

The Chicago Construction Codes 2019

Municipal Code of Chicago

Title 14



CHICAGO MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR **EXISTING BUILDINGS**



2019 Chicago Minimum Requirements for Existing Buildings

(Reflecting ordinances adopted through July 24, 2019)

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CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



Mayor's Message

I am pleased to present the 2019 *Chicago Construction Codes*, which build on the City's 150-year-long legacy of innovation, adaptation and dedication in public safety by bringing our city's building regulations into the 21st century. Since establishing one of this nation's earliest building codes in 1875, Chicago has championed construction quality and safety, implementing the nation's first electrical code in 1883 and the first high-rise code for a major American city in 1975. After years of evolving to match the unique dense urban environment of our city, it is time for Chicago's building code to take on the framework, terminology and consensus-based standards that are used throughout the country. User-friendly and universal, this modern family of codes will help ensure that every building on every block of Chicago is built safe, sustainable and vibrant.

With these new codes, Chicago joins a host of other major cities in aligning with the International Codes. Not only will this streamline the permitting process, it will reduce barriers to cost-effective construction, foster sustainable design and construction, and facilitate innovation among the building community to continue Chicago's long-standing tradition for world-class architecture. Together with significant updates to our electrical and elevator codes implemented in 2018, and the full coordination of energy efficiency requirements with the building code, the updated *Construction Codes* bring safety and sustainability to the forefront of our efforts to maintain a resilient city.

As Chicagoans, it is our responsibility to ensure that the code addresses local contexts and successfully guides development and upkeep at every scale in every neighborhood. To improve the outdated one-size-fits-all approach of the previous code, this edition holds small buildings and high-rises to different standards, tightening requirements on high-rise buildings to accommodate innovations in engineering and materials while reducing barriers to rehabilitate and preserve the character of existing buildings that form the fabric of neighborhoods throughout the City.

I am pleased to acknowledge the city employees and many professionals from the private sector who contributed to the first full rewrite of the Chicago Building Code in 70 years. Commissioner Judith Frydland and Deputy Commissioner Grant Ullrich of the Department of Buildings ably led this monumental project with the support and assistance of the Departments of Fire, Health, Planning and Development, and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, as well as the International Code Council and more than 150 volunteer technical experts and industry leaders. With this modernized code, the city's reputation for innovative design and world-renowned architecture can continue to thrive, and together, we can continue building a better Chicago community by community.

Sincerely,

Mayor



CITY OF CHICAGO



DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

Commissioner's Message

The 2019 Chicago Construction Codes reflect the City of Chicago's commitment to enable safer, more cost-effective, sustainable, accessible, and innovative construction and rehabilitation of buildings in every neighborhood. Chicago has long been a leader in the field of building regulations, beginning with the establishment of one of the nation's first building codes in 1875 and the first electrical code in 1883. Though there have been amendments over the years, the Chicago Construction Codes represent the first full rewrite of the Chicago Building Code since 1949.

In addition to enhancing safety and quality of life for residents and visitors of the City of Chicago, our mission at the Department of Buildings is to ensure city government is a reliable partner in helping homeowners, businesses, and developers complete construction and renovation projects by improving consistency, communication, and customer service in the permitting and inspection processes. The 2019 codes streamline the permitting process and move Chicago closer to national standards in several significant areas including building planning, fire and life safety, enclosures and materials, structural, small residential, and rehabilitation of existing buildings. In being more closely aligned with model codes and national standards, the new codes will speak the same language as building regulations adopted throughout the United States and promote greater use of green technologies and best practices for sustainable building design and construction.

Similar to the city's new electrical and elevator codes, which were successfully implemented in 2018, the new Chicago Building Code and Chicago Building Rehabilitation Code retain several requirements from earlier codes that enhance building safety in Chicago's unique local conditions and urban density, such as stricter limits on the use of combustible materials in large buildings.

