



# 2012 INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE®

*A Member of the International Code Family®*

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2012 International Building Code®

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# PREFACE

## Introduction

Internationally, code officials recognize the need for a modern, up-to-date building code addressing the design and installation of building systems through requirements emphasizing performance. The *International Building Code*®, in this 2012 edition, is designed to meet these needs through model code regulations that safeguard the public health and safety in all communities, large and small.

This comprehensive building code establishes minimum regulations for building systems using prescriptive and performance-related provisions. It is founded on broad-based principles that make possible the use of new materials and new building 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 Energy Conservation 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 Building Code* provisions provide many benefits, among which is the model code development process that offers an international forum for building 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 Building Code* (2000) was the culmination of an effort initiated in 1997 by the ICC. This included five drafting subcommittees appointed by ICC and consisting of representatives of the three statutory members of the International Code Council 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). The intent was to draft a comprehensive set of regulations for building systems consistent with and inclusive of the scope of the existing model codes. Technical content of the latest model codes promulgated by BOCA, ICBO and SBCCI was utilized as the basis for the development, followed by public hearings in 1997, 1998 and 1999 to consider proposed changes. This 2012 edition presents the code as originally issued, with changes reflected in the 2003, 2006 and 2009 editions and further changes approved by the ICC Code Development Process through 2010. A new edition such as this is promulgated every 3 years.

This code is founded on principles intended to establish provisions consistent with the scope of a building 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 Building 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 legislation. The sample adoption ordinance on page xix addresses several key elements of a code adoption ordinance, including the information required for insertion into the code text.

## 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 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 Building 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 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 the code are considered at the Code Development Hearings by the applicable International Building Code Development Committee (IBC-Fire Safety, General, Means of Egress or Structural). 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 [F] in front of them (e.g., [F] 903.1.1.1) are considered by the International Fire Code Development Committee during the portion of the code development hearings when the International Fire Code Development Committee meets.

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;
- [E] = International Energy Conservation Code Development Committee (Commercial Energy Committee or Residential Energy Committee, as applicable);
- [EB] = International Existing Building Code Development Committee;
- [F] = International Fire Code Development Committee;
- [FG] = International Fuel Gas Code Development Committee;
- [M] = International Mechanical Code Development Committee; and
- [P] = International Plumbing 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 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 committee for this code meets.

For instance, 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 code hearings. This committee will conduct its code development hearings in 2013 to consider all code change proposals for Chapter 1 of this code and proposals for Chapter 1 of all I-Codes. Therefore, any proposals received for Chapter 1 of this code will be deferred for consideration in 2013 by the Administrative Code Development Committee.

Another example is Section 903.1 which is designated as the responsibility of the International Fire Code Development Committee, along with most of the provisions in Chapter 9. This committee will conduct its code development hearings in 2013 to consider all code change proposals to the *International Fire Code* and any portions of other codes that it is responsible for, including Section 903.1 and most of the provisions of Chapter 9 (designated with [F] in front of those sections). Therefore, any proposals received for Section 903.1 in Chapter 9 will be deferred for consideration in 2013 by the International Fire Code Development Committee.

In some cases, another committee in Group A will be responsible for a section of this code. For example, Section 1210.3 has a [P] in front of the numbered section, indicating that this section of the code is the responsibility of the International Plumbing Code Development Committee. The *International Plumbing Code* is in Group A; therefore, any code change proposals to this section will be due before the Group A deadline of January 3, 2012, and these code change proposals will be assigned to the International Plumbing Code Development Committee for consideration.

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 Building Code*.

