



THE CITY OF  
**Wilmington**  
Delaware

Interpretation of Wilmington Delaware Code	Reference Code Section(s): International Building Code 2012 Section 504.4 Local Modifications, Table 503 and Section 504.2
Subject of Bulletin:	5A (Protected Frame) Construction
Issued By: Commissioner James Rhodes, Department of Licenses and Inspections	Issue Date: August 9, 2016

**Issue:**

Does the Building Code allow single family dwellings that exceed three stories in height to be erected of 5A (protected frame) construction?

**Relevant Code Provisions:**

[International Building Code 2012 Local Modifications Table 503 and Section 504.2](#)

*Section 504.4. Dwellings. Provided that they are constructed in accordance with the applicable provisions of the International Building Code 2012, particularly in connection with fire-protection requirements, for protected frame construction, and the amendments in this section:*

*Section 504.4.1. One-family detached dwellings and one-family semidetached dwellings, not exceeding three stories in height, may be erected of protected frame construction (type 5A) when not less than five feet from the interior lot lines. All structural elements shall meet the requirements of strength and rigidity as specified in chapter 17. In one family semi-detached dwellings, walls between the housing units shall be two-hour party walls and shall meet the requirements of the basic code.*

*Section 504.4.2. Rowhouses or townhouses, not exceeding ten houses in number or three stories in height, may be constructed of protected frame construction (type 5A) when the row of houses, considered as a unit, is not less than five feet from the exterior lot lines. All structural elements shall meet the requirements of strength and rigidity specified in chapter 7. All party walls between housing units shall be two-hour party walls and shall meet the requirements of the basic code.*

International Building Code 2012 edition, Table 503 and Section 504.2

*Table 503. Table 503 states that a Group Type R-3 (one or two family dwelling where the residents are permanent in nature), constructed under Type 5A construction, may not exceed 3 stories above grade plane and 50 feet in height.*

*Section 504.2. Automatic Sprinkler System Increase. For Group R buildings equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.2(NFPA 13R System), the value specified in Table 503 for maximum building height is increased by 20 feet and the maximum number of stories is increased by one, but shall not exceed 60 feet or four stories respectively.*

**Policy:**

Type 5-A construction is permitted for any single-family structure constructed at a maximum height of 4 stories and 60 feet when an NFPA 13R Automatic Sprinkler System is installed throughout the building. Where no Automatic Sprinkler System is installed, type 5-A construction may not exceed three-stories in height.