Since becoming Building Commissioner in 2015, I have been overwhelmed by the willingness of so many in Chicago's design, construction, and development communities to volunteer their time and resources to assist with development and implementation of important policy and program changes. The generosity and willingness to work toward consensus offered by so many of our industry partners, including those listed on the following pages, was essential to preparing and adopting the Chicago Construction Codes.

Because of continuing innovations in the construction industry, the Chicago Construction Codes will always remain a work in progress. I encourage you to reach out to the Department of Buildings if you have a suggestion for future changes or questions about how to apply any provision. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Judith Frydland
Building Commissioner

About the Chicago Construction Codes

Overview

The *Chicago Construction Codes* (Titles 14A through 14X of the *Municipal Code of Chicago*) are intended to provide clear, consistent, and coordinated requirements for the construction and maintenance of buildings and property in the City of Chicago. The *Chicago Construction Codes* are based on up-to-date model codes and standards with carefully-considered amendments to reflect local conditions and building practices. The *Chicago Construction Codes* are administered by several departments, but primary responsibility for development and enforcement is assigned to the Department of Buildings. The International Code Council® (ICC®) publishes the *Chicago Construction Codes* in user-friendly print and electronic formats on behalf of the City of Chicago. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) publishes the *Chicago Electrical Code*.

Individual Titles

The requirements of each title of the *Chicago Construction Codes* are interrelated and not intended to be applied separately. In developing the *Chicago Construction Codes*, efforts have been made to avoid unnecessary duplication across different titles. The *Chicago Construction Codes* are also designed to interact with the Chicago Zoning Ordinance. In case of a conflict between the *Chicago Construction Codes* and the Chicago Zoning Ordinance, the stricter provision governs. There are currently eleven full or interim titles:

A Administrative Provisions	B Building Code	C Conveyance Device Code	E Electrical Code	F Fire Prevention Code (Interim)	G Fuel Gas Code (Interim)
M Mechanical Code (Interim)	N Energy Conservation Code	P Plumbing Code (Interim)	R Building Rehabilitation Code	X Existing Building Requirements	

The ***Chicago Construction Codes Administrative Provisions*** (Title 14A) establish uniform administrative procedures for each code in the *Chicago Construction Codes* series. These provisions establish the limits of the applicability of each code and describe how the codes are to be applied and enforced. These provisions also establish the powers and responsibilities of city employees, design professionals, construction professionals, and building owners with respect to application of the *Chicago Construction Codes*.

The ***Chicago Building Code*** (Title 14B) regulates the new construction of buildings and structures and other building- and property-related activities, including special inspections and tests, construction site safety, and building rehabilitation work, as specifically referenced in the other *Chicago Construction Codes*. The accessibility-related provisions of this code have been drafted to be consistent with the 2018 *Illinois Accessibility Code* and federal regulations for privately-funded construction.

The **Chicago Conveyance Device Code** (Title 14C) regulates the design, construction, installation, alteration, maintenance, and repair of conveyance devices, such as elevators, escalators, mechanical amusement riding devices, and their components.

The **Chicago Electrical Code** (Title 14E) regulates the installation and removal of electrical conductors, equipment, and raceways; signaling and communication conductors, equipment, and raceways; and optical fiber cables and raceways.

The **Chicago Fire Prevention Code** (Title 14F) regulates matters affecting or relating to protecting people and structures from the hazards of fire and explosion arising from the storage, handling, or use of specialized industrial processes, materials, or devices; conditions unusually hazardous to life, property, or public welfare in the use and occupancy of buildings or premises; and the maintenance and operation of fire protection and life safety systems. An interim version of this code, incorporating numerous fire-safety-related provisions of the *Municipal Code of Chicago* by reference, was adopted in April 2019. A comprehensively-updated code addressing fire prevention is expected in a future phase of code modernization.