2012 LOCATION	2009 LOCATION
407.4	1014.2
410.6	1015.6
424	402.6.3
712.1	708.1
712.1.2	708.2, Exception 1
712.1.3	708.2, Exception 2
712.1.3.1	708.2, Exception 2.1
712.1.3.2	708.2, Exception 2.2
712.1.4	708.2, Exception 3
712.1.5	708.2, Exception 4
712.1.6	708.2, Exception 5
712.1.7	708.2, Exception 6
712.1.8	708.2, Exception 7
712.1.9	708.2, Exception 8
712.1.10	708.2, Exception 9
712.1.11	708.2, Exception 10
712.1.12	708.2, Exception 11
712.1.13	708.2, Exception 12
712.1.14	708.2, Exception 13
712.1.15	708.2, Exception 14
712.1.16	708.2, Exception 15
712.1.18	708.2, Exception 16
713.3 through 713.14.1.1	708.3 through 708.14.1.1
909.21 through 909.21.11	708.14.2 through 708.14.2.11
1004.1.1.2	1004.6
1008.1.9.8	1008.1.4.4
1013.8	1405.13.2
1028.10.1	1017.4
1028.10.1.1	1017.4.1
1028.10.1.1	1017.4.2
1028.10.1.2	1017.4.3
1210.3.1	2903.1
1210.3.2	2903.2
1406.2.1	1406.2.1.1
1406.2.2	1406.2.1
1607.6	1605.4
1704.3	1705.1
1704.4	1709.1

2012 LOCATION	2009 LOCATION
1704.5	1710.1
1705.1.1	1704.15
1705.4.2	1704.11
1705.10	1706.1
1705.11	1707.1
1705.12	1708.1
3313.1	3311.4

## Coordination between the International Building and Fire Codes

Because the coordination of technical provisions is one of the benefits of adopting the ICC family of model codes, users will find the ICC codes to be a very flexible set of model documents. To accomplish this flexibility some technical provisions are duplicated in some of the model code documents. While the *International Codes* are provided as a comprehensive set of model codes for the built environment, documents are occasionally adopted as a stand-alone regulation. When one of the model documents is adopted as the basis of a stand-alone code, that code should provide a complete package of requirements with enforcement assigned to the entity for which the adoption is being made.

The model codes can also be adopted as a family of complimentary codes. When adopted together there should be no conflict of any of the technical provisions. When multiple model codes are adopted in a jurisdiction it is important for the adopting authority to evaluate the provisions in each code document and determine how and by which agency(ies) they will be enforced. It is important, therefore, to understand that where technical provisions are duplicated in multiple model documents, the enforcement duties must be clearly assigned by the local adopting jurisdiction. ICC remains committed to providing state-of-the-art model code documents that, when adopted locally, will reduce the cost to government of code adoption and enforcement and protect the public health, safety and welfare.

## Italicized Terms

Selected terms set forth in Chapter 2, Definitions, are italicized where they appear in code text (except those in Sections 1903 through 1908 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 which the user should read carefully to facilitate better understanding of the code.





# Effective Use of the International Building Code

The *International Building Code*® (IBC®) is a model code that provides minimum requirements to safeguard the public health, safety and general welfare of the occupants of new and existing buildings and structures. The IBC is fully compatible with the ICC family of codes, including: *International Energy Conservation Code*® (IECC®), *International Existing Building Code*® (IEBC®), *International Fire Code*® (IFC®), *International Fuel Gas Code*® (IFGC®), *International Green Construction Code*™ (IGCC™) (to be available March 2012), *International Mechanical Code*® (IMC®), *ICC Performance Code*® (ICCPC®), *International Plumbing Code*® (IPC®), *International Private Sewage Disposal Code*® (IPSDC®), *International Property Maintenance Code*® (IPMC®), *International Residential Code*® (IRC®), *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code*™ (ISPSC™) (to be available March 2012), *International Wildland-Urban Interface Code*® (IWUIC®) and *International Zoning Code*® (IZC®).

The IBC addresses structural strength, means of egress, sanitation, adequate lighting and ventilation, accessibility, energy conservation and life safety in regards to new and existing buildings, facilities and systems. The codes are promulgated on a 3-year cycle to allow for new construction methods and technologies to be incorporated into the codes. Alternative materials, designs and methods not specifically addressed in the code can be approved by the code official where the proposed materials, designs or methods comply with the intent of the provisions of the code (see Section 104.11).

