

2027 ISPSC® Code and Commentary

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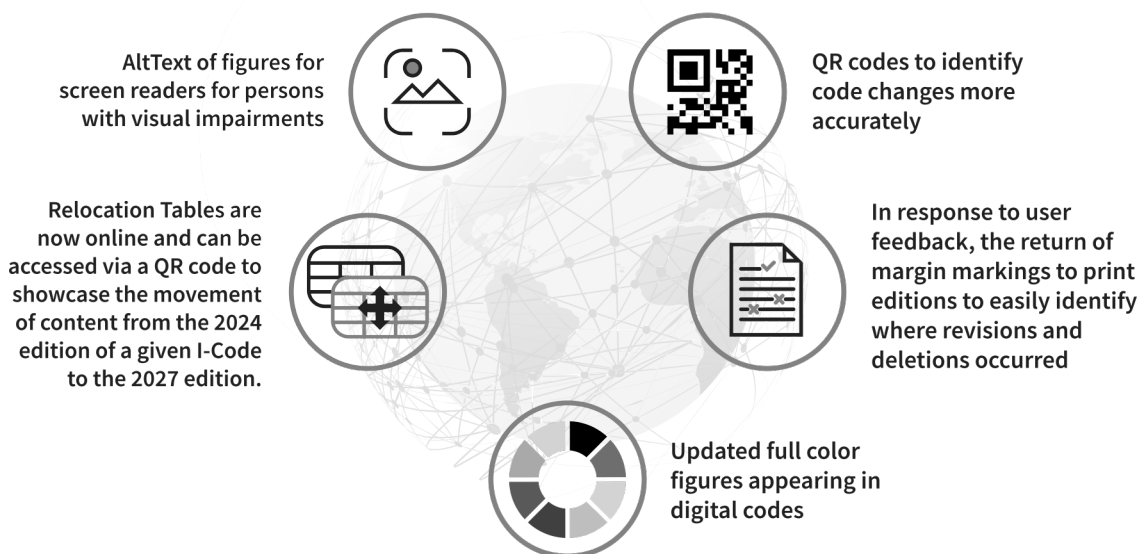
FORMATTING UPDATES FOR THE 2027 I-CODES



The 2027 International Codes® (I-Codes®) reflect ongoing formatting enhancements that advance the International Code Council's® (ICC®) digital transformation strategy and improve the overall user experience across both print and digital platforms. These updates align the print editions with ICC's Digital Codes content online, creating a more consistent and integrated product experience.

With the 2027 editions, the I-Codes include some key updates:

- In the 2024 I-Code print editions, solid vertical lines and deletion arrows in the margins were replaced with QR codes to more precisely identify revisions. While this approach improved specificity, many users indicated that margin markings remained valuable, particularly in environments with limited internet access. In response to this feedback, ICC has reintroduced margin markings in the 2027 print editions. QR codes will continue to be included, providing users with flexible and reliable options for locating and reviewing code changes.
- Relocation Tables are now online and can be accessed via a QR code to showcase the movement of content from the 2024 edition of a given I-Code to the 2027 edition.
- AltText is added to digital formats, providing text descriptions for screen readers to assist those with visual impairments.
- Figures have been enhanced for greater clarity, and now appear in full color in all digital formats.



PREFACE

As a follow up to the *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code*® (ISPSC®), we offer a companion document, the *ISPSC® Code and Commentary*. The basic appeal of the Commentary is thus: it provides in a small package and at reasonable cost thorough coverage of many issues likely to be dealt with when using the ISPSC—and then supplements that coverage with historical and technical background. Reference lists, information sources and bibliographies are also included.

Throughout all of this, effort has been made to keep the vast quantity of material accessible and its method of presentation useful. With a comprehensive yet concise summary of each section, the Commentary provides a convenient reference for swimming pool and spa regulations. In the chapters that follow, discussions focus on the full meaning and implications of the code text. Guidelines suggest the most effective method of application and the consequences of not adhering to the code text. Illustrations are provided to aid understanding; they do not necessarily illustrate the only methods of achieving code compliance.

The format of the Commentary includes the full text of each section, table and figure in the code, followed immediately by the commentary applicable to that text. Each section's narrative includes a statement of its objective and intent, and usually includes a discussion about why the requirement commands the conditions set forth. Code text and commentary text are easily distinguished from each other. All commentary is indented below the code text, accompanied by a “C” icon and vertical line.