The **Chicago Fuel Gas Code** (Title 14G) regulates the installation and operation of fuel gas (natural gas) piping from the point of utility delivery to the inlet connections of gas-fueled appliances and related accessories. An interim version of this code, incorporating existing fuel-gas-related provisions of the *Municipal Code of Chicago* by reference, was adopted in April 2019. A comprehensively-updated code addressing fuel gas is expected in a future phase of code modernization.

The **Chicago Mechanical Code** (Title 14M) regulates the installation, alteration, repair, and replacement of mechanical systems and equipment, including ventilating, heating, cooling, air-conditioning, and refrigeration systems, incinerators, and other energy-related systems. An interim version of this code, incorporating existing mechanical-system-related provisions of the *Municipal Code of Chicago* by reference, was adopted in April 2019. A comprehensively-updated code addressing mechanical systems is expected in a future phase of code modernization.

The **Chicago Energy Conservation Code** (Title 14N) regulates matters related to the design, construction, and rehabilitation of new and existing buildings for energy efficiency. This code has been drafted to be consistent with the 2019 Illinois amendments to the *International Energy Conservation Code*.

The **Chicago Plumbing Code** (Title 14P) regulates plumbing systems. An interim version of this code, incorporating existing plumbing-related provisions of the *Municipal Code of Chicago* by reference, was adopted in April 2019. A comprehensively-updated code addressing plumbing is expected in a future phase of code modernization.

The **Chicago Building Rehabilitation Code** (Title 14R) regulates the repair, alteration, change of occupancy, addition to, and relocation of existing buildings and structures. The accessibility-related provisions of this code have been drafted to be consistent with the 2018 *Illinois Accessibility Code* and federal regulations for privately-funded construction.

The **Chicago Minimum Requirements for EXisting Buildings** (Title 14X) regulate the condition and maintenance of existing buildings, existing structures, and outdoors areas, and establish the respective responsibilities of owners and occupants to comply with these requirements. This code also establishes minimum requirements for providing light, ventilation, space, security, electricity, plumbing, heating, cooling, sanitation, weather protection, and fire protection in occupied buildings, and requirements for the maintenance of vacant structures. These requirements apply both prospectively and retroactively.

Unlike the International Codes® family, the *Chicago Construction Codes* do not (and are not intended to) include a separate code for one- and two-family residential buildings. Instead, one- to three-unit residential buildings up to four stories (single-family homes to three flats) are regulated in most titles of the *Chicago Construction Codes* as Occupancy Group R-5. There are numerous Chicago-specific exceptions applicable to Group R-5 occupancies. Additionally, in the *Chicago Electrical Code*, requirements for residential occupancies are collected in Article 560, and requirements applicable to the rehabilitation of residential buildings up to four stories are in Article 570.

Development and Adoption

In 2019, as part of a multi-year effort to comprehensively update regulations for the construction and maintenance of buildings, the City Council reorganized numerous building-related provisions of the *Municipal Code* into the *Chicago Construction Codes*. As part of this same effort, the City Council adopted new provisions aligned with the *International Building Code*® and *International Existing Building Code*®, which will be phased in between December 2019 and July 2020. Previously, in 2017 and 2018, the City Council adopted comprehensively-revised requirements for electrical installations and conveyance devices. In a future phase of this effort, the City of Chicago intends to update its requirements for mechanical systems, fuel gas, and plumbing, and adopt a comprehensively-revised fire prevention code.

The creation of the *Chicago Construction Codes* would not have been possible without the generous and continued support and encouragement of professionals and organizations working in the design, construction, and real estate industries. Numerous individuals contributed countless hours over several decades to lay the groundwork necessary for the comprehensive code modernization initiative launched by Commissioner Judy Frydland in 2015.

In 2017, the electrical industry took the lead in supporting a comprehensive overhaul of the *Chicago Electrical Code*, which was drafted by a dedicated team of technical experts with guidance from the reinvigorated Chicago Electrical Commission. In 2018, a new *Chicago Conveyance Device Code*, developed in consultation with elevator specialists and large building owners, was adopted. These successful efforts established a template for restarting efforts to align core provisions of the *Chicago Building Code* with the International Codes®.

