



# INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION CODE®

*A Member of the International Code Family®*

# 2012 IECC®

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2012 International Energy Conservation Code®

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# PREFACE

## Introduction

Internationally, code officials recognize the need for a modern, up-to-date energy conservation code addressing the design of energy-efficient building envelopes and installation of energy efficient mechanical, lighting and power systems through requirements emphasizing performance. The *International Energy Conservation Code*®, in this 2012 edition, is designed to meet these needs through model code regulations that will result in the optimal utilization of fossil fuel and nondepletable resources in all communities, large and small.

This code contains separate provisions for commercial buildings and for low-rise residential buildings (3 stories or less in height above grade.) Each set of provisions in this code—IECC—Commercial Provisions and IECC—Residential Provisions are separately applied to buildings within their respective scopes. Each set of provisions are to be treated separately; they each contain a Scope and Administration chapter, a Definitions chapter, a General Requirements chapter, and a chapter containing energy efficiency requirements applicable to buildings within their scope.

This comprehensive energy conservation code establishes minimum regulations for energy efficient buildings using prescriptive and performance-related provisions. It is founded on broad-based principles that make possible the use of new materials and new energy efficient designs. This 2012 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 Existing Building Code*®, *International Fire Code*®, *International Fuel Gas Code*®, *International Green Construction Code*™ (to be available March 2012), *International Mechanical Code*®, *ICC Performance Code*®, *International Plumbing Code*®, *International Private Sewage Disposal Code*®, *International Property Maintenance Code*®, *International Residential Code*®, *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code*™ (to be available March 2012), *International Wildland-Urban Interface Code*® and *International Zoning Code*®.

The *International Energy Conservation Code* provisions provide many benefits, among which is the model code development process that offers an international forum for energy professionals to discuss performance and prescriptive code requirements. This forum provides an excellent arena to debate proposed revisions. This model code also encourages international consistency in the application of provisions.

## Development

The first edition of the *International Energy Conservation Code* (1998) was based on the 1995 edition of the *Model Energy Code* promulgated by the Council of American Building Officials (CABO) and included changes approved through the CABO Code Development Procedures through 1997. CABO assigned all rights and responsibilities to the International Code Council and its three statutory members at that time, including Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc. (BOCA), International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO) and Southern Building Code Congress International (SBCCI). This 2012 edition presents the code as originally issued, with changes reflected in the 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009 editions and further changes approved through the ICC Code Development Process through 2010. A new edition such as this is promulgated every three years.

This code is founded on principles intended to establish provisions consistent with the scope of an energy conservation code that adequately conserves energy; 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 Energy Conservation Code* is available for adoption and use by jurisdictions internationally. Its use within a governmental jurisdiction is intended to be accomplished through adoption by reference in accordance with proceedings establishing the jurisdiction's laws. At the time of adoption, jurisdictions should insert the appropriate information in provisions requiring specific local information, such as the name of the adopting jurisdiction. These locations are shown in bracketed words in small capital letters in the code and in the sample ordinance. The sample adoption ordinance on page ix addresses several key elements of a code adoption ordinance, including the information required for insertion into the code text.

## Maintenance

The *International Energy Conservation Code* is kept up to date through the review of proposed changes submitted by code enforcement 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 both through 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 Energy Conservation Code* assures the highest degree of care, 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 ICC and its members do 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 the code are considered at the Code Development Hearings by the applicable International Code Development Committee. The IECC—Commercial Provisions (sections designated with a “C” prior to the section number) are primarily maintained by the Commercial Energy Code Development Committee. The IECC—Residential Provisions (sections designated with an “R” prior to the section number) are maintained by the Residential Energy Code Development Committee. This is designated in the chapter headings by a [CE] and [RE], respectively. Proposed changes to a code section or defined term, other than those designated by [CE] or [RE], 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 or defined terms that have [M] in front of them are considered by the International Mechanical Code Development Committee.

Maintenance responsibilities for the IECC are designated as follows:

[CE] = Commercial Energy Code Development Committee

[M] = International Mechanical Code Development Committee

[RE] = Residential Energy Code Development Committee

Note that, for the development of the 2015 edition of the I-Codes, there will be two groups of code development committees and they will meet in separate years. The groupings are as follows:

<b>Group A Codes (Heard in 2012, Code Change Proposals Deadline: January 3, 2012)</b>	<b>Group B Codes (Heard in 2013, Code Change Proposals Deadline: January 3, 2013)</b>
International Building Code	Administrative Provisions (Chapter 1 all codes except the IECC, IRC and ICCPC, administrative updates to currently referenced standards, and designated definitions)
International Fuel Gas Code	International Energy Conservation Code
International Mechanical Code	International Existing Building Code
International Plumbing Code	International Fire Code
International Private Sewage Disposal Code	International Green Construction Code
	ICC Performance Code
	International Property Maintenance Code
	International Residential Code
	International Swimming Pool and Spa Code
	International Wildland-Urban Interface Code
	International Zoning 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 will meet in different years, it is possible that some proposals for this code will be heard by a committee in a different year than the year in which the primary committees for this code meets.

