

2026 CODE AMENDMENTS

Official Code of Cobb County Part I. – Chapter 54

Package I

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Adopted – October 27, 2026

Board of Commissioners Public Hearing Dates

October 13, 2026 – 9:00 a.m.

October 27, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

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Chapter 54 - FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

ARTICLE III. – FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS

Section 54-59 of the Official Code of Cobb County, Georgia, is amended, to read as follows:

Sec. 54-59. Hydrant obstruction and hydrant maintenance.

- (a) ~~Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services shall have~~ For private fire hydrants located at one-family and two-family dwellings, including townhouses and condominiums, Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services shall have the authority to enforce all codes with regards to privately owned fire hydrants including but not limited to: location, inspections, maintenance, flow test (every three years) and obstructions within the defined service area. These private hydrants shall comply with the applicable codes, standards and local ordinances currently adopted by Cobb County and shall be enforceable per the terms of section 54-51 of this chapter.
- (b) All hydrants shall be painted silver as needed. Reflective tape a minimum of one-inch wide shall be placed around the entire circumference of the bonnet with the ends overlapping a minimum of one inch. White reflective tape shall be used on all public fire hydrants. Orange reflective tape shall be used on all fire hydrants that are not owned and/or maintained by Cobb County Water System. Painted tape or worn tape shall be replaced. Contact the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office for information on reflective tape that has been approved for use on fire hydrants.
- (c) Hydrants other than those owned and/or maintained by Cobb County Water System shall have general maintenance performed annually in accordance with the currently adopted edition of NFPA 25. Maintenance and flow test records shall be ~~maintained on the premises for inspection by the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office~~ presented to Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services within 5 business days of the inspection or work. Submittal of records shall carry a fee as approved by the Cobb County Board of Commissioners. A weather-resistant tag shall be affixed to each hydrant indicating the date of inspection, the name of the company responsible for the inspection, and the operational status of the hydrant using the following color system: green shall indicate that no deficiencies are present and the hydrant is fully operational; yellow shall indicate that deficiencies were found, but the hydrant remains functional; and red shall indicate that the hydrant is non-operational and will not function as intended. All maintenance shall be performed by a qualified company on file with the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office.
- (d) Hydrants other than those owned and/or maintained by Cobb County Water System shall be flow tested every three years. Flow testing shall be done in accordance with requirements in the American Water Works Association M17 manual, "Installation, Field Testing, and Maintenance of Fire Hydrants." A site map showing flow and residual hydrants (numbered appropriately) shall be provided with each report. The flow test shall be performed by a qualified company on file with the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office.
- (e) All hydrants shall be installed and maintained such that the center of any hose outlet shall not be less than 18 inches above final grade.

(Ord. of 7-26-05; Ord. of 7-25-06; Amd. of 2-24-15; Amd. of 11-20-25; Amd. 2026)

The Official Code of Cobb County, Georgia, is amended by adding a section numbered 59.1, to read as follows:

Sec. 54-59.1. - Fire hydrant installation for existing multifamily residential.

- (a) Existing apartment complexes. Apartment complexes in existence as of the effective date of this section shall, at a minimum, be brought into full compliance with fire hydrant locations and flow rates set forth in the state minimum fire safety standards and the applicable development standards as enforced by Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services.
- (b) Flow rates. Where there is substantial documentation that compliance with the minimum flow rates of this section would require overly burdensome steps by a property owner, the fire marshal may deem such hydrants as acceptable or may accept alternatives deemed equivalent for fire safety risk reduction.

(Ord. of 2026)

Section 54-60 of the Official Code of Cobb County, Georgia, is amended, to read as follows:

Sec. 54-60. ~~Fire hydrant installation for existing apartment complexes~~ Fire and Life Safety System Inspection, Testing, and Continual Maintenance.

- ~~(a) Existing apartment complexes.~~ Apartment complexes in existence as of the effective date of this section shall, at a minimum, be brought into full compliance with fire hydrant locations and flow rates set forth in the state minimum fire safety standards and the applicable development standards as enforced by Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services. The owner, owner's representative, tenant, occupant, or other person responsible for a building, structure, premises, or fire and life safety system shall be liable for the inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and continued operation of all required fire and life safety systems, equipment, devices, features, and safeguards.
- ~~(b) Flow rates.~~ Where there is substantial documentation that compliance with the minimum flow rates of this section would require overly burdensome steps by a property owner, the fire marshal may deem such hydrants as acceptable or may accept alternatives deemed equivalent for fire safety risk reduction. The liability established by this section shall be continuous and shall remain with the responsible party for the life of the system unless otherwise provided by law.
- (c) Fire and life safety systems regulated by this section include, but are not limited to, fire sprinkler systems, standpipe systems, fire pumps, private fire service mains, private fire hydrants, fire alarm systems, commercial cooking fire suppression systems, clean agent extinguishing systems, portable fire extinguishers, smoke control systems, emergency and standby power systems serving fire protection equipment, emergency lighting, exit signs, fire and smoke dampers, fire doors, fire barriers, smoke barriers, fire walls, means of egress

components, carbon monoxide detection systems, hazardous materials protection systems, and any other fire or life safety system, feature, safeguard, or device.