In 2018, the Department of Buildings convened a distinguished cross section of industry leaders to launch the external phase of the consensus-based code development process. For several months, a dedicated team of volunteer architects and engineers, assigned to six subject-matter working groups, reviewed and debated draft provisions. A diverse group of stakeholder representatives provided regular feedback on their progress and provided insight on larger policy decisions. In all, more than 200 individuals contributed to the code development process and helped to build widespread support. The ordinance creating the *Chicago Construction Codes* was adopted by a unanimous vote of the City Council on April 10, 2019.

Maintenance

The City of Chicago is committed to ensuring the *Chicago Construction Codes* remain clear, consistent, and up to date. The Department of Buildings periodically proposes amendments to the *Chicago Construction Codes* for consideration by the City Council. Suggestions for potential amendments may be sent to the attention of the Commissioner of Buildings, 121 North LaSalle Street, City Hall Room 906, Chicago, Illinois 60602 or DOBCommissioner@cityofchicago.org. Information about recent amendments may be found on the Department of Buildings' web site.

The Department of Buildings will continue to engage with industry stakeholders to develop protocols for ensuring continued alignment with model codes in the years ahead.

Section Numbering

The *Chicago Construction Codes* are part of the *Municipal Code of Chicago* and are subject to the general interpretive and organizational rules established in Chapter 1-4 of the *Municipal Code*. Provisions of the *Municipal Code* use a three-part numbering system, with each part separated by hyphens. The first part indicates the title in which the provision appears. The second part indicates the chapter within the title. The third part is a section designation:

[Title]-[Chapter]-[Section]

The *Chicago Construction Codes* have been assigned title designations from 14A to 14X, with the letter-portion of the title designation correlated to the subject matter. Not all letters are currently used. Provisions of the *Chicago Construction Codes* may either be referred to in the formal three-part *Municipal Code* style, 14B-2-203, or more informally as Section 203 of the *Chicago Building Code*.

Italicized Terms

In each title of the *Chicago Construction Codes* (except the *Chicago Electrical Code* and *Chicago Conveyance Device Code*) italicized text is used to identify defined words and terms. Definitions, and additional rules governing code interpretation, are in Chapter 2 of each title.

Marginal Markings

In titles based on model codes published by ICC, Chicago-specific amendments are indicated by marginal markings. Provisions added or modified by Chicago are indicated with a double-ruled line (| |) in the outer margin adjoining the text. Provisions deleted by Chicago are indicated with a carat (<) in the outer margin.

In the *Chicago Electrical Code*, Chicago-specific modifications and additions are indicated by shaded text. Chicago-specific deletions are indicated by a bullet (•) in the left-hand margin.

Revisions History

All ordinances adopted by the City Council are published by the City Clerk in the *Journal of the Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago* (Council Journal) after each council meeting. As part of ICC and NFPA's publication of the *Chicago Construction Codes*, the adoption and amendment history, along with a citation to the relevant page(s) of the Council Journal, is provided in a box beneath each section heading.

Editor's Notes

When preparing this publication based on the ordinances adopted by the City Council, ICC occasionally identifies items which it believes to be typographic or editorial errors in the ordinance text. ICC reviews each of these items with the Department of Buildings. In the case of minor errors, such as clear spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors, ICC has corrected the error in this text without note. Where any ambiguity exists, ICC will note the extent of any modification using an Editor's Note immediately following the affected provision. ICC's editorial revisions do not have the force of law. Where appropriate, the City Council will make corresponding corrections or clarifications through future legislation.

Publisher's Errors

Pursuant to the adopting ordinances, individual titles of the *Chicago Construction Codes* may incorporate corrections to errors in the model code text identified by the model code publisher (errata). For specific information, review the ordinance provisions reproduced at the beginning of Chapter 1 of each code.

