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2015 International Swimming Pool and Spa Code™

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PREFACE

Introduction

Internationally, code officials recognize the need for a modern, up-to-date code governing the design, construction, alteration, repair and maintenance of swimming pools, spas, hot tubs and aquatic facilities. This 2015 edition of the *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code*™ is designed to meet this need through model code regulations in a single document that contains clear and specific requirements that safeguard the public health and safety in all communities.

This 2015 edition is fully compatible with all of the *International Codes*® (I-Codes®) published by the International Code Council (ICC®), including the *International Building Code*®, *International Energy Conservation Code*®, *International Existing Building Code*®, *International Fire Code*®, *International Fuel Gas Code*®, *International Green Construction Code*®, *International Mechanical Code*®, *ICC Performance Code*®, *International Plumbing Code*®, *International Private Sewage Disposal Code*®, *International Property Maintenance Code*®, *International Residential Code*®, *International Wildland-Urban Interface Code*® and *International Zoning Code*®.

The *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code* provisions provide many benefits, among which is the model code development process that offers an international forum for code officials, design professionals, pool and industry representatives and other interested parties to discuss performance and prescriptive code requirements relative to pool and spa safety. This forum provides an excellent arena to debate proposed revisions. This model code also encourages international consistency in the application of provisions.

Development

The 2015 *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code* is the culmination of an effort that started in 2010 with the drafting of Public Version 1.0 by the Swimming Pool Code Drafting Committee (SPCDC) established by the ICC Board of Directors, with The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals® (APSP®) as a cooperating sponsor. The goal of the SPCDC was to draft a code which coordinated and enhanced the provisions previously found in the International Codes and APSP standards to upgrade pool and spa safety and to meet the requirements of the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Safety Act.

Following drafting of Public Version 1.0, a full cycle of code development in accordance with ICC's Code Development Procedures was held in 2011. This included the submission of code change proposals followed by a Committee Action Hearing, the submission of public comments and a Final Action Hearing. This 2015 edition presents the code as originally issued, with changes as reflected in subsequent editions through 2012 and with changes approved through the ICC Code Development Process through 2013 (completion of the Group B cycle, see below). A new edition of the code will be promulgated every 3 years.

This code is founded on principles intended to establish provisions consistent with the scope of a swimming pool and spa code that adequately protects public health, safety and welfare; provisions that do not unnecessarily increase construction costs; provisions that do not restrict the use of new materials, products or methods of construction; and provisions that do not give preferential treatment to particular types or classes of materials, products or methods of construction.

Adoption

The International Code Council maintains a copyright in all of its codes and standards. Maintaining copyright allows ICC to fund its mission through sales of books, in both print and electronic formats. The *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code* is designed for adoption and use by jurisdictions that recognize and acknowledge the ICC's copyright in the code, and further acknowledge the substantial shared value of the public/private partnership for code development between jurisdictions and the ICC.

The ICC also recognizes the need for jurisdictions to make laws available to the public. All ICC codes and ICC standards, along with the laws of many jurisdictions, are available for free in a non-downloadable form on the ICC's website. Jurisdictions should contact the ICC at adoptions@icc-safe.org to learn how to adopt and distribute laws based on the *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code* in a manner that provides necessary access, while maintaining the ICC's copyright.

Maintenance

The *International Building Code* is kept up to date through the review of proposed changes submitted by code enforcing officials, industry representatives, design professionals and other interested parties. Proposed changes are carefully considered through an open code development process in which all interested and affected parties may participate.

The contents of this work are subject to change through both the Code Development Cycles and the governmental body that enacts the code into law. For more information regarding the code development process, contact the Codes and Standards Development Department of the International Code Council.

While the development procedure of the *International Building Code* ensures the highest degree of care, the ICC, its members and those participating in the development of this code do not accept any liability resulting from compliance or noncompliance with the provisions because the ICC does not have the power or authority to police or enforce compliance with the contents of this code. Only the governmental body that enacts the code into law has such authority.