- (d) Any inspection, observation, acceptance test, operational test, complaint investigation, permit inspection, certificate of occupancy inspection, annual inspection, reinspection, emergency response, spot check, or other activity performed by Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services shall be conducted solely for regulatory purposes and shall not satisfy, replace, reduce, extend, waive, certify, or otherwise modify any inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, documentation, or operational requirement imposed upon the responsible party by law or adopted standards.
- (e) The discovery or failure to discover any deficiency by Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services shall not create a warranty, representation, certification, guarantee, assumption of responsibility, or transfer of liability regarding the condition, operability, or code compliance of any fire or life safety system.
- (f) The Fire Marshal may require the owner or responsible party to produce inspection reports, testing reports, maintenance records, impairment records, contractor certifications, monitoring records, or other documentation necessary to demonstrate compliance with this section.
- (g) Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be subject to the enforcement provisions and penalties established in **Section 54-3** of this Chapter.
- (h) Any inspection, flow test, operation, observation, or spot check of a private fire hydrant performed by Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services shall be conducted solely for governmental purposes and shall not satisfy or replace the inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, documentation, or certification requirements imposed upon the responsible party by this Chapter, the adopted fire code, NFPA standards, or any other applicable law.

(Ord. of 3-25-08; Amd. of 2-26-13; Amd. of 11-20-25; Amd. of 2026)

Section 54-62 of the Official Code of Cobb County, Georgia, is amended, to read as follows:

Sec. 54-62. Fire watch, special fire services.

- (a) The fire department, fire marshal, fire official, fire chief or their designee, shall have the authority to require, assess and collect fees for special fire services, including, but not limited to fire watch, fire standby, the cleanup of hazardous materials, lift assist, and/or an approved fire watch when potentially hazardous conditions or a reduction in a life safety feature exist due to the type of performance, display, exhibit, occupancy, contest or activity; or an impairment to a fire protection feature; or the number of persons present.
- (b) Where special fire services, standby fire personnel or an approved fire watch is required or requested:
 - (1) When required by the fire marshal, the business, owner, agent, or lessee shall identify and designate one or more qualified persons, as required and approved to be on duty;
 - (2) The cost of special fire services and/or standby fire personnel shall be at no cost to the fire department and shall be assessed as provided in this section;

- (3) Such standby fire personnel or fire watch personnel shall be subject to the orders of the fire marshal, or his/her designee, at all times and shall be identifiable and remain on duty during the times such places are open to the public, when such activity is being conducted, or while such impairment or condition remains, as required by the fire marshal, or his/her designee;
- (4) The fire watch and/or special fire services shall be documented using a fire watch log or other record to be maintained at the protected facility and available to fire department personnel at all times. The fire watch log or record shall contain, but not be limited to, the following information: date and time of the special fire service or fire watch duty, beginning and ending times of each patrol, any fire safety hazards found, record of communication with the fire department and alarm monitoring company, and a record of other information as required by the fire marshal, fire chief, or their designee; and
- (5) The fire department shall be authorized to establish and collect fees to recover costs for providing special fire services, including, but not limited to equipment, supplies, and/or personnel affiliated with special fire services, fire standby, fire watch, fire inspections, lift assist, responding to a hazardous condition and/or similar special fire services requested by an entity doing business or providing services in Cobb County or where required by the authority having jurisdiction to protect public safety pursuant to fee schedule(s) established under this section.
- (6) Fee schedule(s). The fire department and/or fire marshal shall establish a separate or combined fee schedule for all special fire services under this section and present said fee schedule(s) to the board of commissioners for initial approval and for any amendment to the same. The assessment of such fees shall be made against the person, firm, partnership, corporation or organization requesting or responsible for the special fire service within six months from the last date of service. Notice of assessment shall be in writing and sent to the responsible entity and/or individual via certified U.S. Mail, ~~with a copy via~~ first class U.S. Mail, or electronic mail via verifiable delivery. The fire marshal and/or fire department shall establish a process for assessing and tracking fees under this section.
- (7) Payment of costs. Costs assessed pursuant to this article, including reasonable attorney fees, court costs and administrative costs shall be payable by the person, firm, partnership, corporation, insurance company or organization requesting or responsible for the fire service(s). These costs shall be paid within 60 days of the date of the notice of assessment and shall bear interest at ten percent per annum from the date when same becomes due and payable. The county may pursue collections and/or proceed in a court of valid jurisdiction to collect any fees or monies remaining unpaid under this section from a responsible party and shall have any and all other remedies provided by and subject to law for the collection of said charges.
- (8) Lien. In addition to any civil remedy allowed by law, the assessment under this section shall constitute a lien in favor of the county on any property, real or personal, owned by the person, firm, corporation, partnership or organization which shall be enforceable pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 48-4-78 for delinquent ad valorem taxes, which may