Readers should note that the Commentary is to be used in conjunction with the ISPSC and not as a substitute for the code. The Commentary is advisory only; the code official alone possesses the authority and responsibility for interpreting the code.

Comments and recommendations are encouraged, for through your input, we can improve future editions. Please direct your comments to customersuccess@iccsafe.org.

The International Code Council would like to extend its thanks to the following individuals for their contributions to certain parts of the technical content of this commentary: Greg Ceton, Jen Hatfield, Wendy Purser, Rebecca Quinn and Michael Weinbaum.

For the complete history of content updates of this code, please visit: <https://www.iccsafe.org/contentupdates/>

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CODES

The 2027 International Codes® (I-Codes®), published by the International Code Council® (ICC®), are 15 fully compatible titles intended to establish provisions that adequately protect public health, safety and welfare; that do not unnecessarily increase construction costs; that do not restrict the use of new materials, products or methods of construction; and that do not give preferential treatment to particular types or classes of materials, products or methods of construction.

The I-Codes are updated 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 an I-Code can be approved by the building official where the proposed materials, designs or methods comply with the intent of the provisions of the code.

The I-Codes are used as the basis of laws and regulations in communities across the US and in other countries. They are also used in a variety of nonregulatory settings, including:

- Voluntary compliance programs.
- The insurance industry.
- Certification and credentialing for building design, construction and safety professionals.
- Certification of building and construction-related products.
- Facilities management.
- “Best practices” benchmarks for designers and builders.
- College, university and professional school textbooks and curricula.
- Reference works related to building design and construction.

The coordination of technical provisions allows the I-Codes to be used as a complete set of complementary documents. Individual codes can also be used in subsets or as stand-alone documents. Some technical provisions that are relevant to more than one subject area are duplicated in multiple model codes.

THE CODE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The code development process regularly provides an international forum for building professionals to discuss requirements for building design, construction methods, safety, performance, technological advances and new products. Proposed changes to the I-Codes, submitted by code enforcement officials, industry representatives, design professionals and other interested parties, are deliberated through an open code development process in which all interested and affected parties may participate.

Openness, transparency, balance, due process and consensus are the guiding principles of both the ICC Code Development Process and OMB Circular A-119, which governs the federal government's use of private-sector standards. The ICC process is open to anyone without cost. Remote participation is available through [cdpAccess](#)®, ICC's cloud-based app. Details on the code development process and information on how you can engage in the process can be found at <https://www.iccsafe.org/committees/cdc/>. This includes details of past, present, and future cycles.

To ensure that organizations with a direct and material interest in the codes have a voice in the process, ICC has developed partnerships with key industry segments that support ICC's important public safety mission.

Code development committees evaluate and make recommendations regarding proposed changes to the codes. Beginning with the 2027 cycle, a second Committee Action Hearing (CAH) was introduced. The second CAH allowed for proponents and interested parties to respond to the committee's recommendations at CAH#1. At CAH#2 the committee could consider these comments once introduced and either modify or reaffirm their recommendation at CAH#1. Their recommendations are then subject to public comment and council-wide votes. 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 I-Codes are subject to change through future 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 ICC at iccsafe.org/products-and-services/i-codes/code-development/.

While the I-Code development procedure is thorough and comprehensive, ICC, its members and those participating in the development of the codes expressly disclaim any liability resulting from the publication or use of the I-Codes, or from compliance or noncompliance with their provisions. NO WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, IMPLIED, EXPRESSED OR STATUTORY, IS GIVEN WITH RESPECT TO THE I-CODES. ICC does not have the power or authority to police or enforce compliance with the contents of the I-Codes.

CODE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES (LETTER DESIGNATIONS IN FRONT OF SECTION NUMBERS)

In each cycle, proposed changes are considered by the Code Development Committee assigned to a specific code or subject matter. Committee Action Hearings result in recommendations regarding a proposal to the voting membership. Where changes to a code section are not considered by that code's own committee, the code section is preceded by a bracketed letter designation identifying a different committee. Bracketed letter designations for the I-Code committees are:

- [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
- [CE]** = IECC—Commercial Energy Committee*
- [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
- [MP]** = IRC—Mechanical/Plumbing Code Development Committee
- [P]** = International Plumbing Code Development Committee
- [PC]** = International Code Council Performance Code Development Committee
- [PM]** = International Property Maintenance Code Development Committee
- [RB]** = IRC—Building Code Development Committee
- [RE]** = IECC—Residential Energy Committee*
- [SP]** = International Swimming Pool and Spa Code Development Committee
- [W]** = International Wildland-Urban Interface Code Development Committee
- [Z]** = International Zoning Code Development Committee**

* This code is currently developed through the ICC Consensus Procedures CP12.

