CHAPTER 12
INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT

SECTION 1201
GENERAL

1201.1 Scope. The provisions of this chapter shall govern ventilation, temperature control, lighting, yards and courts, sound transmission, room dimensions, surrounding materials and rodent proofing associated with the interior spaces of buildings.

SECTION 1202
DEFINITIONS

1202.1 General. The following words and terms shall, for the purposes of this chapter and as used elsewhere in this code, have the meanings shown herein.

SUNROOM ADDITION. A one-story addition added to an existing building with a glazing area in excess of 40 percent of the gross area of the structure's exterior walls and roof.

THERMAL ISOLATION. A separation of conditioned spaces, between a sunroom addition and a dwelling unit, consisting of existing or new wall(s), doors and/or windows.

SECTION 1203
VENTILATION

1203.1 General. Buildings shall be provided with natural ventilation in accordance with Section 1203.4, or mechanical ventilation in accordance with the *International Mechanical Code* and the *Washington State Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality Code*.

1203.2 Attic spaces. Enclosed attics and enclosed rafter spaces formed where ceilings are applied directly to the underside of roof framing members shall have cross ventilation for each separate space by ventilating openings protected against the entrance of rain and snow. Blocking and bridging shall be arranged so as not to interfere with the movement of air. A minimum of 1 inch (25 mm) of airspace shall be provided between the insulation and the roof sheathing. The net free ventilating area shall not be less than 1/150 of the area of the space ventilated, with 50 percent of the required ventilating area provided by ventilators located in the upper portion of the space to be ventilated at least 3 feet (914 mm) above eave or cornice vents with the balance of the required ventilation provided by eave or cornice vents.

Exception: The minimum required net free ventilating area shall be $^1/_{300}$ of the area of the space ventilated, provided a vapor retarder having a transmission rate not exceeding 1 perm in accordance with ASTM E 96 is installed on the warm side of the attic insulation and provided 50 percent of the required ventilating area provided by ventilators located in the upper portion of the space to be ventilated at least 3 feet (914 mm) above eave or cornice vents, with the balance of the required ventilation provided by eave or cornice vents.

1203.2.1 Openings into attic. Exterior openings into the attic space of any building intended for human occupancy shall be covered with corrosion-resistant wire cloth screening, hardware cloth, perforated vinyl or similar material that will prevent the entry of birds, squirrels, rodents, snakes and other similar creatures. The openings therein shall be a minimum of $^1/_8$ inch (3.2 mm) and shall not exceed $^1/_4$ inch (6.4 mm). Where combustion air is obtained from an attic area, it shall be in accordance with Chapter 7 of the *International Mechanical Code*.

1203.3 Under-floor ventilation. The space between the bottom of the floor joists and the earth under any building except spaces occupied by a basement or cellar shall be provided with ventilation openings through foundation walls or exterior walls. Such openings shall be placed so as to provide cross ventilation of the under-floor space.

1203.3.1 Openings for under-floor ventilation. The minimum net area of ventilation openings shall not be less than 1 square foot for each 150 square feet (0.67 m^2 for each 100 m^2) of crawl-space area. Ventilation openings shall be covered for their height and width with any of the following materials, provided that the least dimension of the covering shall not exceed $^1/_4$ inch (6 mm):

1. Perforated sheet metal plates not less than 0.070 inch (1.8 mm) thick.
2. Expanded sheet metal plates not less than 0.047 inch (1.2 mm) thick.
3. Cast-iron grills or gratings.
4. Extruded load-bearing vents.
5. Hardware cloth of 0.035 inch (0.89 mm) wire or heavier.
6. Corrosion-resistant wire mesh, with the least dimension not exceeding $^1/_8$ inch (3.2 mm).

1203.3.2 Exceptions. The following are exceptions to Sections 1203.3 and 1203.3.1:

1. Where warranted by climatic conditions, ventilation openings to the outdoors are not required if ventilation openings to the interior are provided.
2. The total area of ventilation openings is permitted to be reduced to $^1/_{1,500}$ of the under-floor area where the ground surface is treated with an approved vapor retarder material and the required openings are placed so as to provide cross ventilation of the space. The installation of operable louvers shall not be prohibited.
3. Ventilation openings are not required where continuously operated mechanical ventilation is provided at a rate of 1.0 cubic foot per minute (cfm) for each 50

square feet (1.02 L/s for each 10 m^2) of crawl-space floor area and the ground surface is covered with an approved vapor retarder.

