BUILDING CODES

Healthy and Safe Buildings in Iowa by Design

The primary purpose of codes and standards is to protect the health safety and welfare of the public. Building code implementation can have a major influence on the economic well-being of a community and its citizens.

The American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter supports regulation by a single set of comprehensive, coordinated, and contemporary building codes and standards that establish sound threshold values of health, safety, and the protection of the public welfare throughout.

**Recommendations for Action:**

1. Prompt adoption of updated Building Codes in a coordinated manner to provide uniformity and consistency. This includes bringing all codes, particularly the International Energy Conservation Code.

2. Collaboration with building industry groups and authorities responsible for adoption and implementation of codes and standards.

**Current Iowa Codes:**

State Codes (applicable statewide and adopted by the noted agencies):
- 2015 International Fire Code (IFC) – Iowa State Fire Marshal
- 2017 National Electric Code (NEC) – Iowa Electrical Examining Board
- 2015 International Mechanical Code (IMC) – Iowa Dept of Public Health
- 2010 ADA Standards – US Department of Justice & Iowa Building Code Bureau

Local Codes* (adopted and amended by local jurisdictions.)
- International Building Code (IBC)
- International Residential Code (IRC)
- International Existing Building Code (IEBC)

*Local jurisdictions can adopt/enforce locally and amend to include more stringent standards.

For more information contact AIA Iowa at 515-244-7502 or info@aiaiowa.org
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Model Codes are Families:
- Developed and maintained by an independent standards organization through a stakeholder process in response to changing needs of society and building industry.
- Designed and written as a “family” of individual codes addressing different aspects of construction applicable to both residential and commercial buildings;
- Maintained on regular 3-year cycle with each editions of the code “family” developed and designed to function together.

Balanced Approach to Adoption and Enforcement of Codes:
Prompt adoption of updated codes provides the following benefits:
- Cost savings in construction, building operations and maintenance by incorporating the latest technology and construction methods.
- Improves building safety for all users.
- Accommodate alterations to existing buildings w/ reasonable requirements & construction costs.
- Enhanced resilience of structures, resulting in less property damage & loss in natural disasters.
- Lower insurance costs for owners.
- Uniformity & consistency in codes provides predictability for developers, owners and contractors.
- Streamlined education, training, and enforcement for jurisdictions.

Accommodating differences in code standards to respond to local issues:
- Consideration of local adoption or amendments to respond to extreme variations in regulations compared to adjacent states (home rule vs. statewide regulation).
- Working collaboratively across jurisdictions to achieve uniformity & consistency in codes, creating an even playing field & predictability.
- Adopting reasonable amendments to model codes to address issues such as construability or adding more options for paths to compliance with updated regulations.
- Educational programs to train local contractors & subcontractors on new technology and requirements.

Resources:
- State of Iowa Building Code Bureau: www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/building/index.shtml
  - Advisory Council: www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/building/bcac/index.shtml
- International Code Council (ICC): www.iccsafe.org
- National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS): www.nibs.org/page/about
- ISO (leading source of information on property/casualty insurance risk): www.isomitigation.com

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