** IZC proposals will be heard by the IPMC committee.

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 most codes will be heard by committees in both the 2027 (Group A) and the 2028 (Group B) code development cycles. 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.

HOW TO IDENTIFY CODE CHANGES

Changes to the I-Codes are identified in multiple ways, including QR codes, colored text and margin markings (solid vertical lines and deletion arrows). QR codes were used in the 2024 I-Codes to precisely identify revisions. In 2027, in addition to QR codes, solid vertical lines denoting changed text and arrows denoting deletions were reintroduced to print editions.

The following key details how those methods appear in the I-Codes:

QR Codes

Scan For Changes



969ed4b

A section bearing a QR code indicates that section has undergone technical revision from the previous code cycle. QR codes take the user to ICC's Digital Codes website (codes.iccsafe.org), where technical revisions are displayed. Use the QR code via one of the following methods:

- Scan the QR code with a mobile device.
- Enter the 7-digit code printed below the QR code at the end of the following URL: qr.iccsafe.org/
- Click the QR code when viewing the code in PDF format.

Margin Markings (specific to print/pdf versions)

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2. Shall not ha

Solid vertical lines indicate a technical change from the requirements of the previous edition.

Deletion arrows indicate where an entire section, paragraph, list item, exception, table or table row has been deleted.

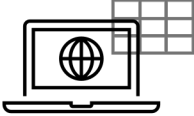
Blue Text (specific to Digital Codes)



DIGITAL CODES

While print editions may not display color, digital formats, including online and PDF versions, use **blue text** to denote changes made from the previous I-Code cycle.

Content Relocations



The Content Relocations section of this Preface provides a QR code linking to a table that indicates the relocation of content from the 2024 edition of this code to the 2027 edition.

CONTENT RELOCATIONS

The following QR code links to a Relocations Table documenting the movement of content from the 2024 edition of this code to the 2027 edition:



ITALICIZED TERMS

Words and terms defined in Chapter 2, Definitions, are italicized where they appear in code text and the Chapter 2 definitions apply. Although care has been taken to ensure applicable terms are italicized, there may be instances where a defined term has not been italicized or where a term is italicized but the definition found in Chapter 2 is not applicable. For example, Chapter 2 of the *International Building Code*® (IBC®) contains a definition for “*Listed*” that is applicable to equipment, products and services. The term “listed” is also used in that code to refer to a list of items within the code or within a referenced document. For the latter, the Chapter 2 definition would not be applicable.

ADOPTION OF INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL CODES AND STANDARDS

