

CHANGES IN THE BUILDING CODES & STANDARDS SYSTEM IN CALIFORNIA

Why

Over many years numerous competing and expanding model codes and an uneven treatment of adoptions of various codes and standards by hundreds of state agencies and local governments had resulted in a very poorly organized, highly confusing patchwork of laws and regulations. Some governments and agencies were many years behind in adopting new codes and standards and because of this the public safety was at risk.

What

Beginning in the early 1970s and through the present at the state level there was planning and legislation carried forward to accomplish major changes in state laws and regulations intended to promote standardization of the many various codes used in California relating to construction and housing standards. These changes greatly affected both the Building Standards Laws and State Housing Law and fire safety regulations.

The end result, brought out in 1999, was the California Building Standards Codes system. It is comprised as of 2009 of twelve parts that incorporate most of the health and safety standards used in the design and construction of buildings in California. The codes also include standards for energy efficiency and regulations regarding access for persons with disabilities.

When

Major changes were carried into effect starting in 1999.

CBSC Building Standards Bulletin 99-01 dated Mar 17, 1999 which summarizes the changes for local governments in the "adoption" and enforcement process for building and fire rules and the requirements on local agencies to file "finding" to justify any alterations with the state for any local modifications and ONLY in cases where specific local conditions necessitate it.

These adopted regulations generally become effective 180 days after the date the state adopts those codes or on such later date as may be provided for. The process of development has largely been completed with the new system mostly in place when the 2007 California Building Standards Codes became effective on January 1, 2008.

In the new system and since 2001 the former "model codes" can no longer be adopted by cities and counties where the State of California has set the standards. Only the State codes and standards may be used. Only limited changes are allowed. (See the California "Building Standards Bulletin 99-01" dated March 17, 1999 at http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/bsc/cd_qustns/documents/BSB_99-01.pdf

Who

The recently approved building standards were developed by the Department of Housing and Community Development, Office of the State Fire Marshal, Division of the State Architect, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, and the Commission. They will be published in the California Building Code, California Electrical Code, California Mechanical Code, California Plumbing Code, and California Existing Building Code -- all parts of the California Building Standards Code

How

State law and various state regulations adopted under the California regulatory process (having the force of law) have now preempted local governments and agencies in the area of these codes and standards to provide uniformity and ensure better application of safety standards throughout the state.

The Effect on Local Codes and Enforcement

The approved California Codes have replaced many of the model codes previously used. Since 1999 local governments **must** use the California Codes for building and other standards.

The codes may only be amended by local governments and agencies by "findings" submitted by agencies based on a set of criteria set out by state law. Finding may be denied under certain circumstances.

See http://www.bsc.ca.gov/proc_rslt/pr_proc_rtnstnd.html

HEALTH & SAFETY CODE 17958. Except as provided in Sections 17958.8 and 17958.9, any city or county may **make changes** in the provisions adopted pursuant to Section 17922 and published in the California Building Standards Code or the other regulations thereafter adopted pursuant to Section 17922 to amend, add, or repeal ordinances or regulations **which impose the same requirements as are contained in the provisions** adopted pursuant to Section 17922 and published in the California Building Standards Code or the other regulations adopted pursuant to Section 17922 or make changes or modifications in those requirements **upon express findings pursuant to Sections 17958.5 and 17958.7. If any city or county does not amend, add, or repeal ordinances or regulations** to impose those requirements or make changes or modifications in those requirements **upon express findings**, the provisions published in **the California Building Standards Code or the other regulations promulgated pursuant to Section 17922 shall be applicable to it and shall become effective 180 days after publication by the California Building Standards Commission.**

Important References

See Building Standards Commission Information Bulletins generally at

http://www.bsc.ca.gov/cd_qustns/cq_infobltns.htm

http://www.bsc.ca.gov/abt_bsc/default.htm

Building Standards Commission Information Bulletin 99-01 dated Mar 19, 1999

http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/bsc/proc_rslt/documents/BSB_01_01.pdf#search=information%20Bulletin%201999&view=FitH&pagemode=none

Building Standards Commission Information Bulletin 07-01

http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/bsc/cd_qustns/documents/07-01%20IB-New%20Ch1.pdf

Housing & Community Development Div. of Codes & Standards Information Bulletin 2007-04

<http://www.hcd.ca.gov/codes/fbh/IB2007-04Final>.

THE 2008 CALIFORNIA BUILDING STANDARDS CODES

From http://www.bsc.ca.gov/title_24/t24_2007tried.htm

2007 Triennial Edition of CCR, Title 24

California Code of Regulations, Title 24 (California Building Standards Code) applies to all occupancies that applied for a building permit on or after January 1, 2008, and remains in effect until the effective date of the 2010 triennial edition.

[Part 1 - California Building Standards Administrative Code](#)

[Part 2 - California Building Code](#) (amended from the IBC model)

[Part 3 - California Electrical Code](#)

[Part 4 - California Mechanical Code](#)

[Part 5 - California Plumbing Code](#)

[Part 6 - California Energy Code](#)

[Part 7 - California Elevator Safety Construction Code](#)

[Part 8 - California Historical Building Code](#)

[Part 9 - California Fire Code](#)

[Part 10 - California Existing Building Code](#)

Part 11 - California Green Building Standards Code (adopted July 17, 2008 / not yet effective)

See http://www.bsc.ca.gov/prpsd_stds/default.htm

[Part 12 - California Reference Standards Code](#)