4. Ventilation openings are not required when the ground surface is covered with an approved vapor retarder, the perimeter walls are insulated and the space is conditioned in accordance with the ~~*International Energy Conservation Code*~~ *Seattle Energy Code*.
5. For buildings in flood hazard areas as established in Section 1612.3, the openings for under-floor ventilation shall be deemed as meeting the flood opening requirements of ASCE 24 provided that the ventilation openings are designed and installed in accordance with ASCE 24.

1203.4 Natural ventilation. For other than Group R Occupancies, ~~N~~natural ventilation of an occupied space shall be through windows, doors, louvers or other openings to the outdoors. The operating mechanism for such openings shall be provided with ready access so that the openings are readily controllable by the building occupants. All Group R Occupancies shall comply with the *Washington State Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality Code.*

1203.4.1 Ventilation area required. The minimum openable area to the outdoors shall be 4 percent of the floor area being ventilated.

1203.4.1.1 Adjoining spaces. Where rooms and spaces without openings to the outdoors are ventilated through an adjoining room, the opening to the adjoining room shall be unobstructed and shall have an area of not less than 8 percent of the floor area of the interior room or space, but not less than 25 square feet (2.3 m^2). The minimum openable area to the outdoors shall be based on the total floor area being ventilated.

Exception: Exterior openings required for ventilation shall be permitted to open into a thermally isolated sunroom addition or patio cover provided that the openable area between the sunroom addition or patio cover and the interior room shall have an area of not less than 8 percent of the floor area of the interior room or space, but not less than 20 square feet (1.86 m^2). The minimum openable area to the outdoors shall be based on the total floor area being ventilated.

1203.4.1.2 Openings below grade. Where openings below grade provide required natural ventilation, the outside horizontal clear space measured perpendicular to the opening shall be one and one-half times the depth of the opening. The depth of the opening shall be measured from the average adjoining ground level to the bottom of the opening.

1203.4.2 Contaminants exhausted. Contaminant sources in naturally ventilated spaces shall be removed in accordance with the *International Mechanical Code* and the *International Fire Code.*

1203.4.2.1 Bathrooms. Rooms containing bathtubs, showers, spas and similar bathing fixtures shall be mechanically ventilated in accordance with the *International Mechanical Code.*

1203.4.3 Openings on yards or courts. Where natural ventilation is to be provided by openings onto yards or courts, such yards or courts shall comply with Section 1206.

1203.5 Other ventilation and exhaust systems. Ventilation and exhaust systems for occupancies and operations involving flammable or combustible hazards or other contaminant sources as covered in the *International Mechanical Code* or the *International Fire Code* shall be provided as required by both codes.

SECTION 1204
TEMPERATURE CONTROL

1204.1 Equipment and systems. Interior spaces intended for human occupancy shall be provided with active or passive space-heating systems capable of maintaining ~~a minimum~~ an average indoor temperature of 68°F (20°C) at a point 3 feet (914 mm) above the floor ~~on the design heating day~~ when the outside temperature is 24°F.

Exception: Interior spaces where the primary purpose is not associated with human comfort.

See the *Seattle Energy Code* and *Seattle Mechanical Code* for further requirements for heating systems.

[W] 1204.2 Use of solid-fuel-burning devices.

1204.2.1 Definitions. For the purposes of this section only, the following definitions apply.

DESIGNATED AREAS. Those areas designated by a county to be an urban growth area in Chapter 36.70A RCW and those areas designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as being in nonattainment for particulate matter.

SUBSTANTIALLY REMODELED. Any alteration or restoration of a building exceeding 60 percent of the appraised value of such building within a 12-month period. For the purpose of this section, the appraised value is the estimated cost to replace the building and structure in-kind, based on current replacement costs.

1204.2.2 Primary heating source. Primary heating sources in all new and substantially remodeled buildings in designated areas shall not be dependent upon wood stoves.

1204.2.3 Solid-fuel-burning devices. No used solid-fuel-burning device shall be installed in new or existing buildings unless such device is United States Environmental Protection Agency certified or a pellet stove either certified or exempt from certification by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Exception: Antique wood cook stoves and heaters manufactured prior to 1940.