Code Development Committee Responsibilities (Letter Designations in Front of Section Numbers)

In each code development cycle, proposed changes to this code are considered at the Committee Action Hearing by the International Swimming Pool and Spa Code Development Committee, whose action constitutes a recommendation to the voting membership for final action on the proposed change. Proposed changes to a code section that has a number beginning with a letter in brackets are considered by a different code development committee. For example, proposed changes to code sections that have [A] in front of them (e.g., [A] 102.1) are considered by the Administrative Code Development Committee at the Committee Action Hearings.

The content of sections in this code that begin with a letter designation is maintained by another code development committee in accordance with the following:

[A] = Administrative Code Development Committee; and

[BS] = IBC – Structural Code Development Committee

For the development of the 2018 edition of the I-Codes, there will be three groups of code development committees and they will meet in separate years. Note that these are tentative groupings.

Group A Codes (Heard in 2015, Code Change Proposals Deadline: January 12, 2015)	Group B Codes (Heard in 2016, Code Change Proposals Deadline: January 11, 2016)	Group C Codes (Heard in 2017, Code Change Proposals Deadline: January 11, 2017)
International Building Code – Fire Safety (Chapters 7, 8, 9, 14, 26) – Means of Egress (Chapters 10, 11, Appendix E) – General (Chapters 2-6, 12, 27-33, Appendices A, B, C, D, K)	Administrative Provisions (Chapter 1 of all codes except IRC and IECC, adminis- trative updates to currently referenced standards, and designated definitions)	International Green Construction Code
International Fuel Gas Code	International Building Code – Structural (Chapters 15-25, Appendices F, G, H, I, J, L, M)	
International Existing Building Code	International Energy Conservation Code	
International Mechanical Code	International Fire Code	
International Plumbing Code	International Residential Code – IRC-B (Chapters 1-10, Appendices E, F, H, J, K, L M, O, R, S, T, U)	
International Private Sewage Disposal Code	International Wildland-Urban Interface Code	
International Property Maintenance Code		
International Residential Code – IRC-Mechanical (Chapters 12-24) – IRC-Plumbing (Chapter 25-33, Appendices G, I, N, P)		
International Swimming Pool and Spa Code		
International Zoning Code		

Note: Proposed changes to the ICC Performance Code will be heard by the Code Development Committee noted in brackets [] in the text of the code.

Code change proposals submitted for code sections that have a letter designation in front of them will be heard by the respective committee responsible for such code sections. Because different committees hold code development hearings in different years, proposals for this code will be heard by committees in both the 2015 (Group A) and the 2016 (Group B) code development cycles.

Note that every section of Chapter 1 of this code is designated as the responsibility of the Administrative Code Development Committee, and that committee is part of the Group B portion of the code hearings. This committee will hold its code development hearings in 2016 to consider all code change proposals for Chapter 1 of this code and proposals for Chapter 1 of all I-Codes except the *International Energy Conservation Code*, *International Residential Code* and *ICC Performance Code*. Therefore, any proposals received for Chapter 1 of this code will be assigned to the Administrative Code Development Committee for consideration in 2016.

It is very important that anyone submitting code change proposals understand which code development committee is responsible for the section of the code that is the subject of the code change proposal. For further information on the code development committee responsibilities, please visit the ICC website at www.iccsafe.org/scoping.

Marginal Markings

Solid vertical lines in the margins within the body of the code indicate a technical change from the requirements of the 2012 edition. Deletion indicators in the form of an arrow (➡) are provided in the margin where an entire section, paragraph, exception or table has been deleted or an item in a list of items or a table has been deleted.

A single asterisk [*] placed in the margin indicates that text or a table has been relocated within the code. A double asterisk [**] placed in the margin indicates that the text or table immediately following it has been relocated there from elsewhere in the code. The following table indicates such relocations in the 2015 edition of the *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code*.

2015 LOCATION	2012 LOCATION
None	None

Italicized Terms

Selected terms set forth in Chapter 2, Definitions, are italicized where they appear in code text (except those in Sections 1903 through 1905 where italics indicate provisions that differ from ACI 318). Such terms are not italicized where the definition set forth in Chapter 2 does not impart the intended meaning in the use of the term. The terms selected have definitions that the user should read carefully to facilitate better understanding of the code.