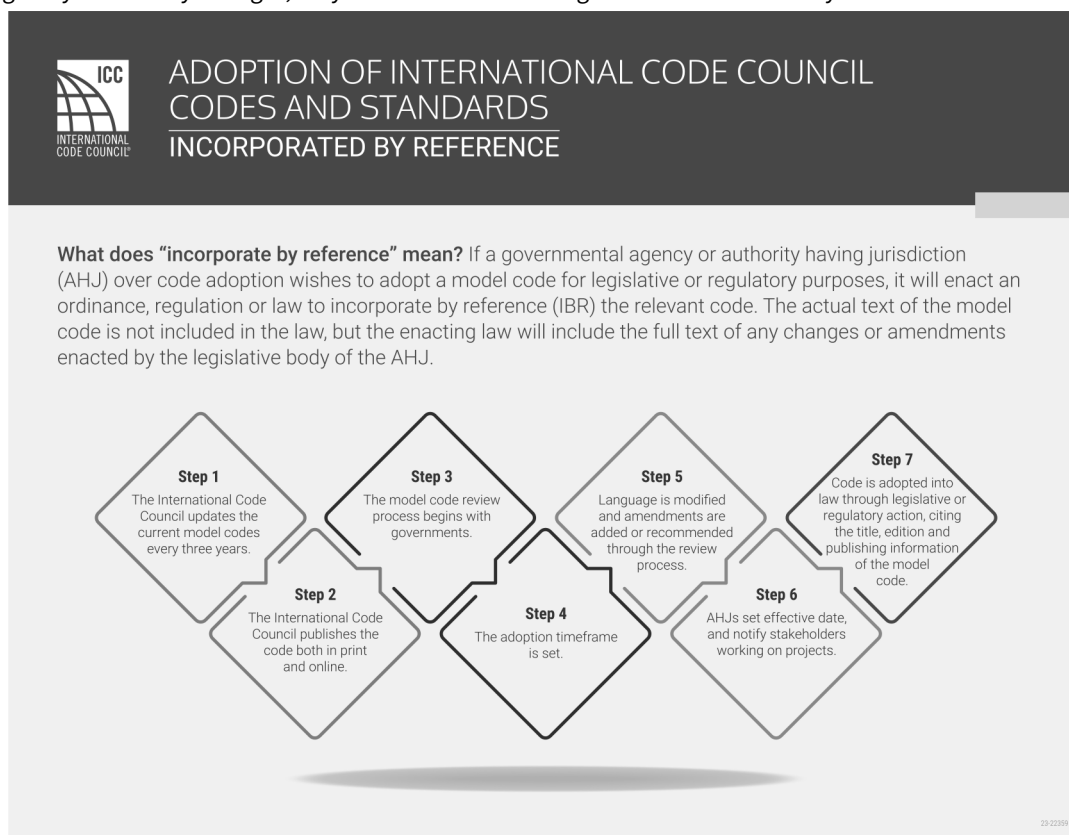
The International Code Council maintains copyright in all of its codes and standards. Maintaining copyright allows the Code Council to fund its mission through sales of books in both print and digital format. The Code Council welcomes incorporation by reference of its codes and standards by jurisdictions that recognize and acknowledge the Code Council’s copyright in the codes and standards and further acknowledge the substantial shared value of the public/private partnership for code development between jurisdictions and the Code Council. By making its codes and standards available for incorporation by reference, the Code Council does not waive its copyright in its codes and standards.

The Code Council’s codes and standards may only be adopted by incorporation by reference in an ordinance passed by the governing body of the jurisdiction. “Incorporation by reference” means that in the adopting ordinance, the governing body cites only the title, edition, relevant sections or subsections (where applicable), and publishing information of the model code or standard, and the actual text of the model code or standard is not included in the ordinance (see graphic, “Adoption of International Code Council

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2027 ISPSC® CODE AND COMMENTARY

Codes and Standards”). The Code Council does not consent to the reproduction of the text of its codes or standards in any ordinance. If the governing body enacts any changes, only the text of those changes or amendments may be included in the ordinance.



The Code Council also recognizes the need for jurisdictions to make laws accessible to the public. Accordingly, all I-Codes and I-Standards, along with the laws of many jurisdictions, are available to view for free at codes.iccsafe.org/codes/i-codes. These documents may also be purchased, in both digital and print versions, at shop.iccsafe.org.

RESOURCES FOR ADOPTION

To facilitate adoption, some I-Code sections contain blanks for fill-in information that needs to be supplied by the adopting jurisdiction as part of the adoption legislation. Template adoption ordinances are available at <https://www.iccsafe.org/advocacy/sample-adoption-ordinances/>.

For further information or assistance with adoption, including a sample ordinance, jurisdictions should contact ICC via email at incorporation@iccsafe.org.

For a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) addressing a range of foundational topics about the adoption of model codes by jurisdictions and to learn more about the Code Council’s code adoption resources, scan the QR code or visit iccsafe.org/code-adoption-resources.



INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL SWIMMING POOL AND SPA CODE

The *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code*, or ISPSC, establishes minimum requirements for the design, construction, alteration, repair and maintenance of swimming pools, spas, hot tubs and aquatic facilities. This includes public swimming pools, public spas, public exercise spas, aquatic recreation facilities, onground storable residential pools, permanent inground residential pools, permanent residential spas, permanent residential exercise spas, portable residential spas and portable residential exercise spas.

In many jurisdictions, in addition to code officials having the responsibility for reviewing plans and inspecting the construction of pools and spas, environmental health officials also have a responsibility for oversight of the operation of pools and spas. In order to prevent disease and injuries, environmental health officials conduct operational evaluations (inspections). This may include water chemistry, credentials and training of pool operators and lifeguards, proper water circulation, facility staff’s preparedness to respond to injuries and accidents, and proper sanitation and safety of the facility.

Code officials and environmental health officials commonly work closely in the plan review and inspection of pools and spas. This collaboration between departments to jointly review plans and inspect pools and spas is critical in order to achieve a safe and healthy environment for all that utilize these facilities.

