

IPMC[®]

INTERNATIONAL
PROPERTY MAINTENANCE
CODE[®]

A Member of the International Code Family[®]



2021



2021 International Property Maintenance Code®

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PREFACE

Introduction

The *International Property Maintenance Code*® (IPMC®) establishes minimum requirements for the maintenance of existing buildings through model code regulations that contain clear and specific property maintenance and property improvement provisions. This 2021 edition is fully compatible with all of the International Codes® (I-Codes®) published by the International Code Council® (ICC®), including the *International Building Code*® (IBC®), *International Energy Conservation Code*® (IECC®), *International Existing Building Code*® (IEBC®), *International Fire Code*® (IFC®), *International Fuel Gas Code*® (IFGC®), *International Green Construction Code*® (IgCC®), *International Mechanical Code*® (IMC®), *International Plumbing Code*® (IPC®), *International Private Sewage Disposal Code*® (IPSDC®), *International Residential Code*® (IRC®), *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code*® (ISPSC®), *International Wildland-Urban Interface Code*® (IWUIC®), *International Zoning Code*® (IZC®) and *International Code Council Performance Code*® (ICPC®).

The I-Codes, including the IPMC, are used in a variety of ways in both the public and private sectors. Most industry professionals are familiar with the I-Codes as the basis of laws and regulations in communities across the US and in other countries. However, the impact of the codes extends well beyond the regulatory arena, as they are used in a variety of nonregulatory settings, including:

- Voluntary compliance programs such as those promoting sustainability, energy efficiency and disaster resistance.
- The insurance industry, to estimate and manage risk, and as a tool in underwriting and rate decisions.
- Certification and credentialing of individuals involved in the fields of building design, construction and safety.
- Certification of building and construction-related products.
- US federal agencies, to guide construction in an array of government-owned properties.
- Facilities management.
- “Best practices” benchmarks for designers and builders, including those who are engaged in projects in jurisdictions that do not have a formal regulatory system or a governmental enforcement mechanism.
- College, university and professional school textbooks and curricula.
- Reference works related to building design and construction.

In addition to the codes themselves, the code development process brings together building professionals on a regular basis. It provides an international forum for discussion and deliberation about building design, construction methods, safety, performance requirements, technological advances and innovative products.

Development

This 2021 edition presents the code as originally issued, with changes reflected in the 2003 through 2018 editions and with further changes developed through the ICC Code Development Process through 2019. A new edition of the code is promulgated every 3 years.

This code is intended to establish provisions that adequately protect public health, safety and welfare and that neither unnecessarily increase construction costs nor give preferential treatment to particular types or classes of materials, products or methods of construction.

Maintenance

The *International Property Maintenance 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 ICC Code Development Process reflects principles of openness, transparency, balance, due process and consensus, the principles embodied in OMB Circular A-119, which governs the federal government's use of private-sector standards. The ICC process is open to anyone; there is no cost to participate, and people can participate without travel cost through the ICC's cloud-based app, *cdpAccess*[®]. A broad cross section of interests are represented in the ICC Code Development Process. The codes, which are updated regularly, include safeguards that allow for emergency action when required for health and safety reasons.

In order to ensure that organizations with a direct and material interest in the codes have a voice in the process, the ICC has developed partnerships with key industry segments that support the ICC's important public safety mission. Some code development committee members were nominated by the following industry partners and approved by the ICC Board:

- American Institute of Architects (AIA)
- National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)

The code development committees evaluate and make recommendations regarding proposed changes to the codes. Their recommendations are then subject to public comment and council-wide votes. The ICC's governmental members—public safety officials who have no financial or business interest in the outcome—cast the final votes on proposed changes.

The contents of this work are subject to change through the code development cycles and by any governmental entity that enacts the code into law. For more information regarding the code development process, contact the Codes and Standards Development Department of the ICC.

While the I-Code development procedure is thorough and comprehensive, the ICC, its members and those participating in the development of the codes disclaim any liability resulting from the publication or use of the I-Codes, or from compliance or noncompliance with their provisions. The ICC does not have the power or authority to police or enforce compliance with the contents of this code.

Code Development Committee Responsibilities (Letter Designations in Front of Section Numbers)

In each code development cycle, proposed changes to this code are considered at the Code Development Hearings by the International Property Maintenance/Zoning Code Development Committee, whose action constitutes a recommendation to the voting membership for final action on the proposed changes. Proposed changes to a code section having 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 the letter [F] in front of them (e.g., [F] 704.1) are considered by the International Fire Code Development Committee at the Committee Action Hearing.

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;
- [F] = International Fire Code Development Committee;
- [P] = International Plumbing Code Development Committee;
- [BE] = IBC—Egress Code Development Committee; and
- [BG] = IBC—General Code Development Committee.

For the development of the 2024 edition of the I-Codes, there will be two groups of code development committees and they will meet in separate years, as shown in the following Code Development Hearings Table.

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 Committee Action Hearings in different years, proposals for the IPMC will be heard by committees in both the 2021 (Group A) and the 2022 (Group B) code development cycles.