For example, the definition of the term “Energy Recovery Ventilation System” for the IECC—Commercial Provisions (page C-8) is the responsibility of the International Mechanical Code Development Committee, which is part of the Group A code hearings. Therefore, any proposed changes to this defined term will need to be submitted by the deadline for the Group A codes, so that the International Mechanical Code Development Committee can consider that proposed change during the 2012 Code Change Cycle.

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 web site at [www.iccsafe.org/scoping](http://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 2009 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 2012 Edition of the *International Energy Conservation Code*.

<b>2012 LOCATION</b>	<b>2009 LOCATION</b>
C402.4.3	502.4.1
C408.2.2.1	503.2.9.1
C408.2.2.2	503.2.9.2
C408.2.5.2	503.2.9.3

## Italicized Terms

Selected terms set forth in Chapter 2, Definitions, for both the Commercial and Residential Provisions are italicized where they appear in code text. 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 which the user should read carefully to facilitate better understanding of the code.



# Effective Use of the International Energy Conservation Code

The *International Energy Conservation Code* (IECC) is a model code that regulates minimum energy conservation requirements for new buildings. The IECC addresses energy conservation requirements for all aspects of energy uses in both commercial and residential construction, including heating and ventilating, lighting, water heating, and power usage for appliances and building systems.

The IECC is a design document. For example, before one constructs a building, the designer must determine the minimum insulation *R*-values and fenestration *U*-factors for the building exterior envelope. Depending on whether the building is for residential use or for commercial use, the IECC sets forth minimum requirements for exterior envelope insulation, window and door *U*-factors and SHGC ratings, duct insulation, lighting and power efficiency, and water distribution insulation.

## Arrangement and Format of the 2012 IECC

The IECC contains two separate sets of provisions—one for commercial buildings and one for residential buildings. Each set of provisions are applied separately to buildings within their scope. The IECC—Commercial Provisions apply to all buildings except for residential buildings 3 stories or less in height. The IECC—Residential Provisions apply to detached one- and two-family dwellings and multiple single family dwellings as well as Group R-2, R-3 and R-4 buildings three stories or less in height. These scopes are based on the definitions of “commercial building” and “residential building,” respectively, in Chapter 2 of each set of provisions. Note that the IECC—Commercial Provisions therefore contain provisions for residential buildings 4 stories or greater in height. Each set of provisions is divided into 4 different parts:

Chapters	Subjects
1-2	Administration and definitions
3	Climate zones and general materials requirements
4	Energy efficiency requirements
5	Referenced standards

The following is a chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the scope and intent of the provisions of the *International Energy Conservation Code* and applies to both the commercial and residential energy provisions:

**Chapter 1 Administration.** This chapter contains provisions for the application, enforcement and administration of subsequent requirements of the code. In addition to establishing the scope of the code, Chapter 1 identifies which buildings and structures come under its purview. Chapter 1 is largely concerned with maintaining “due process of law” in enforcing the energy conservation criteria contained in the body of the code. Only through careful observation of the administrative provisions can the building official reasonably expect to demonstrate that “equal protection under the law” has been provided.

**Chapter 2 Definitions.** All 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.

Additional definitions regarding climate zones are found in Tables 301.3(1) and (2). These are not listed in Chapter 2.

Where understanding of a term’s definition is especially key to or necessary for 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 Requirements.** Chapter 3 specifies the climate zones that will serve to establish the exterior design conditions. In addition, Chapter 3 provides interior design conditions that are used as a basis for assumptions in heating and cooling load calculations, and provides basic material requirements for insulation materials and fenestration materials.

Climate has a major impact on the energy use of most buildings. The code establishes many requirements such as wall and roof insulation *R*-values, window and door thermal transmittance requirement (*U*-factors) as well as provisions that affect the mechanical systems based upon the climate where the building is located. This chapter contains information that will be used to properly assign the building location into the correct climate zone and is used as the basis for establishing requirements or elimination of requirements.

**Chapter 4 Energy Efficiency.** Chapter 4 of each set of provisions contains the technical requirements for energy efficiency.

**Commercial Energy Efficiency.** Chapter 4 of the IECC—Commercial Provisions contains the energy-efficiency-related requirements for the design and construction of most types of commercial buildings and residential buildings greater than three stories in height above grade. Residential buildings, townhouses and garden apartments three stories or less in height are covered in the IECC—Residential Provisions. This chapter defines requirements for the portions of the building and building systems that impact energy use in new commercial construction and new residential construction greater than three stories in height, and promotes the effective use of energy. The provisions within the chapter promote energy efficiency in the building envelope, the heating and cooling system and the service water heating system of the building.