SECTION 1205
LIGHTING

1205.1 General. Every space intended for human occupancy shall be provided with natural light by means of exterior glazed openings in accordance with Section 1205.2 or shall be provided with artificial light in accordance with Section 1205.3. Exterior glazed openings shall open directly onto a public way or onto a yard or court in accordance with Section 1206.

1205.2 Natural light. The minimum net glazed area shall not be less than 8 percent of the floor area of the room served.

1205.2.1 Adjoining spaces. For the purpose of natural lighting, any room is permitted to be considered as a portion of an adjoining room where one-half of the area of the common wall is open and unobstructed and provides an opening of not less than one-tenth of the floor area of the interior room or 25 square feet (2.32 m^2), whichever is greater.

Exception: Openings required for natural light shall be permitted to open into a thermally isolated sunroom addition or patio cover where the common wall provides a glazed area of not less than one-tenth of the floor area of the interior room or 20 square feet (1.86 m^2), whichever is greater.

1205.2.2 Exterior openings. Exterior openings required by Section 1205.2 for natural light shall open directly onto a public way, yard or court, as set forth in Section 1206.

Exceptions:

1. Required exterior openings are permitted to open into a roofed porch where the porch:
   - 1.1. Abuts a public way, yard or court.
   - 1.2. Has a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet (2134 mm).
   - 1.3. Has a longer side at least 65 percent open and unobstructed.
2. Skylights are not required to open directly onto a public way, yard or court.

1205.3 Artificial light. Artificial light shall be provided that is adequate to provide an average illumination of 10 foot-candles (107 lux) over the area of the room at a height of 30 inches (762 mm) above the floor level.

1205.4 Stairway illumination. Stairways within dwelling units and exterior stairways serving a dwelling unit shall have an illumination level on tread runs of not less than 1 foot-candle (11 lux). Stairs in other occupancies shall be governed by Chapter 10.

1205.4.1 Controls. The control for activation of the required stairway lighting shall be in accordance with the ~~ICC~~ *Seattle Electrical Code* and the *Seattle Energy Code*.

1205.5 Emergency egress lighting. The means of egress shall be illuminated in accordance with Section 1006.1.

SECTION 1206
YARDS OR COURTS

1206.1 General. This section shall apply to yards and courts adjacent to exterior openings that provide natural light or ventilation. Such yards and courts shall be on the same property as the building.

1206.2 Yards. Yards shall not be less than 3 feet (914 mm) in width for one- and two-story buildings. For buildings more than two stories in height, the minimum width of the yard shall be increased at the rate of 1 foot (305 mm) for each additional story. For buildings exceeding 14 stories in height, the required width of the yard shall be computed on the basis of 14 stories.

1206.3 Courts. Courts shall not be less than 3 feet (914 mm) in width. Courts having windows opening on opposite sides shall not be less than 6 feet (1829 mm) in width. Courts shall not be less than 10 feet (3048 mm) in length unless bounded on one end by a public way or yard. For buildings more than two stories in height, the court shall be increased 1 foot (305 mm) in width and 2 feet (310 mm) in length for each additional story. For buildings exceeding 14 stories in height, the required dimensions shall be computed on the basis of 14 stories.

1206.3.1 Court access. Access shall be provided to the bottom of courts for cleaning purposes.

1206.3.2 Air intake. Courts more than two stories in height shall be provided with a horizontal air intake at the bottom not less than 10 square feet (0.93 m^2) in area and leading to the exterior of the building unless abutting a yard or public way.

1206.3.3 Court drainage. The bottom of every court shall be properly graded and drained to a public sewer or other approved disposal system complying with the ~~*International*~~ *Uniform Plumbing Code*.

SECTION 1207
SOUND TRANSMISSION

1207.1 Scope. This section shall apply to common interior walls, partitions and floor/ceiling assemblies between adjacent dwelling units or between dwelling units and adjacent public areas such as halls, corridors, stairs or service areas.

1207.2 Air-borne sound. Walls, partitions and floor/ceiling assemblies separating dwelling units from each other or from public or service areas shall have a sound transmission class (STC) of not less than 50 (45 if field tested) for air-borne noise when tested in accordance with ASTM E 90. Penetrations or openings in construction assemblies for piping; electrical devices; recessed cabinets; bathtubs; soffits; or heating, ventilating or exhaust ducts shall be sealed, lined, insulated or otherwise treated to maintain the required ratings. This requirement shall not apply to dwelling unit entrance doors; however, such doors shall be tight fitting to the frame and sill.