For instance, every section of Chapter 1 of this code is designated as the responsibility of the Administrative Code Development Committee, which is part of the Group B portion of the hearings. This committee will hold its Committee Action Hearings in 2022 to consider code change proposals for Chapter 1 of all I-Codes except the IECC, IRC and IgCC. Therefore, any proposals received for Chapter 1 of this code will be assigned to the Administrative Code Development Committee for consideration in 2022.

It is very important that anyone submitting code change proposals understands 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/current-code-development-cycle.

CODE DEVELOPMENT HEARINGS

Group A Codes (Heard in 2021, Code Change Proposals Deadline: January 11, 2021)	Group B Codes (Heard in 2022, Code Change Proposals Deadline: January 10, 2022)
International Building Code – Egress (Chapters 10, 11, Appendix E) – Fire Safety (Chapters 7, 8, 9, 14, 26) – General (Chapters 2–6, 12, 27–33, Appendices A, B, C, D, K, N)	Administrative Provisions (Chapter 1 of all codes except IECC, IRC and IgCC; IBC Appendix O; the appendices titled “Board of Appeals” for all codes except IECC, IRC, IgCC, ICCPC and IZC; administrative updates to currently referenced standards; and designated definitions)
International Fire Code	International Building Code – Structural (Chapters 15–25, Appendices F, G, H, I, J, L, M)
International Fuel Gas Code	International Existing Building Code
International Mechanical Code	International Energy Conservation Code—Commercial
International Plumbing Code	International Energy Conservation Code—Residential – IECC—Residential – IRC—Energy (Chapter 11)
International Property Maintenance Code	International Green Construction Code (Chapter 1)
International Private Sewage Disposal Code	International Residential Code – IRC—Building (Chapters 1–10; Appendices AE, AF, AH, AJ, AK, AL, AM, AO, AQ, AR, AS, AT, AU, AV, AW)
International Residential Code – IRC—Mechanical (Chapters 12–23) – IRC—Plumbing (Chapters 25–33, Appendices AG, AI, AN, AP)	
International Swimming Pool and Spa Code	
International Wildland-Urban Interface Code	
International Zoning Code	

Note: Proposed changes to the ICCPC will be heard by the code development committee noted in brackets [] in the text of the ICCPC.

Marginal Markings

Solid vertical lines in the margins within the body of the code indicate a technical change from the requirements of the 2018 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 row of 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 2021 edition of the IPMC.

RELOCATIONS

2021 LOCATION	2018 LOCATION
104.1	103.5
105	104
105.7-105.7.1	103.4-103.4.1
106	105
107.2	111.1
108.1	111.2
109	106
110	112
111	108
111.4-111.6	107.1-107.4, 107.6
112	109
113	110
B101.2.2	111.8
B101.3	111.2
B101.3.2	111.2.1
B101.3.4	111.2.2
B101.3.5	111.2.4
B101.3.6	111.2.3
B101.3.7	111.2.5
B101.4	111.4.1
B101.5	111.3
B101.5.3	111.5
B101.7	111.6
B101.7.1	111.6.1
B101.8	111.7

Coordination of the International Codes

The coordination of technical provisions is one of the strengths of the ICC family of model codes. The codes can be used as a complete set of complementary documents, which will provide users with full integration and coordination of technical provisions. Individual codes can also be used in subsets or as stand-alone documents. To make sure that each individual code is as complete as possible, some technical provisions that are relevant to more than one subject area are duplicated in some of the model codes. This allows users maximum flexibility in their application of the I-Codes.

Italicized Terms

Terms italicized in code text, other than document titles, are defined in Chapter 2. The terms selected to be italicized have definitions that the user should read carefully to better understand the code. Where italicized, the Chapter 2 definition applies. If not italicized, common-use definitions apply.

Adoption

The ICC maintains a copyright in all of its codes and standards. Maintaining copyright allows the ICC to fund its mission through sales of books, in both print and electronic formats. The ICC welcomes adoption of its codes 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 I-Codes and I-Standards, along with the laws of many jurisdictions, are available for free in a nondownloadable form on the ICC's website. Jurisdictions should contact the ICC at adoptions@iccsafe.org to learn how to adopt and distribute laws based on the IPMC in a manner that provides necessary access, while maintaining the ICC's copyright.

To facilitate adoption, several sections of this code contain blanks for fill-in information that needs to be supplied by the adopting jurisdiction as part of the adoption legislation. For this code, please see:

Section 101.1. Insert: **[NAME OF JURISDICTION]**

Section 103.1. Insert: **[NAME OF DEPARTMENT]**

Section 302.4. Insert: **[HEIGHT IN INCHES]**

Section 304.14. Insert: **[DATES IN TWO LOCATIONS]**

Section 602.3. Insert: **[DATES IN TWO LOCATIONS]**

Section 602.4. Insert: **[DATES IN TWO LOCATIONS]**

Effective Use of the International Property Maintenance Code

The IPMC is a model code that regulates the minimum maintenance requirements for existing buildings.