Disclaimer

This publication may not reflect the most current legislation adopted by the City of Chicago and may unintentionally vary, in material ways, from the official legislation. The publisher has prepared and provides this document for informational purposes only, and this document should not be relied upon as the definitive authority for legislation adopted by the City of Chicago. The publisher makes no guaranty or warranty as to the accuracy or completeness of any information published in this document. The publisher further disclaims liability for any personal injury, property, or other damages of any nature whatsoever, whether special, indirect, consequential, or compensatory, directly or indirectly resulting from the publication, use of, or reliance on the publication of the *Chicago Construction Codes*.

Acknowledgments

The City of Chicago gratefully acknowledges the many individuals and organizations who have contributed to the development and adoption of the *Chicago Construction Codes*. Comprehensively updating Chicago's construction requirements to better align with up-to-date model codes and standards used elsewhere in the United States while maintaining longstanding local requirements that are adapted to local conditions and practices has long been a goal of many working in the design and construction fields in Chicago. Over several decades, many committees, organizations, and individuals have studied how to accomplish this monumental task. The code modernization initiative launched in 2015 would not have been possible without the ground-work completed through these earlier efforts.

Every effort has been made to list all those who participated in the most recent efforts. Any errors or omissions in these acknowledgments are entirely unintended.

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NEW YORK CITY

The City of Chicago also acknowledges the endless generosity of the New York City Department of Buildings and Fire Department in sharing material, insight, and moral support from their own efforts to adapt and apply national model codes to the realities of regulating construction in a city shaped by several centuries of dense urban development.

Thank you.

EFFECTIVE USE OF THE CHICAGO MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS

The *Chicago Minimum Requirements for Existing Buildings* regulate the condition and maintenance of existing buildings, existing structures, and outdoors areas, and establish the respective responsibilities of owners and occupants to comply with these requirements. This code also establishes minimum requirements for providing light, ventilation, space, security, electricity, plumbing, heating, cooling, sanitation, weather protection, and fire protection in occupied buildings, and requirements for the maintenance of vacant structures. These requirements apply both prospectively and retroactively and are a continuation of similar requirements previously adopted by the City Council as Chapters 78 and 13-196 of the *Municipal Code of Chicago*.

Some provisions of the *Chicago Minimum Requirements for Existing Buildings* have been based on the 2018 edition of the *International Property Maintenance Code*® (IPMC®) and Chapter 11 of the 2018 edition of the *International Fire Code*® (IFC®) with permission from the International Code Council® (ICC®).

Arrangement of the Chicago Minimum Requirements for Existing Buildings

Before reading or applying the provisions of the *Chicago Minimum Requirements for Existing Buildings*, it is helpful to understand the arrangement and format. Similar to model codes developed by ICC, this code is arranged and organized to follow logical steps that generally occur during an inspection. This code is divided into twelve chapters:

Chapters	Subjects
1–2	Administration and definitions
3	General property maintenance requirements
4	Residential occupancies
5	Fire safety requirements
6	Light and ventilation
7–10	Building systems (electrical, mechanical, plumbing, conveyance devices)
12	Vacant buildings
20	Referenced standards

The following is a chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the scope and intent of the provisions of the *Chicago Minimum Requirements for Existing Buildings*:

Chapter 1 Scope and Administration. This chapter identifies the scope and purpose of this code. Users should also refer to the *Chicago Construction Codes Administrative Provisions* for general administrative requirements applicable to all types of construction activities. Section 103 establishes the responsibilities of owners and occupants (tenants) for compliance with various provisions of this code.

Chapter 2 Definitions. Definitions for specialized terms used throughout the code are provided in Chapter 2. Words and terms that are defined in Chapter 2 appear in italics in the body of the code. This chapter also provides rules on how to determine the meaning of words that are not specifically defined as well as interpretive rules on tense, gender, and number. Users are referred to the latest edition of Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary for terms that are not defined in any of the *Chicago Construction Codes*.

