

# PREFACE

## Introduction

The *Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code* (USBC) is a state regulation promulgated by the Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development, a Governor-appointed board, for the purpose of establishing minimum regulations to govern the construction and maintenance of buildings and structures.

The provisions of the USBC are based on nationally recognized model building and fire codes published by the International Code Council, Inc. The model codes are made part of the USBC through a regulatory process known as incorporation by reference. The USBC also contains administrative provisions governing the use of the model codes and establishing requirements for the enforcement of the code by the local building departments and other code enforcement agencies.

In keeping with the designations of the USBC used previously, since the 2009 editions of the *International Codes* are incorporated by reference into this version of the USBC, it is known as the 2009 edition of the USBC.

## Arrangement

The USBC is part of the *Virginia Administrative Code* (VAC), the official compilation of state regulations published under the authority and guidance of the Virginia Code Commission. Due to the difference in the section numbering system between the VAC and the model codes incorporated by reference into the USBC, the USBC utilizes a dual section numbering system. In the USBC, the VAC section numbers are listed first, followed by a section number matching the model code system. In this printing of the USBC, the VAC section numbers are omitted and only the model code numbering system is utilized. The version of the USBC containing both the VAC section numbers and the model code numbering is available from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and may also be accessed through the website of the Virginia Code Commission or by subscription to the VAC.

## Overview

The USBC is divided into three stand-alone parts. Part I contains regulations specific to the construction of new buildings and structures and alterations, additions and change of occupancy in existing buildings and structures and is known as the *Virginia Construction Code*. Part II contains optional regulations specific to the rehabilitation of existing buildings that may be used as an acceptable alternative to the *Virginia Construction Code*. Part II is known as the *Virginia Rehabilitation Code*. Part III of the USBC contains the regulations for the maintenance of existing structures which is enforced at the option of the local governments. It is known as the *Virginia Maintenance Code*.

## Codes Purchased from ICC

The 2009 edition of the USBC is being made available in pamphlet form as in past editions of the USBC. In addition to the pamphlet form of the USBC published by DHCD, the International Code Council (ICC) publishes versions of the *Virginia Construction Code*, *Virginia Rehabilitation Code*, *Virginia Maintenance Code* and a series of Virginia specific trade codes. In the ICC published versions, marginal markings are provided to distinguish between text which is part of the *International Codes* and text which is part of the state regulations. Double vertical lines in the margins within the body of the codes indicate state amendments to the *International Codes*. As in the standard printings of the *International Codes*, a single vertical line in the margins within the body of the code indicates a technical change from the previous edition of the *International Codes*. Deletions from the previous editions of the *International Codes* are indicated in the form of an arrow (➡) 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.

As the Virginia specific trade codes published by ICC (the *Virginia Plumbing Code*, the *Virginia Mechanical Code*, the *Virginia Fuel Gas Code* and the *Virginia Energy Conservation Code*) are excerpts from the *Virginia Construction Code*, which references the trade codes through the *International Building Code* (IBC), only those administrative provisions of the *Virginia Construction Code* which are not dependent on the IBC provisions are included in the Virginia specific trade codes. If questions arise concerning the applicability of any provisions of the Virginia specific trades codes, the *Virginia Construction Code* provisions should be reviewed.

## Technical Assistance

The local building departments and enforcing agencies may be contacted for further information concerning the USBC. Contact information for DHCD is below.

**DHCD, Division of Building and Fire Regulation**  
**Technical Assistance Services Office**  
**600 East Main Street, Suite 300**  
**Richmond, Virginia 23219-2430**  
**Phone: (804) 371-7150 – Email: [taso@dhcd.virginia.gov](mailto:taso@dhcd.virginia.gov)**  
**Website: [www.dhcd.virginia.gov](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov)**