The IPMC is a maintenance document intended to establish minimum maintenance standards for basic equipment, light, ventilation, heating, sanitation and fire safety. Responsibility is fixed among owners, operators and occupants for code compliance. The IPMC provides for the regulation and safe use of existing structures in the interest of the social and economic welfare of the community.

ARRANGEMENT AND FORMAT OF THE 2021 IPMC

Before applying the requirements of the IPMC, it is beneficial to understand its arrangement and format. The IPMC, like other codes published by ICC, is arranged and organized to follow sequential steps that generally occur during a plan review or inspection. Below is a chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the scope and intent of the provisions of the IPMC. The following table shows how the IPMC is divided. The ensuing chapter-by-chapter synopsis details the scope and intent of the provisions of the IPMC.

Chapter Topics	
Chapter	Subjects
1	Scope and Administration
2	Definitions
3	General Requirements
4	Light, Ventilation and Occupancy Limitations
5	Plumbing Facilities and Fixture Requirements
6	Mechanical and Electrical Requirements
7	Fire Safety Requirements
8	Referenced Standards
Appendix A	Boarding Standard
Appendix B	Board of Appeals

Chapter 1 Scope and Administration

Chapter 1 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 property maintenance 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.

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. 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 is provided regarding tense, gender and plurality of defined terms as well as guidance regarding terms not defined in this code.

Chapter 3 General Requirements

Chapter 3, “General Requirements,” is broad in scope. It includes a variety of requirements for the exterior property areas as well as the interior and exterior elements of the structure. This chapter provides requirements that are intended to maintain a minimum level of safety and sanitation for both

the general public and the occupants of a structure, and to maintain a building's structural and weather-resistance performance. Chapter 3 provides specific criteria for regulating the installation and maintenance of specific building components; maintenance requirements for vacant structures and land; requirements regulating the safety, sanitation and appearance of the interior and exterior of structures and all exterior property areas; accessory structures; vehicle storage regulations and establishes who is responsible for complying with the chapter's provisions. This chapter also contains the requirements for swimming pools, spas and hot tubs and the requirements for protective barriers and gates in these barriers. Chapter 3 establishes the responsible parties for exterminating insects and rodents, and maintaining sanitary conditions in all types of occupancies.

Chapter 4 Light, Ventilation and Occupancy Limitations

The purposes of Chapter 4 are to set forth these requirements in the code and to establish the minimum environment for occupiable and habitable buildings, by establishing the minimum criteria for light and ventilation and identifying occupancy limitations including minimum room width and area, minimum ceiling height and restrictions to prevent overcrowding. This chapter also provides for alternative arrangements of windows and other devices to comply with the requirements for light and ventilation and prohibits certain room arrangements and occupancy uses.

Chapter 5 Plumbing Facilities and Fixture Requirements

Chapter 5 establishes the minimum criteria for the installation, maintenance and location of plumbing systems and facilities, including the water supply system, water heating appliances, sewage disposal system and related plumbing fixtures.

Sanitary and clean conditions in occupied buildings are dependent upon certain basic plumbing principles, including providing potable water to a building, providing the basic fixtures to effectively utilize that water and properly removing waste from the building. Chapter 5 establishes the minimum criteria to verify that these principles are maintained throughout the life of a building.

Chapter 6 Mechanical and Electrical Requirements

The purpose of Chapter 6 is to establish minimum performance requirements for heating, electrical and mechanical facilities and to establish minimum standards for the safety of these facilities.

This chapter establishes minimum criteria for the installation and maintenance of the following: heating and air-conditioning equipment, appliances and their supporting systems; water heating equipment, appliances and systems; cooking equipment and appliances; ventilation and exhaust equipment; gas and liquid fuel distribution piping and components; fireplaces and solid fuel-burning appliances; chimneys and vents; electrical services; lighting fixtures; electrical receptacle outlets; electrical distribution system equipment, devices and wiring; and elevators, escalators and dumbwaiters.

Chapter 7 Fire Safety Requirements

The purpose of Chapter 7 is to address those fire hazards that arise as the result of a building's occupancy. It also provides minimum requirements for fire safety issues that are most likely to arise in older buildings.

This chapter contains requirements for means of egress in existing buildings, including path of travel, required egress width, means of egress doors and emergency escape openings.

Chapter 8 Referenced Standards

The code contains numerous references to standards that are used to regulate materials and methods of construction. Chapter 8 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 8 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.

Appendix A Boarding Standard

The provisions in Appendix A are not mandatory unless specifically referenced in the adopting ordinance. This appendix provides minimum specifications for boarding a structure. This can be utilized by a jurisdiction as a set of minimum requirements in order to result in consistent boarding quality.

Appendix B Board of Appeals

The provisions contained in Appendix B are not mandatory unless specifically referenced in the adopting ordinance. This appendix provides criteria for Board of Appeals members and procedures by which the Board of Appeals should conduct its business.

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