PREFACE

Introduction

Internationally, code officials recognize the need for a modern, up-to-date fire code addressing conditions hazardous to life and property from fire, explosion, handling or use of hazardous materials and the use and occupancy of buildings and premises. The International Fire Code®, in this 2015 edition, is designed to meet these needs through model code regulations that safeguard the public health and safety in all communities, large and small.


The International Fire Code provisions provide many benefits, among which is the model code development process that offers an international forum for fire safety 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 Fire Code (2000) was the culmination of an effort initiated in 1997 by a development committee 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 fire safety regulations 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 1998 and 1999 to consider proposed changes. This 2015 edition presents the code as originally issued, with changes reflected in the 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012 editions and further changes approved through the ICC Code Development Process through 2014. 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 fire 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 Fire 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 adop-
tions@iccside.org to learn how to adopt and distribute laws based on the International Fire Code in a manner that provides necessary access, while maintaining the ICC’s copyright.

Maintenance

The International Fire 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 Fire 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 the code are considered at the Committee Action Hearings by the International Fire 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(s) in brackets are considered by a different code development committee. For example, proposed changes to code sections that have [BE] in front of them (e.g., [BE] 607.3) are considered by the appropriate International Building Code Development Committee (IBC – Means of Egress) at the code development 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;
[BE] = IBC – Means of Egress Code Development Committee;
[BF] = IBC – Fire Safety Code Development Committee;
[BG] = IBC – General Code Development Committee;
[BS] = IBC – Structural Code Development Committee;
[EB] = International Existing Building Code Development Committee;
[FG] = International Fuel Gas Code Development Committee;
[M] = International Mechanical Code Development Committee; and
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A Codes</th>
<th>Group B Codes</th>
<th>Group C Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **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, administrative updates to currently referenced standards, and designated definitions) | International Green Construction Code |
– Structural  
(Chapters 15-25, Appendices F, G, H, I, J, L, M) | |
| International Mechanical Code | International Fire Code | |
| International Plumbing Code | International Residential Code  
| International Private Sewage Disposal Code | International Wildland-Urban Interface Code | |
| International Property Maintenance Code | | |
| International Residential Code  
– IRC-Mechanical (Chapters 12-24)  
– IRC-Plumbing  
(Chapters 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.

For example, Section 907.2.13.1.2 of this code (and the IBC) is designated as the responsibility of the International Mechanical Code Development Committee. This committee will conduct its code development hearings in 2015 to consider code change proposals in its purview, which includes any proposals to Section 907.2.13.1.2.

Note also that the majority of the sections of Chapter 1 of this code are designated as the responsibility of the Administrative Code Development Committee, and that committee is part of the Group B portion of the hearings. This committee will conduct its code development hearings in 2016 to consider most code change proposals for Chapter 1 of this code and proposals for Chapter 1 of all I-Codes except the *International Energy Conservation Code*, the ICC *Performance Code* and the *International Residential Code*. Therefore, any proposals received for the sections of Chapter 1 excluded by the designation [A] will be deferred for consideration in 2016 by the Administrative Code Development Committee.

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. Dashed vertical lines in the margins indicate a technical change in the Seattle amendments.

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. Deletion indicators in the form of a hollow arrow (⬜️) are provided in the margin where a Seattle amendment 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 Fire Code.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 LOCATION</th>
<th>2015 LOCATION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>408.11.3</td>
<td>311.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>408</td>
<td>403</td>
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<tr>
<td>903.3.5.2</td>
<td>914.3.2</td>
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<td>908.7</td>
<td>915</td>
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<td>1014.3, 1015, 1021</td>
<td>1006</td>
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<td>1009.3</td>
<td>1019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2311.8</td>
<td>2309.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 complementary 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 that 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. Where defined terms do not appear in italics, consider the context to judge applicability of the definition in Chapter 2.
Acknowledgement

The Seattle Fire Department thanks the members of the Fire Code Advisory Board for their dedication, knowledge, and experience they generously devoted to reviewing the 2015 Seattle Fire Code. The Seattle Fire Department would like to formally acknowledge the Chair of the Board, Allen Rainsberger, for his many years of service to the Fire Code Advisory Board. Al passed away on July 1, 2017 and his contributions to public safety will be missed.