EFFECTIVE USE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SWIMMING POOL AND SPA CODE

The *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code* (ISPSC) is a model code that regulates the minimum requirements for the design, construction, alteration, repair and maintenance of swimming pools, spas, hot tubes and aquatic facilities. This includes public swimming pools, public spas, public exercise spas, aquatic recreation facilities, onground storable residential pools, permanent inground residential pools, permanent residential spas, permanent residential exercise spas, portable residential spas and portable residential exercise spas.

In many jurisdictions, in addition to code officials having the responsibility for reviewing plans and inspecting the construction of pools and spas, environmental health officials also have a responsibility for oversight of the operation of pools and spas. In order to prevent disease and prevent injuries, environmental health officials conduct operational evaluations (inspections). This may include water chemistry, credentials and training of pool operators and lifeguards, proper water circulation, facility staff's preparedness to respond to injuries and accidents, and proper sanitation and safety of the facility.

Code officials and environmental health officials commonly work closely in the plan review and inspection of pools and spas. This collaboration between departments to jointly review plans and inspect pools and spas is critical in order to achieve a safe and healthy environment for all that utilize these facilities.

The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals (APSP), a cooperating sponsor with ICC in the development and update of the ISPSC, further notes: "While it is recognized that proper construction and installation are essential, safe use of pools and spas requires common sense, including constant adult supervision of children, and proper maintenance. It is assumed and intended that pool users will exercise appropriate personal judgment and responsibility (including constant adult supervision of children) and that operators will create and enforce rules and warning appropriate for their pool/spa."

Arrangement and Format of the 2015 ISPSC

The format of the ISPSC allows each chapter to be devoted to a particular subject with the exception of Chapter 3 which contains general compliance subject matter that is coordinated with the provisions for each type of pool and spa regulated in Chapters 4 – 10. The ISPSC is divided into eleven different parts:

Chapter	Subject
1	Scope and Administration
2	Definitions
3	General Compliance
4	Public Swimming Pools
5	Public Spas and Public Exercise Spas
6	Aquatic Recreation Facilities
7	Onground Storable Residential Swimming Pools
8	Permanent Inground Residential Swimming Pools
9	Permanent Residential Spas and Permanent Residential Exercise Spas
10	Portable Residential Spas and Portable Residential Exercise Spas
11	Referenced Standards

The following is a chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the scope and intent of the provisions of the *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code*:

Chapter 1 Scope and Administration. This chapter contains provisions for the application, enforcement and administration of subsequent requirements of the code. Chapter 1 identifies which swimming pools and spas come under its purview. It is largely concerned with maintaining “due process of law” in enforcing the design and construction criteria contained in the body of the code. Only through careful observation of the administrative provisions can the code official reasonably expect to demonstrate that “equal protection under the law” has been provided.

Chapter 2 Definitions. Terms that are defined in the code are listed alphabetically in Chapter 2. While a defined term may be used in one chapter or another, the meaning provided in Chapter 2 is applicable throughout the code.

Where understanding of a term’s definition is especially key to or necessary for the understanding of a particular code provision, the term is shown in *italics* wherever it appears in the code. This is true only for those terms that have a meaning that is unique to the code. In other words, the generally understood meaning of a term or phrase might not be sufficient or consistent with the meaning prescribed by the code; therefore, it is essential that the code-defined meaning be known.

Guidance regarding tense, gender and plurality of defined terms as well as guidance regarding terms not defined in this code is provided.

Chapter 3 General Compliance. Chapter 3 is broad in scope. It includes a variety of requirements for pools and spas. This chapter provides requirements that are intended to maintain a minimum level of safety and sanitation for both the general public and the users of pools or spas. Chapter 3 provides specific criteria for electrical, plumbing, mechanical and fuel gas requirements; energy savings requirements; construction in flood hazard areas; barrier requirements; decks around pools and spas; general design; dimensional design; equipment; suction entrapment avoidance; circulation systems; filters; pumps and motors; return and suction fittings; skimmers; heaters; air blowers and air induction systems; water supply; sanitizing equipment; waste water disposal; lighting; ladders and recessed treads; and safety. It is important to note that Chapter 3 is intended to provide general requirements not found in Chapters 4 – 10. Chapters 4 – 10 specifically reference Chapter 3 in order to coordinate the general provisions with the specific provisions based on the type of pool or spa.