Exception: Dwelling unit or guest room entrance doors from interior corridors and interconnecting doors between separate units shall have perimeter seals and such door as-

semblies shall have a sound transmission class (STC) rating of not less than 28.

1207.3 Structure-borne sound. Floor/ceiling assemblies between dwelling units or between a dwelling unit and a public or service area within the structure shall have an impact insulation class (IIC) rating of not less than 50 (45 if field tested) when tested in accordance with ASTM E 492.

Exception: Floor assemblies in the bathrooms of Group R, Division 1 Occupancies are not required to meet the impact insulation class of 50 where structural concrete floor systems are used.

Joints in the perimeter of such separating wall or floor-ceiling assemblies shall be acoustically sealed with a permanent resilient material approved for such purpose. The separating wall or floor-ceiling assembly shall extend completely to and be sealed to another separating assembly or an exterior wall, roof or floor assembly.

Conduits, ducts, pipes and vents within such wall or floor-ceiling assemblies causing vibration shall be reasonably isolated from the building construction at points of support by means of resilient sleeves, mounts or underlayments. All other openings through which such conduits, ducts, pipes or vents pass shall have the excess opening fully sealed with insulative and permanently resilient materials approved for such purpose.

Electrical outlet boxes shall not be placed back-to-back and shall be offset by not less than 12 inches (305 mm) from outlets in the opposite wall surface. The back and sides of boxes shall be sealed with $^1/_8$-inch (3 mm) resilient sealant and backed by a minimum of 2-inch (51 mm) thick material fiber insulation or approved equivalent.

Metal ventilating and conditioned air ducts which pass between dwelling units shall be fabricated and installed to maintain required sound transmission ratings.

1207.4 Tested assemblies. Field- or laboratory-tested wall or floor-ceiling designs having an STC or IIC of 50 or more may be used without additional field testing when, in the opinion of the building official, the tested design has not been compromised by flanking paths. Tests may be required by the building official when evidence of compromised separations is noted.

1207.5 Field testing and certification. Field testing, when permitted to determine airborne sound transmission or impact sound insulation class, shall be done in accordance with ASTM E 336 or ASTM E 492 under the supervision of an acoustical professional who is experienced in the field of acoustical testing and engineering and who shall forward certified test results to the building official that minimum sound insulation requirements stated above have been met.

1207.6 Mechanical equipment spaces. Spaces or shafts containing air conditioning, refrigeration or ventilating equipment, elevator machinery, or other mechanical equipment shall be separated both vertically and horizontally from adjoining dwelling units or guest rooms by construction designed to provide a minimum STC rating of 50.

1207.7 Sound transmission control systems. Generic systems as listed in GA 600-00 may be accepted where a laboratory test indicates that the requirements of Section 1207 are met by the system.

Note: Design and materials for sound transmission control shall not impair the fire-resistant integrity of separating walls or floor-ceiling assemblies required to be of fire-resistant construction.

SECTION 1208
INTERIOR SPACE DIMENSIONS

1208.1 Minimum room widths. Habitable spaces, other than a kitchen, shall not be less than 7 feet (2134 mm) in any plan dimension. Kitchens shall have a clear passageway of not less than 3 feet (914 mm) between counter fronts and appliances or counter fronts and walls.

~~**1208.2 Minimum ceiling heights.** Occupiable spaces, habitable spaces and corridors shall have a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet 6 inches (2286 mm). Bathrooms, toilet rooms, kitchens, storage rooms and laundry rooms shall be permitted to have a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet (2134 mm).~~

~~**Exceptions:**~~

1. ~~In one- and two-family dwellings, beams or girders spaced not less than 4 feet (1219 mm) on center and projecting not more than 6 inches (152 mm) below the required ceiling height.~~
2. ~~If any room in a building has a sloped ceiling, the prescribed ceiling height for the room is required in one-half the area thereof. Any portion of the room measuring less than 5 feet (1524 mm) from the finished floor to the ceiling shall not be included in any computation of the minimum area thereof.~~
3. ~~Mezzanines constructed in accordance with Section 505.1.~~

~~**1208.2.1 Furred ceiling.** Any room with a furred ceiling shall be required to have the minimum ceiling height in two-thirds of the area thereof, but in no case shall the height of the furred ceiling be less than 7 feet (2134 mm).~~

1208.2 Minimum ceiling heights. Habitable rooms, hallways, bathrooms, toilet rooms, laundry rooms and basements shall have a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet (2134 mm). The required height shall be measured from the finished floor to the lowest projection from the ceiling.

