



AUSTIN FIRE DEPARTMENT

PREVENTION 6310 WILHELMINA DELCO DR. AUSTIN, TX 78752 P:512.974.0160

TO: General Public
FROM: Tom Vocke, *Fire Marshal*
DATE: March 13, 2023
SUBJECT: Required Exterior Column / Post Size and Material in the Wildland-Urban Interface

The intent of this memorandum is to clarify the 2015 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) requirements as amended by the City of Austin for Porch, Patio, and Deck columns.

Should your drawing set provide a standard Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) detail sheet intended to supersede other drawings in the plan set, errors and omissions on the WUI detail sheet shall not exempt the project from complying with the 2015 IWUIC and local amendments.

Original Patio Covers Over the Original Foundation Slab

Patio covers or Porches constructed as part of the original building over the original foundation slab, are permitted to be constructed of the materials shown below as “Allowed”.

	WUI Proximity Class of Ignition-Resistant Construction	
	Class A	Class B or Class C
Allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignition Resistant Material, any size • Protected column, any size • Minimum 6x8 heavy timber column supporting a roof only • Minimum 8x8 heavy timber column supporting a floor or floor and roof 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignition Resistant Material, any size • Protected column, any size • 4x4 unprotected column • 6x6 unprotected column • 6x8 unprotected column • 8x8 unprotected column
Not Allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4x4 unprotected column • 6x6 unprotected column • Hollow unprotected column 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hollow unprotected column

All Other Appendages

All other appendages and structures within 10’ of an occupied structure shall comply with the more restrictive 2015 IWUIC 504.7 Appendages and Structures. This includes Patio Covers and Porches that are constructed over a slab that is added to the structure at a later time or is otherwise separate from the original building foundation. This category includes decks, covered decks, multi-story decks, trellises, pergolas, or any other appendage that is not a patio cover constructed as part of the original building over the original foundation slab.

	WUI Proximity Class of Ignition-Resistant Construction
	Class A or Class B or Class C



AUSTIN FIRE DEPARTMENT

PREVENTION 6310 WILHELMINA DELCO DR. AUSTIN, TX 78752 P:512.974.0160

Allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignition Resistant Material, any size • Protected column, any size • Minimum 6x8 heavy timber column supporting a roof only • Minimum 8x8 heavy timber column supporting a floor or floor and roof
Not Allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4x4 unprotected column • 6x6 unprotected column • Hollow unprotected column

NOTES

1. Unprotected column = column that is not made of an ignition-resistant material and is not fully covered by an ignition-resistant material per IWUIC 503.2, 504.5 or 504.7. This includes solid sawn lumber that does not meet the minimum size of heavy timber.
2. Protected column = column of any material or size, fully covered by ignition-resistant material per IWUIC 503.2, 504.5 or 504.7. All exterior surfaces of the column shall be an approved ignition-resistant material (e.g. fiber cement).
3. Requirements apply to screened porches including the porch interior. Porch screening can be any screen material.
4. Ignition-Resistant Material = allowed material per IWUIC 503.2, 504.5 or 504.7.
5. Column size shall be the more stringent of the following:
 - a. Size determined by the structural engineer, architect, or per the prescriptive tables in the IRC which shall be reviewed and inspected by DSD.
 - b. Minimum size and material per WUI Proximity Class
 - c. No hollow columns unless covered by an ignition-resistant material
6. Heavy timber columns are solid (not hollow) and allowed in any WUI Proximity Class. See simplified table below for minimum sizes.

HEAVY TIMBER SIZES

Simplified table based on 2021 IBC Table 2304.11 (see 2021 IBC for full table):

Load Supported	Heavy Timber Element	Minimum Nominal Solid Sawn Lumber Size	
		Width, inches	Depth, inches
Floor (or Floor and Roof)	Columns	8	8
	Beams and Girders	6	10
Roof only	Columns	6	8
	Roof framing	4	6

Should you have any questions, we are here to help. Please reach out to us at any time at FirePrevention@austintexas.gov. Visit our website for the most up-to-date approved materials list: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/wildland-urban-interface-code>.