildings that are not already provided with an automatic residential sprinkler system.

A request was submitted to the SFM regarding the scenarios noted below, and the following is their response and interpretation. In all of the scenarios noted below for existing dwellings, the assumption is that there is no existing fire sprinkler system nor was it originally required to be protected by a fire sprinkler system.

Q1. A property owner of an existing single-family dwelling (SFD) decides to divide it into a two-family dwelling through alteration and addition. Is a new fire sprinkler system required to be installed in the newly created dwelling unit or both?

ANSWER: The SFM views this construction work as an alteration/addition to the existing dwelling and would not require the sprinkler installation pursuant to the exception in RC Section R313.2.

Q2. Would an addition of a new dwelling unit that is attached to an existing SFD require a fire sprinkler system to be installed for the new unit only or both? The construction work results in the conversion of an existing one-family dwelling to a two-family dwelling.

ANSWER: The SFM views this construction work as an addition to the existing dwelling and would not require the sprinkler installation pursuant to the exception in RC Section R313.2.

Q3. Is the installation of a fire sprinkler system required in a new detached guest unit that does not have a kitchen (i.e., cooking) and is accessory to an existing SFD?

ANSWER: The SFM does not typically view these types of structures as a dwelling unit (one- or two-family dwelling) as defined in RC Section R202 and as such would not require sprinkler installation pursuant to the exception in RC Section R313.2. However, when a kitchen is permitted by Planning Department in a new detached guest unit, such defined new dwelling unit shall require sprinkler installation.

Q4. When do new accessory structures (i.e., carport, garage, patio, workshop, shed, barn, stable, and greenhouse) as defined in RC Section R202 require fire sprinkler systems to be installed under the following scenarios below?

- (a) Attached accessory structures to one- or two- family dwellings other than carports and garages?

ANSWER: The SFM does not typically require sprinkler installation in these non-habitable structures attached to a dwelling. (For attached carports and garages, refer to Section R309.6 for requirements.)

- (b) Detached accessory structures with the required fire separation distance from the SFD?

ANSWER: The SFM does not typically require sprinkler installation in these detached accessory structures.

Q5. Which of the following scenarios would require fire sprinkler systems to be installed based on a proposed alteration/addition of a new dwelling unit from an existing detached garage (or other existing detached accessory structures)?

- (a) A new dwelling unit is added to the existing detached garage (or other existing detached accessory structures).

ANSWER: The SFM typically views these types of structures as a new dwelling unit (one- or two-family dwelling) as defined in RC Section R202 and as such would require sprinkler installation pursuant to RC Section R313.2. However, the existing garage (or other existing detached accessory structures) would not require the sprinkler installation pursuant to the exception in RC Section R309.6.

- (b) Existing detached garage (or other existing detached accessory structures) is converted to a new dwelling unit.

ANSWER: The SFM typically views these types of structures as a new dwelling unit (one- or two-family dwelling) as defined in RC Section R202 and as such would require sprinkler installation pursuant to RC Section R313.2.

- (c) Existing detached garage (or other existing detached accessory structures) is converted to a new dwelling unit and additional floor area is added for the new unit.

ANSWER: The SFM typically views these types of structures as a new dwelling unit (one- or two-family dwelling) as defined in RC Section R202 and as such would require sprinkler installation pursuant to RC Section R313.2.

- Q6. A property owner of an existing SFD proposes to alter and add to the building, leaving only one existing wall standing or just the foundation. Is this situation considered a “new” dwelling or an “alteration/addition” to a dwelling for the purpose of determining if a fire sprinkler system is required to be installed?

ANSWER: The described situation is considered an alteration/addition, and as such would not require sprinkler installation pursuant to the exception in RC Section R313.2. The SFM's adoption and amendments to the RC for residential fire sprinklers are intended to apply to new one- and two-family dwellings.

- Q7. Would a property owner of an unpermitted dwelling unit be required to install a fire sprinkler system?

ANSWER: The unpermitted dwelling unit shall be evaluated as a new dwelling unit based on the current RC, and as such may or may not require sprinkler installation as determined in the scenarios presented above. The unpermitted dwelling unit shall be legalized through the process of obtaining a building permit for alteration and/or addition of an existing permitted structure to a dwelling unit; or for the construction of a new building for dwelling use.

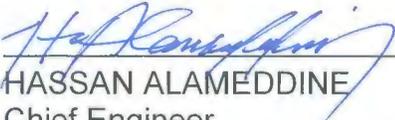
Though a new fire sprinkler system may not be required based on the scenarios described above, such exceptions do not waive other conditions that may trigger fire sprinklers (e.g. fire flow, access, etc.).

Supersedes RCM R313.2 Article 1 dated 02-09-12

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