

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 2003 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 2003 edition is fully compatible with all the International Codes (“I-Codes”) published by the International Code Council (ICC), including the ICC *Electrical Code*, *International Energy Conservation Code*, *International Existing Building Code*, *International Fire Code*, *International Fuel Gas Code*, *International Mechanical Code*, *ICC Performance Code*, *International Plumbing Code*, *International Private Sewage Disposal Code*, *International Property Maintenance Code*, *International Residential Code*, *International Urban-Wildland 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: 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 2003 edition presents the code as originally issued, with changes approved through the ICC Code Development Process through 2002. A new edition such as this is promulgated every three years.

With the development and publication of the family of International Codes in 2000, the continued development and maintenance of the model codes individually promulgated by BOCA (“BOCA National Codes”), ICBO (“Uniform Codes”) and SBCCI (“Standard Codes”) was discontinued. This 2003 *International Building Code*, as well as its predecessor—the 2000 edition, is intended to be the successor building code to those codes previously developed by BOCA, ICBO and SBCCI.

The development of a single set of comprehensive and coordinated family of International Codes was a significant milestone in the development of regulations for the built environment. The timing of this publication mirrors a milestone in the change in structure of the model codes, namely, the pending Consolidation of BOCA, ICBO and SBCCI into the ICC. The activities and services previously provided by the individual model code organizations will be the responsibility of the Consolidated ICC.

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 ordinance. The sample adoption ordinance on page v 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 Code and Standard Development Department of the International Code Council.

While the development procedure of the *International Building Code* assures the highest degree of care, ICC and the founding members of ICC—BOCA, ICBO, SBCCI—their 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 founding 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.

Letter Designations in Front of Section Numbers

In each code development cycle, proposed changes to this code are considered at the Code Development Hearing by the International Building 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 whose number begins with a letter in brackets are considered by a different code development committee. For instance, proposed changes to code sections which have the letter [F] in front (e.g., [F] 1001.3), are considered by the International Fire Code Development Committee at the Code Development Hearing. Where this designation is applicable to the entire content of a main section of the code, the designation appears at the main section number and title and is not repeated at every subsection in that section.

The content of sections in this code which begin with a letter designation is maintained by another code development committee in accordance with the following: [E] = International Energy Conservation Code Development Committee; [EB] = International Existing Building Code Development Committee; [EL] = ICC Electrical Code Development Committee; [F] = International Fire Code Development Committee; [M] = International Mechanical Code Development Committee; [P] = International Plumbing Code Development Committee; [PC] = ICC Performance Code Development Committee; [PM] = International Property Maintenance Code Development Committee; [RBE] = International Residential Code Building and Energy Development Committee; [RMP] = International Residential Code Mechanical/Plumbing Development Committee; [UW] = International Urban-Wildland Interface Code Development Committee; and [Z] = International Zoning Code Development Committee. Sections which begin with a [W] designation are derived from the Washington State Building Code.

Marginal Markings

Solid vertical lines in the margins within the body of the code indicate a technical change from the requirements of the 2000 edition. Deletion indicators (➡) are provided in the margin where a paragraph or item has been deleted.

Chapter 10 user note: Chapter 10 of the code has been reorganized from the 2000 edition as a result of an approved code change proposal. This resulted in a renumbering of the chapter from nine sections to 25. The presentation of text predominantly follows that of the 2000 edition; however, the section numbers have been revised. Marginal markings are included at each section number but have not been included to reflect the subsection renumbering. A comprehensive 2000/2003 Chapter 10 section number cross index is posted on the ICC website at www.intlcode.org.

Seattle Specific Marginal Markings

Language added as a result of ordinance 122049, which takes effect on May 5, 2006 is denoted with the numerals (06) in the margin beside that language. Where previous Seattle amendments were removed from this code, a caret (>) has been placed in the margin.

Acknowledgement

Development of the 2003 Seattle Building Code is the result of cooperative effort of the volunteer Construction Codes Advisory Board and the Department of Planning and Development. The staff of the Department wishes to extend its appreciation to the members of the Board and its committees. The Department is deeply indebted to the Board and its subcommittees for their intense hard work over many months. Adoption of this code would not have been possible without them.

Electronic Mailing List

If you would like to receive occasional email messages notifying you of future amendments and errata to the *Seattle Building Code* or other codes, go to the Technical Codes page on DPD's website <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/TechCodes/>. Click the link "Subscribe to Mailing List" in the right column under "Resources".

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