PREFACE

The Pool and Hot Tub Alliance (PHTA) [formerly The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals (APSP)], a cooperating sponsor with ICC in the development and update of the ISPSC, further notes: “While it is recognized that proper construction and installation are essential, safe use of pools and spas requires common sense, including constant adult supervision of children and proper operation and maintenance. It is assumed and intended that pool users will exercise appropriate personal judgment and responsibility and that owners and operators of public and residential pools and spas will create and enforce rules and warning appropriate for their facilities.”

ARRANGEMENT AND FORMAT OF THE 2027 ISPSC

The format of the ISPSC allows each chapter to be devoted to a particular subject except for Chapter 3, which contains general compliance subject matter that is coordinated with the provisions for each type of pool and spa regulated in Chapters 4–10.

The following table shows how the ISPSC is divided. The chapter synopses detail the scope and intent of the provisions of the ISPSC.

CHAPTER TOPICS	
CHAPTERS	SUBJECTS
1	Scope and Administration
2	Definitions
3	General Compliance
4	Public Swimming Pools
5	Public Spas and Public Exercise Spas
6	Aquatic Recreation Facilities
7	Onground Storable Residential Swimming Pools
8	Permanent Residential Swimming Pools
9	Permanent Residential Spas and Permanent Residential Exercise Spas
10	Portable Residential Spas and Portable Residential Exercise Spas
11	Referenced Standards
Appendix A	Board of Appeals
Appendix B	Water Conservation Efficiency

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. The provisions of Chapter 1 establish the authority and duties of the code official appointed by the authority having jurisdiction and also establish the rights and privileges of the design professional, contractor and property owner.

Chapter 2 Definitions.

Chapter 2 is the repository of the definitions of terms used in the body of the code. The user of the code should be familiar with and consult this chapter because the definitions are essential to the correct interpretation of the code and because the user may not be aware that a term is defined.

Chapter 3 General Compliance.

Chapter 3 includes a variety of requirements for pools and spas intended to maintain a minimum level of safety and sanitation for both the general public and the users of pools or spas.

Chapter 4 Public Swimming Pools.

Chapter 4 sets forth specific requirements for public swimming pools with regard to diving equipment, bather load limitations, rest ledges, wading pools, decks, deck equipment, filters, dressing and sanitary facilities, special features and signage.

Chapter 5 Public Spas and Public Exercise Spas.

Chapter 5 establishes the specific criteria for public spas and public exercise spas with regard to materials, structure and design, pumps and motors, return and suction fittings, heater and temperature requirements, water supply, sanitation, oxidation equipment and chemical feeders, and safety features.

Chapter 6 Aquatic Recreation Facilities.

Chapter 6 establishes specific requirements for aquatic recreation facilities with regard to floors, markings and indications, circulation systems, handholds and ropes, depths, barriers, number of occupants, toilet rooms and bathrooms, special features and signage.

Chapter 7 Onground Storable Residential Swimming Pools.

Chapter 7 establishes specific requirements for onground storable residential swimming pools decks and circulation systems. Through standard ANSI/PHTA/ICC-4, the chapter has requirements for circulation systems, ladders and stairs.

Chapter 8 Permanent Residential Swimming Pools.

Chapter 8 establishes specific requirements for permanent inground residential swimming pools with regard to design, construction tolerances, diving water envelopes, walls, offset ledges, pool floors, diving equipment, special features, circulation systems and safety features.

Chapter 9 Permanent Residential Spas and Permanent Residential Exercise Spas.

Chapter 9 establishes specific requirements for permanent residential spas and permanent residential exercise spas with regard to safety features.

Chapter 10 Portable Residential Spas and Portable Residential Exercise Spas.

Chapter 10 establishes specific requirements for portable residential spas and portable residential exercise spas with regard to standards that the equipment must meet.

Chapter 11 Referenced Standards.

Chapter 11 lists all of the product and installation standards and codes that are referenced throughout Chapters 1 through 10 and includes identification of the promulgators and the section numbers in which the standards and codes are referenced. As stated in Section 102.7, these standards and codes become an enforceable part of the code (to the prescribed extent of the reference) as if printed in the body of the code.

Appendix A Board of Appeals.

Appendix A contains the provisions for appeal and the establishment of a board of appeals. The provisions include the application for an appeal, the makeup of the board of appeals and the conduct of the appeal process.

Appendix B Water Conservation Efficiency.

Appendix B provides ANSI/APSP/ICC-13 for regulations covering water efficiency for residential and public pools, spas, portable spas and swim spas.

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