Chapter 4 Public Swimming Pools. The purpose of Chapter 4 is to set forth specific requirements in the code for public swimming pools with regard to diving equipment, bather load limitations, rest ledges, wading pools, decks, deck equipment, filters, dressing and sanitary facilities, special features and signage. The term “public swimming pool” is defined in Chapter 2 and includes the different classes of pools (Class A – Class F).

Chapter 5 Public Spas and Public Exercise Spas. Chapter 5 establishes the specific criteria for public spas and public exercise spas with regard to materials, structure and design, pumps and motors, return and suction fittings, heater and temperature requirements, water supply, sanitation, oxidation equipment and chemical feeders, and safety features. The term “spa” is defined in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6 Aquatic Recreation Facilities. The purpose of Chapter 6 is to establish specific requirements for aquatic recreation facilities with regard to floors, markings and indications, circulation systems, handholds and ropes, depths, barriers, number of occupants, toilet rooms and bathrooms, special features and signage. The term “aquatic recreation facilities” is defined in Chapter 2 and includes wave pools, leisure rivers, inner tube rides and body slides, to name a few.

Chapter 7 Onground Storable Residential Swimming Pools. The purpose of Chapter 7 is to establish specific requirements for onground storable residential swimming pools with regard to ladders and stairs, decks and circulation systems. The term “onground storable pool” is defined in Chapter 2. This chapter applies to what has been commonly referred to in past standards and codes as onground or above-ground pools. The application of the provisions for onground residential pools is limited to pools associated with detached one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses not more than three stories high in accordance with the definition of the term “residential” in Chapter 2.

Chapter 8 Permanent Inground Residential Swimming Pools. The purpose of Chapter 8 is to establish specific requirements for permanent inground residential swimming pools with regard to design, construction tolerances, diving water envelopes, walls, offset ledges, pool floors, diving equipment, special features, circulation systems and safety features. The application of the provisions for inground residential pools is limited to pools associated with detached one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses not more than three stories high in accordance with the definition of the term “residential” in Chapter 2.

Chapter 9 Permanent Residential Spas and Permanent Residential Exercise Spas. The purpose of Chapter 9 is to establish specific requirements for permanent residential spas and permanent residential exercise spas with regard to safety features. The application of the provisions for residential spas (“spa” is defined in Chapter 2) is limited to spas associated with detached one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses not more than three stories high in accordance with the definition of the term “residential” in Chapter 2.

Chapter 10 Portable Residential Spas and Portable Residential Exercise Spas. The purpose of Chapter 10 is to establish specific requirements for portable residential spas and portable residential exercise spas with regard to standards that the equipment must meet. The application of the provisions for residential spas (“spa” is defined in Chapter 2) is limited to spas associated with detached one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses not more than three stories high in accordance with the definition of the term “residential” in Chapter 2.

Chapter 11 Referenced Standards. The code contains numerous references to standards that are used to regulate materials and methods of construction. Chapter 11 contains a comprehensive list of all standards that are referenced in the code. The standards are part of the code to the extent of the reference to the standard. Compliance with the referenced standard is necessary for compliance with this code. By providing specifically adopted standards, the construction and installation requirements necessary for compliance with the code can be readily determined. The basis for code compliance is, therefore, established and available on an equal basis to the code official, contractor, designer and owner.

Chapter 11 is organized in a manner that makes it easy to locate specific standards. It lists all of the referenced standards, alphabetically, by acronym of the promulgating agency of the standard. Each agency’s standards are then listed in either alphabetical or numeric order based on the standard identification. The list also contains the title of the standard; the edition (date) of the standard referenced; any addenda included as part of the ICC adoption; and the section or sections of this code that reference the standard.