Chapter 3 Property Maintenance. Chapter 3 is broad in scope and addresses basic maintenance requirements that apply to all buildings, structures, and properties. It includes requirements for both interior and exterior areas of a property. The requirements in this chapter are intended to establish a minimum level of safety and sanitation for both the general public and building occupants. The provisions are arranged to follow the logical sequence of a typical property inspection,

beginning with exterior conditions, followed by interior conditions and specific building features. Requirements related to building systems are found in Chapters 7 through 10.

Chapter 4 Residential Occupancies. This chapter addresses specific requirements which apply only to residential occupancies (buildings where people sleep). Section 402 establishes minimum ceiling height and floor areas for dwelling units and sleeping units to create reasonable living conditions and prevent overcrowding. Section 403 establishes requirements for security features in dwelling units other than owner-occupied units.

Chapter 5 Fire Safety Requirements. Chapter 5 is intended to establish a minimum degree of fire and life safety in all buildings without respect to the requirements in effect at the time of construction. The chapter is organized to follow the order of the fire safety requirements for new buildings found in the *Chicago Building Code* (CBC). Section 502 addresses fire and smoke protection features, which are addressed in Chapter 7 of the CBC. Section 503 is reserved, as there are no retroactive requirements at the time of this publication for interior finishes equivalent to Chapter 8 of the CBC. Section 504 addresses fire protection and life safety systems, which are addressed in Chapter 9 of the CBC. Section 505 addresses means of egress, which are addressed in Chapter 10 of the CBC. Chapter 506 contains provisions requiring engineered life safety evaluations and compliance plans for high-rise buildings not fully equipped with automatic sprinkler systems.

Chapter 6 Light and Ventilation. This chapter establishes minimum criteria for providing some level of natural or artificial light and ventilation to occupiable spaces. For some occupancy types, natural light and/or ventilation are required.

Chapter 7 Electrical Requirements. Chapter 7 establishes minimum standards for existing electrical systems and equipment. These minimum standards are intended to prohibit unreasonable hazards from older systems or unlisted equipment. Where an existing electrical system is altered, additional requirements, found in the *Chicago Electrical Code* and *Chicago Building Rehabilitation Code* may require upgrades to conditions allowed by this chapter.

Chapter 8 Heating, Cooling, and Mechanical. This chapter establishes minimum standards for providing heating and cooling to specified occupancies and for the maintenance of existing mechanical systems.

Chapter 9 Plumbing Systems and Fixtures. Chapter 9 provides minimum criteria for the maintenance of plumbing systems, including water supply lines, water heating appliances, sewerage lines, and connected plumbing fixtures. The chapter also establishes minimum requirements for providing sanitary facilities in various occupancies

Chapter 10 Elevators and Other Conveyance Devices. This chapter establishes minimum requirements for elevators, escalators, dumbwaiters, and other conveyance devices. Existing conveyance devices are also subject to requirements found in Chapter 4 of the *Chicago Conveyance Device Code*, which is based on ASME A17.3, *Safety Code for Existing Elevators and Escalators*.

Chapter 11 Reserved.

Chapter 12 Vacant Buildings. In addition to the general requirements found in Chapter 3, vacant buildings must be maintained in accordance with additional requirements in this chapter. In most cases, vacant buildings must be secured, insured, and registered with the city. In some cases, mortgagees are required to undertake obligations with respect to vacant structures where the owner has failed to do so.

Chapters 13-19 Reserved.

Chapter 20 Referenced Standards. This code contains several references to standards that are used to regulate materials and methods of construction. Chapter 20 refers to Chapter 35 of the *Chicago Building Code* for a comprehensive list of standards that are referenced in both codes. The standards are part of this code to the extent of the reference, however this code controls in case of a conflict.

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