

INTERNATIONAL EXISTING BUILDING CODE®

Building codes establish minimum requirements to address public health, safety and general welfare through means to protect and safeguard the public through fire safety, structural strength, energy conservation, sanitation, means of egress from buildings, occupancy limits, and adequate light and ventilation in the construction of new buildings or rehabilitation of existing buildings.

International Code Council

The International Code Council, a membership association dedicated to building safety and fire prevention, develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Most U.S. cities, counties and states that adopt codes choose those developed by the International Code Council. The International Building Code is issued by the International Code Council.

International Building Code®

The International Building Code is founded on broad-based principles that make possible the use of new materials and new building designs. It focuses on new building construction activities and materials. The code is founded on principles intended to establish provisions consistent with the scope of a building code that adequately protects public health, safety and welfare. The International Building Code is the predominant model for jurisdictions in Nebraska.

Nebraska State Building Code

The International Building Code was adopted in 2003 as Nebraska's state building code (NRS 71-6403). The state code is comprehensive, using prescriptive and performance-based provisions that are applied to buildings. The purpose is to promote the consistent use of building code regulations throughout the state. The statute requires jurisdictions that choose to adopt building codes to use the state building code.

International Existing Building Code®

There are perceptions that rehabilitation of older and historic buildings is made difficult by conflicting and inflexible code requirements intended primarily for new construction. The International Existing Building Code (IEBC) is a companion code to the IBC. While the IBC has the ability to address existing buildings, it is less comprehensive and systematic than the IEBC. It contains requirements intended to encourage the use and reuse of existing buildings. The scope covers repair, alteration, addition and change of occupancy for existing buildings, while achieving appropriate levels of safety by offering options to new construction requirements in the existing state building code. The permissive provisions of this legislation provide the option of local jurisdictions to adopt and utilize the IEBC.

While new construction is attractive, the preservation of older building stock is important. Meeting appropriate life safety in existing buildings is critical to maintaining this important investment and tax base in Nebraska's communities, large and small. Encouraging buildings to be rehabilitated and maintained is a goal that communities

recognize. The IEBC provides a tool to utilize in most downtown business districts and older neighborhoods, for example. By addressing existing buildings, the IEBC provides flexibility to permit alternative uses of older buildings and achieve compliance with minimum requirements to safeguard public health, safety and welfare.

To date, 20 states have adopted the IEBC, including Nebraska's neighboring states of Iowa and Colorado. In addition, the cities of Ashland, Hastings, North Platte, Papillion, and Valley use the IEBC for code guidance. Another example is found in Grand Island, where it provides guidance for the local codes administrator in discussions, such as fire ratings of existing building materials. Adoption of the IEBC into state building code would offer these cities and other local government jurisdictions the ability to formally adopt this code. Municipalities that elect to use IEBC may modify the scoping so it is applied to the buildings that it is targeted to benefit, rather than newly completed buildings, core and shell buildings or phased construction.

Purpose for Proposed Legislation

The Uniform Code for Building Conservation (UCBC) was adopted into state building code and remains in law. However, the Uniform Building Code is no longer recognized and is no longer pertinent for use by building officials. As a result, local building code officials have no other similar code to rely on.

The purpose of legislation is to delete reference to the Uniform Code for Building Conservation and add the IEBC to state law under NRS 71-6403 and 71-6405. Nothing in this proposed legislation would preclude the application of the Life Safety Code (see NRS 81-502), which is enforced by the State Fire Marshal.

Summary

The Nebraska State Historical Society, the primary agency delegated to encouraging rehabilitation of historic buildings through programs such as state and federal tax incentives, supports the change. Also supporting the adoption of the IEBC into state building code and the ability of local jurisdictions to apply this code change is the Nebraska Codes Officials Association, and Heritage Nebraska/Main Street.