



BACKGROUNDER | FEBRUARY 2024

ICC Model Code Development 2027 Editions

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About NMHC

Based in Washington, DC, the National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC) is a national association representing the interests of the larger and most prominent apartment firms in the U.S. NMHC's members are the principal officers of firms engaged in all aspects of the apartment industry, including ownership, development, management and financing. NMHC advocates on behalf of rental housing, conducts apartment-related research, encourages the exchange of strategic business information and promotes the desirability of apartment living. Nearly one-third of Americans rent their housing, and almost 15 percent live in an apartment (buildings with five or more units). For more information, contact NMHC at 202/974-2300, email the Council at info@nmhc.org or visit NMHC's website at www.nmhc.org.

Overview

The apartment industry is actively involved in the development of model building codes and standards to ensure that the unique needs of multifamily construction are considered and that proposed changes to codes and standards do not unnecessarily undermine the affordability and availability of housing.

While there are a number of building code and standard-setting organizations, the most widely used set of codes and standards is developed by the International Code Council (ICC). The ICC family of codes and standards provide minimum requirements for all facets of multifamily construction, including structural and mechanical systems, energy efficiency, plumbing, fire safety, accessibility and sustainability, and often serve as the basis for code requirements adopted at the state and local levels.

The ICC national model codes are updated every three years according to a detailed development process and timeline. While the process is open to the public and allows for participation by interested stakeholders, final approval of new code editions is made by government code and safety officials.

ICC Codes Development Process

The ICC produces a series of model codes known as the I-Codes. The most recent editions—the 2024 I-Codes—began publication in 2023 and will continue to be released in 2024.

The ICC is now developing the 2027 I-Codes, which are divided into two groups - Groups A and B. Changes to each group are considered on a staggered basis and include these key elements:

- **Code Change Review.** At the beginning of each code cycle, the ICC publishes all proposals for public review. During this period, NMHC analyzes the proposals and identifies those having repercussions for multifamily properties. Throughout the process, we advocate for codes and standards that are technologically feasible, cost-effective and reflect the needs of the apartment industry.
- **Committee Action Hearings (CAH).** Approximately two months after code change proposals are published, the ICC holds public code development hearings where interested parties testify before the Code Development Committees in support of or in opposition to a proposed change. We routinely testify at these hearings to ensure that the code committees understand the

issues important to the apartment industry. After testimony is complete, the committee recommends accepting or denying a code change proposal.

- ***Second Committee Action Hearings (NEW).*** Beginning with the development of the 2027 codes, ICC has instituted a second CAH that provides an additional opportunity for participants to provide information and for code committees to consider code proposals.
- ***Combined Public Comment Hearings (PCH) (NEW) and Publication.*** After the CAHs, the ICC publishes hearing results and invites the submittal of comments on the CAH decisions. NMHC reviews the hearing results and comments as necessary. Beginning with the development of the 2027 codes, ICC will now hold combined Public Comment Hearings on the Group A and B codes. This provides a final hearing opportunity allowing interested parties to offer testimony on the public comments and CAH recommendations. After testimony is completed, designated ICC voting members (largely code officials) vote for or against code change proposals. The ICC then incorporates all approved proposals into the next editions of the I-Codes.
- ***State and Local Adoption.*** The revised codes are not in effect until adopted by a state or local jurisdiction. Advocacy on behalf of the apartment sector at the state and local level can help policymakers understand the code changes and make recommendations for amendment or non-adoption of model code provisions.

Group A Codes and Timeline

Group A includes the following codes:

- International Building Code (IBC) – Egress and Fire Safety Portions
- International Fire Code (IFC)
- International Fuel Gas Code (IFGC)
- International Mechanical Code (IMC)
- International Plumbing Code (IPC)
- International Private Sewage Disposal Code (IPSDC)
- International Residential Code (IRC) – Mechanical and Plumbing Portions
- International Swimming Pool and Spa Code (ISPSC)
- International Zoning Code (IZC)
- International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC)
- International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC)

Group A Development Schedule:

- **January 8, 2024:** Deadline for ICC receipt of code change proposals.
- **February 2024 (Tentative):** Proposed code changes are released.

- **April 2024:** First Committee Action Hearings held.
- **October 2024:** Second Committee action Hearings held.
- **April 2026:** Public Comment Hearings held.
- **Mid- to Late 2026:** ICC voting members finalize 2027 Group A codes.

Group B Codes and Timeline

Group B includes the following codes:

- Administrative provisions for all I-Codes
- International Building Code (IBC) – General and Structural Portions
- International Existing Building Code (IEBC)
- International Residential Code – Building (IRC-B)

Group B Development Schedule:

- **January 10, 2025:** Deadline for ICC receipt of code change proposals.
- **March 2025:** Proposed code changes are released.
- **April - May 2025:** First Committee Action Hearings held.
- **October 2025:** Second Committee Action Hearings held.
- **April 2026:** Public Comment Hearings held.
- **Mid- to Late 2026:** ICC voting members finalize 2027 Group B codes.