**Residential Energy Efficiency.** Chapter 4 of the IECC—Residential Provisions contains the energy-efficiency-related requirements for the design and construction of residential buildings regulated under this code. It should be noted that the definition of a *residential building* in this code is unique for this code. In this code, a *residential building* is a detached one- and two-family dwelling and multiple single family dwellings as well as R-2, R-3 or R-4 building three stories or less in height. All other buildings, including residential buildings greater than three stories in height, are regulated by the energy conservation requirements in the IECC—Commercial Provisions. The applicable portions of a residential building must comply with the provisions within this chapter for energy efficiency. This chapter defines requirements for the portions of the building and building systems that impact energy use in new residential construction and promotes the effective use of energy. The provisions within the chapter promote energy efficiency in the building envelope, the heating and cooling system and the service water heating system of the building.

**Chapter 5 Referenced Standards.** The code contains numerous references to standards that are used to regulate materials and methods of construction. Chapter 5 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 5 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 upon 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.

# LEGISLATION

The International Codes are designed and promulgated to be adopted by reference by legislative action. Jurisdictions wishing to adopt the 2012 *International Energy Conservation Code* as an enforceable regulation governing energy efficient building envelopes and installation of energy efficient mechanical, lighting and power systems should ensure that certain factual information is included in the adopting legislation at the time adoption is being considered by the appropriate governmental body. The following sample adoption legislation addresses several key elements, including the information required for insertion into the code text.

## SAMPLE LEGISLATION FOR ADOPTION OF THE *INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION CODE* ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A[N] [ORDINANCE/STATUTE/REGULATION] of the [JURISDICTION] adopting the 2012 edition of the *International Energy Conservation Code*, regulating and governing energy efficient building envelopes and installation of energy efficient mechanical, lighting and power systems in the [JURISDICTION]; providing for the issuance of permits and collection of fees therefor; repealing [ORDINANCE/STATUTE/REGULATION] No. \_\_\_\_\_ of the [JURISDICTION] and all other ordinances or parts of laws in conflict therewith.

The [GOVERNING BODY] of the [JURISDICTION] does ordain as follows:

**Section 1.** That a certain document, three (3) copies of which are on file in the office of the [TITLE OF JURISDICTION'S KEEPER OF RECORDS] of [NAME OF JURISDICTION], being marked and designated as the *International Energy Conservation Code*, 2012 edition, as published by the International Code Council, be and is hereby adopted as the Energy Conservation Code of the [JURISDICTION], in the State of [STATE NAME] for regulating and governing energy efficient building envelopes and installation of energy efficient mechanical, lighting and power systems as herein provided; providing for the issuance of permits and collection of fees therefor; and each and all of the regulations, provisions, penalties, conditions and terms of said Energy Conservation Code on file in the office of the [JURISDICTION] are hereby referred to, adopted, and made a part hereof, as if fully set out in this legislation, with the additions, insertions, deletions and changes, if any, prescribed in Section 2 of this ordinance.

**Section 2.** The following sections are hereby revised:

Sections C101.1 and R101.1. Insert: [NAME OF JURISDICTION].

Sections C108.4 and R108.4. Insert: [DOLLAR AMOUNT] in two places.

**Section 3.** That [ORDINANCE/STATUTE/REGULATION] No. \_\_\_\_\_ of [JURISDICTION] entitled [FILL IN HERE THE COMPLETE TITLE OF THE LEGISLATION OR LAWS IN EFFECT AT THE PRESENT TIME SO THAT THEY WILL BE REPEALED BY DEFINITE MENTION] and all other ordinances or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**Section 4.** That if any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this legislation is, for any reason, held to be unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The [GOVERNING BODY] hereby declares that it would have passed this law, and each section, subsection, clause or phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses and phrases be declared unconstitutional.

**Section 5.** That nothing in this legislation or in the Energy Conservation Code hereby adopted shall be construed to affect any suit or proceeding impending in any court, or any rights acquired, or liability incurred, or any cause or causes of action acquired or existing, under any act or ordinance hereby repealed as cited in Section 3 of this law; nor shall any just or legal right or remedy of any character be lost, impaired or affected by this legislation.

**Section 6.** That the [JURISDICTION'S KEEPER OF RECORDS] is hereby ordered and directed to cause this legislation to be published. (An additional provision may be required to direct the number of times the legislation is to be published and to specify that it is to be in a newspaper in general circulation. Posting may also be required.)

**Section 7.** That this law and the rules, regulations, provisions, requirements, orders and matters established and adopted hereby shall take effect and be in full force and effect [TIME PERIOD] from and after the date of its final passage and adoption.

