



## **Understanding the International Building Code (IBC): Scope and Administration**

The International Building Code (IBC) serves as a foundational framework for creating safe, resilient, and sustainable buildings. Published by the International Code Council (ICC), the IBC is widely adopted across the United States and internationally, including here in Brookfield, to guide the construction, alteration, and maintenance of structures. Brookfield uses the 2021 IBC.

To help contractors, and developers better understand the IBC, this article highlights its scope and key administrative provisions.

### **What Is the IBC?**

The IBC is a model building code that establishes minimum standards to safeguard public health, safety, and general welfare. It covers everything from structural integrity and fire prevention to accessibility and energy efficiency. While the IBC itself does not have legal authority, its adoption by state and local governments, including Brookfield's Community Development Department, makes it enforceable as law.

### **Scope of the IBC**

The IBC applies to a wide range of building types, including:

- Residential buildings such as apartments and multi-family dwellings.
- Commercial structures like office buildings, retail spaces, and warehouses.
- Public facilities including schools, hospitals, and government buildings.
- Special structures such as arenas and high-rise buildings.

The IBC ensures that these structures are designed and constructed to withstand environmental factors such as earthquakes, wind, and snow loads while prioritizing safety features like fire exits, sprinkler systems, and accessible design elements.

### **Key Administrative Provisions**

The administrative provisions of the IBC define how the code is implemented and enforced. Here are some of the essential components:

### **1. Permits and Inspections:**

- The IBC outlines when building permits are required and the process for obtaining them.
- Inspections are conducted during various stages of construction to ensure compliance with the approved plans and IBC standards.

### **2. Role of the Building Official:**

- The building official is responsible for interpreting and enforcing the IBC. This includes reviewing plans, issuing permits, conducting inspections, and addressing code violations.

### **3. Code Compliance and Violations:**

- Property owners and contractors must adhere to the IBC's requirements. Non-compliance can result in fines, work stoppages, or other penalties.

### **4. Modifications and Appeals:**

- In certain situations, modifications to the code may be granted if strict compliance is impractical but equivalent safety can be demonstrated.
- The IBC provides a process for appealing decisions made by the building official through a local Board of Appeals.

## **How Does Brookfield Apply the IBC?**

Brookfield's Community Development Department incorporates the IBC as part of its local building regulations. The department works closely with builders, architects, and residents to ensure that all projects meet the community's safety and design standards. This includes providing guidance on permitting, plan reviews, and inspections.

## **Why Understanding the IBC Matters**

Understanding the IBC benefits everyone in the community by:

- Ensuring that buildings are safe and functional for their intended use.
- Reducing risks associated with structural failures, fires, and other hazards.
- Supporting sustainable development practices and energy efficiency.

Whether you're a homeowner planning a renovation or a developer undertaking a major project, familiarity with the IBC and its administrative processes can help ensure a smooth and successful construction process.

For more information or assistance, contact Brookfield's Community Development Department at [ecodev@brookfieldil.gov](mailto:ecodev@brookfieldil.gov) or [ipopovic@brookfieldil.gov](mailto:ipopovic@brookfieldil.gov)