Exceptions:

1. Beams and girders spaced not less than 4 feet (1219 mm) on center may project not more than 6 inches (153 mm) below the required ceiling height.

Interpretation I1208.2: Ducts and architectural features such as soffits and coved ceilings may project not more than 6 inches (153 mm) below the required ceiling height allowed for beams and girders.

2. Not more than 50 percent of the required floor area of a room or space is permitted to have a sloped ceiling less than the prescribed height, with no portion of the required floor area less than 5 feet (1524 mm) in height.

3. The ceiling height along an accessible route of travel, as defined in Chapter 11, shall be at least 79 inches (2007 mm), including allowable projections below the minimum ceiling height.

1208.3 Room area. Every dwelling unit shall have at least one room that shall have not less than 120 square feet (13.9 m^2) of net floor area. Other habitable rooms shall have a net floor area of not less than 70 square feet (6.5 m^2).

Exception: Every kitchen in a one- and two-family dwelling shall have not less than 50 square feet (4.64 m^2) of gross floor area.

1208.4 Efficiency dwelling units. An efficiency living unit shall conform to the requirements of the code except as modified herein:

1. The unit shall have a living room of not less than 220 square feet (20.4 m^2) of floor area. An additional 100 square feet (9.3 m^2) of floor area shall be provided for each occupant of such unit in excess of two.

Interpretation I1208.4: The required square footage may not include built-in equipment which extends from floor to ceiling such as wardrobes, cabinets, kitchen units or fixtures.

2. The unit shall be provided with a separate closet.
3. The unit shall be provided with a kitchen sink, cooking appliance and refrigeration facilities, each having a clear working space of not less than 30 inches (762 mm) in front. Light and ventilation conforming to this code shall be provided.
4. The unit shall be provided with a separate bathroom containing a water closet, lavatory and bathtub or shower.

SECTION 1209
ACCESS TO UNOCCUPIED SPACES

1209.1 Crawl spaces. Crawl spaces shall be provided with a minimum of one access opening not less than 18 inches by 24 inches (457 mm by 610 mm).

1209.2 Attic spaces. An opening not less than 20 inches by 30 inches (559 mm by 762 mm) shall be provided to any attic area having a clear height of over 30 inches (762 mm). A 30-inch (762 mm) minimum clear headroom in the attic space shall be provided at or above the access opening.

1209.3 Mechanical appliances. Access to mechanical appliances installed in under-floor areas, in attic spaces and on roofs or elevated structures shall be in accordance with the *International Mechanical Code*.

SECTION 1210
SURROUNDING MATERIALS

1210.1 Floors. In other than dwelling units, toilet and bathing room floors shall have a smooth, hard, nonabsorbent surface that extends upward onto the walls at least 6 inches (152 mm).

1210.2 Walls. Walls within 2 feet (610 mm) of urinals and water closets shall have a smooth, hard, nonabsorbent surface, to a height of 4 feet (1219 mm) above the floor, and except for structural elements, the materials used in such walls shall be of a type that is not adversely affected by moisture.

Exceptions:

1. Dwelling units and sleeping units.
2. Toilet rooms that are not accessible to the public and which have not more than one water closet.

Accessories such as grab bars, towel bars, paper dispensers and soap dishes, provided on or within walls, shall be installed and sealed to protect structural elements from moisture.

1210.3 Showers. Shower compartments and walls above bathtubs with installed shower heads shall be finished with a smooth, nonabsorbent surface to a height not less than 70 inches (1778 mm) above the drain inlet.

1210.4 Waterproof joints. Built-in tubs with showers shall have waterproof joints between the tub and adjacent wall.

1210.5 Toilet rooms. Toilet rooms shall not open directly into a room used for the preparation of food for service to the public. 06