The IBC applies to all occupancies, including one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses that are not within the scope of the IRC. The IRC is referenced for coverage of detached one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses as defined in the Exception to Section 101.2 and the definition for “townhouse” in Chapter 2. The IBC applies to all types of buildings and structures unless exempted. Work exempted from permits is listed in Section 105.2.

## Arrangement and Format of the 2012 IBC

Before applying the requirements of the IBC, it is beneficial to understand its arrangement and format. The IBC, like other codes published by ICC, is arranged and organized to follow sequential steps that generally occur during a plan review or inspection.

Chapters	Subjects
1-2	Administration and definitions
3	Use and occupancy classifications
4, 31	Special requirements for specific occupancies or elements
5-6	Height and area limitations based on type of construction
7-9	Fire resistance and protection requirements
10	Requirements for evacuation
11	Specific requirements to allow use and access to a building for persons with disabilities
12-13, 27-30	Building systems, such as lighting, HVAC, plumbing fixtures, elevators
14-26	Structural components—performance and stability
32	Encroachment outside of property lines
33	Safeguards during construction
34	Existing building allowances
35	Referenced standards
Appendices A-M	Appendices

The IBC requirements for high-hazard, fire-resistance-rated construction, interior finish, fire protection systems, means of egress, emergency and standby power, and temporary structures are directly correlated with the requirements of the IFC. The following chapters/sections of the IBC are correlated to the IFC:

IBC Chapter/Section	IFC Chapter/Section	Subject
Sections 307, 414, 415	Chapters 50-60; 62-67	High-hazard requirements
Chapter 7	Chapter 7	Fire-resistance-rated construction
Chapter 8	Chapter 8	Interior finish, decorative materials and furnishings
Chapter 9	Chapter 9	Fire protection systems
Chapter 10	Chapter 10	Means of egress
Chapter 27	Section 604	Standby and emergency power
Section 3103	Chapter 24	Temporary structures

The IBC requirements for smoke control systems, and smoke and fire dampers are directly correlated to the requirements of the IMC. IBC Chapter 28 is a reference to the IMC and the IFGC for chimney, fireplaces and barbeques, and all aspects of mechanical systems. The following chapters/sections of the IBC are correlated with the IMC:

IBC Chapter/Section	IMC Chapter/Section	Subject
Section 716	Section 607	Smoke and fire dampers
Section 909	Section 513	Smoke control

The IBC requirements for plumbing fixtures and toilet rooms are directly correlated to the requirements of the IPC. The following chapters/sections of the IBC are correlated with the IPC:

IBC Chapter/Section	IPC Chapter/Section	Subject
Chapter 29	Chapters 3 & 4	Plumbing fixtures and facilities

The following is a chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the scope and intent of the provisions of the *International Building Code*.

**Chapter 1 Scope and Administration.** Chapter 1 establishes the limits of applicability of the code and describes how the code is to be applied and enforced. Chapter 1 is in two parts, Part 1—Scope and Application (Sections 101-102) and Part 2—Administration and Enforcement (Sections 103-116). Section 101 identifies which buildings and structures come under its purview and references other ICC codes as applicable. Standards and codes are scoped to the extent referenced (see Section 102.4).

The building code is intended to be adopted as a legally enforceable document and it cannot be effective without adequate provisions for its administration and enforcement. The provisions of Chapter 1 establish the authority and duties of the code official appointed by the jurisdiction having authority and also establish the rights and privileges of the design professional, contractor and property owner.

**Chapter 2 Definitions.** All terms that are defined in the code are listed alphabetically in Chapter 2. Terms are defined in Chapter 2. Defined terms that are pertinent to a specific chapter are also listed in that chapter. While a defined term may be listed in one chapter or another, the meaning is applicable throughout the code.

Codes are technical documents and every word, term and punctuation mark can impact the meaning of the code text and the intended results. The code often uses terms that have a unique meaning in the code and the code meaning can differ substantially from the ordinarily understood