- include all amounts due under this article. Redemption of the property from the lien may be made in accordance with the provisions of O.C.G.A. §§ 48-4-80 and 48-4-81.
- (9) Penalties. Any person who shall violate any of the provisions of this chapter or fail to comply herewith, or who shall violate or fail to comply with any order made hereunder may be subject to the penalties set forth in Code section 54-3 and/or section 54-87.
- (10) Non-exclusive remedy. The penalties and remedies provided by this article shall be in addition to any other remedies or penalties provided by law.
- (c) For the purposes of this section, the terms used herein are defined as follows:
- (1) *Fee schedule* means the separate or combined fee schedule(s) prepared and presented by the fire chief, fire marshal and/or their designee to the board of commissioners for approval by resolution, which may be amended from time to time.
- (2) *Fire watch* means a temporary measure intended to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building or portion thereof by one or more qualified individuals for the purposes of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, raising an alarm of fire and notifying the fire department. ~~Fire watch shall be approved and performed by a currently certified Georgia fire inspector working within the Cobb County fire marshal's office.~~

Subcategories of Fire Watch:

Professional Fire Watch is a fire watch performed by a currently certified Fire Inspector working within the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office or personnel designated by the Fire Marshal. This level of fire watch may be required when conditions present elevated life safety concerns, complex code issues, or circumstances where a trained code official is necessary to provide oversight, documentation, and enforcement. Professional Fire Watch may also be used as a code trade-off when approved by the Fire Marshal.

Non-Professional Fire Watch is a fire watch performed by the property owner, occupant, contractor, employee, security staff, or another responsible person who is not a certified fire inspector. This option may only be authorized by the Cobb County Fire Marshal on a case-by-case basis after reviewing the specific circumstances. Approval requires the responsible party to sign a Fire Watch Acknowledgment and Waiver, accepting responsibility for performing the fire watch in accordance with the approved procedures and all applicable fire code requirements.

Self-Fire Watch is the voluntary initiation of a fire watch by a property owner, occupant, or responsible person after discovering that a required fire protection or life safety system is impaired or otherwise nonconforming. The party responsible immediately places the building on fire watch in accordance with the applicable provisions of the International Fire Code, NFPA standards, and any other applicable regulations, while promptly notifying the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office by telephone, email, online reporting, facsimile, or another approved method. Upon notification, the Fire Marshal's Office will manage the event as a complaint or impairment notification and determine what additional actions, inspections, or enforcement are necessary. Self-Fire Watch encourages immediate life safety

measures without requiring an immediate emergency response when no emergency condition exists.

Natural Disaster Fire Watch is a temporary fire watch process used during a locally declared emergency, state of emergency, or federally declared disaster when widespread impairments or infrastructure failures generate a high volume of fire watch notifications. Property owners or responsible parties immediately implement a fire watch, notify the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office through an approved reporting method, and the notification is managed as a complaint or impairment report. Due to the extraordinary demand on contractors, utilities, and emergency resources, delayed vendor response times may be anticipated and accepted by the Fire Marshal on a case-by-case basis. The purpose of Natural Disaster Fire Watch is to maintain public life safety while allowing the Fire Marshal's Office to prioritize limited resources during large-scale emergency events affecting hundreds or thousands of occupancies.

- (3) *Hazardous condition* means a response to any request for special fire services or emergency that involves the disposal, removal, storage, investigation, remediation or cleanup of:
 - a. Any substance or mixture of substances which is toxic, corrosive, an irritant, a strong sensitizer, flammable or which generates pressure through decomposition, heat or other means, if such substance or mixture of substances may cause substantial personal injury or substantial illness during, or as a proximate result of, any customary or reasonably foreseeable handling or use, including reasonably foreseeable ingestion by children; and/or
 - b. Any substances, elements, or compounds which are contained in the list of hazardous substances adopted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the list of toxic pollutants defined by the United States Congress.
- (4) *Lift assist* means a request for and response by fire department personnel to assist in physically moving a person who has fallen and who does not require emergency care or medical transportation and who is located in a hospital, group home, continuing care retirement community, assisted living facility, independent living facility, nursing home, adult family home and/or rest home, commercial care facility or as otherwise defined in Cobb County Code section 134-1, as amended. This also includes businesses hired for transport services who solicit assistance from the Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services personnel to load, unload, or relocate a patient in their care.
- (5) *Special fire service* means those special fire services designated and listed in the fee schedule(s), as amended, including, but not limited to fire watch, fire standby, the cleanup of hazardous materials, lift assist, and the equipment, supplies, and/or personnel affiliated with such special fire services.

(Amd. of 2-23-16; Amd. of 2-9-21; Amd. 2026)