

To: Department of Buildings Customers and Staff  
 From: Matthew Beaudet, Acting Commissioner  
 Re: Transition to the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes—Permit Applications Started On or After August 1, 2020  
 Date: July 31, 2020

**Overview**

On April 10, 2019, the city council adopted major revisions to the City of Chicago’s requirements for building construction and added five new major sections (titles) to the Municipal Code of Chicago. These provisions are known as the “2019 Chicago Construction Codes” and began phasing in on June 1, 2019. The next phase in that transition occurs on August 1, 2020.

**Permit Applications Started On or After August 1, 2020**

The 2019 Chicago Building Code and (Title 14B) and 2019 Chicago Building Rehabilitation Code (Title 14R) are mandatory for building permit applications started on and after **August 1, 2020**. This requirement is subject to two exceptions:

- Permit applications for a minor revision to a permit issued under the pre-2019 code. (See below for the Department’s policy on what constitutes a minor revision.)
- Permit applications for subsequent phases of a project using phased permitting where the first phase permit, such as a foundation-only permit or interior demo permit (with plans), was issued under the pre-2019 code.

For the purpose of applying this requirement, a permit application is started when the \$300 permit fee deposit and applicable zoning fee are paid; it is not necessary to upload drawings by this date. Drawings must be uploaded to the ProjectDox system and the applicant upload task must be completed **within 120 days** after the date when the application is started. Applications with no activity for more than 120 days are considered withdrawn.

**Starting a Permit Application in the Dynamic Portal (Hansen)**

Permit applications must be started in the Dynamic Portal (Hansen) at <http://ipiweb.cityofchicago.org/DynamicPortal/>. The City of Chicago is in the process of replacing this online system, and menu choices in the legacy system will not be immediately updated to reflect changes in terminology and procedures under the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes.

In the interim, please download and follow the Interim Instructions for starting a permit application using the Dynamic Portal based on the type of work and permitting program. These interim instructions will be posted on the Department of Buildings website by August 3:

**Interim Instructions for Starting a Permit Application Using the Dynamic Portal**

SCOPE OF WORK	PERMITTING PROGRAM		
	Standard Plan Review (SPR)	Self-Certification (SC)	Direct Developer Services (DDS)
<b>New Construction</b> (including initial buildout)	Instructions	Instructions	Instructions
<b>Building Rehabilitation</b>	Instructions	Instructions	Instructions
<b>Tent/Temporary Structure</b> (Special Construction)	Instructions	Instructions	-
<b>Construction Equipment</b> (Special Construction)	Instructions	-	-
<b>Communication Equipment</b> (Special Construction)	Instructions	-	-

Please check the Department of Buildings website for the latest version of these instructions before beginning a new permit application.

**Permit Application Form (Form 400)**

All permit applicants must download the PDF Building Permit Application (Form 400) from the Department of Buildings website, complete it, and upload it to the “Permit Application” folder in ProjectDox. Permit applicants should ignore the older format of permit application generated in the Dynamic Portal.

The following information provided on the PDF Building Permit Application (Form 400) must match the information provided in the Dynamic Portal:

- “Preparer Name” (page 1) must match the name of the Dynamic Portal user who created the application.
- “Application Number” (page 1) must match the 9-digit number generated by the Dynamic Portal.
- “Estimated cost of work” (page 1) must match the amount provided in the Dynamic Portal. If this value changes after you start the permit application, you must notify your project manager in writing so that they can adjust this value in Hansen.
- “Area of work” (page 1) must match the amount provided in the Dynamic Portal as “Building/Tent Area.” If this value changes after you start the permit application, you must notify your project manager in writing so that they can adjust this value in Hansen.
- “Description of work” (page 1) must match the description provided in the Dynamic Portal. If the description changes after you start the permit application, you must notify your project manager in writing so that they can adjust this value in Hansen.
- The “Permit Applicant” (page 5) must be provided as an “Owner” or “Tenant” in the Dynamic Portal.
- When the permit application is started by an Expediter, the “Design Professional of Record” (Pages 5 and 6-DP) must be provided as an Architect in the Dynamic Portal.
- The “General Contractor” (pages 5 and 6-GC) and each of the other contractors (page 5) must be entered in the Dynamic Portal before the permit can be issued. You will have the ability to provide or change this information while your application is under review.

### Construction Documents

In order to facilitate plan review and field inspections, the first page, all index sheets, and all pages with tabular code compliance information, such as a code matrix, must be labeled in bold 24-point type: “**2019 Chicago Building Code**” or “**2019 Chicago Building Rehabilitation Code**” as applicable.

Calculations to support code determinations, such as allowable height and area, occupant load, and egress capacity must be shown on the construction documents to facilitate plan review and inspections.

To assist plan examiners and inspectors in their review of your application, the Department of Buildings encourages you to include a code compliance matrix as part of the construction documents. A sample matrix is available on the Department’s web site, but you may use any format that reflects applicable code requirements and helps the plan examiner to navigate the documents submitted as part of the permit application to confirm this data.

### Standard Plan Review

The Department of Buildings began employee training on the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes last fall and has issued more than 200 permits under the 2019 Construction Codes since they became optional in December.

For a successful review, please follow the instructions referenced in this memo for starting the permit application in the Dynamic Portal; downloading, completing and uploading the PDF Building Permit Application; marking the construction documents and including relevant calculations on the construction documents.

Permit applications which have been submitted for review under the pre-2019 codes cannot be re-reviewed under the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes after plan examination begins.

### Self-Certification Permit Program

Only registered self-certification professionals who completed training on the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes offered by the Department of Buildings in December 2019 or July 2020 may self-certify permit applications submitted under the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes.

### Structural Peer Review

Only registered structural peer reviewers who completed training on the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes offered by the Department of Buildings in January 2020 may prepare structural peer review reports in connection with permit applications submitted under the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes.

## Developer Services Permit Program

The following consultant reviewers working under the Developer Services Permit Program have completed additional training and are authorized to conduct reviews under the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes:

- AECOM Technical Services
- A. Epstein & Sons International, Inc.
- The Code Group
- Globetrotters Engineering Corporation
- Primera Engineers, Ltd.
- Rada Architects, Ltd.
- V3 Companies of Illinois, Ltd.

When using the Traditional Developer Services permit program, use of the new codes can be discussed during an intake meeting with your project administrator.

When using the Direct Developer Services permit program, use of the new codes can be discussed during the intake meeting with the Building Commissioner or Commissioner's representative.

## Easy Permit Program

Permits to repair or replace existing building features issued through the Easy Permit Program, which are applied for on or after August 1, 2020, are subject to the applicable requirements in the 2019 Chicago Building Rehabilitation Code.

Updated application forms for the Easy Permit Program will be released later this year. Until then, applicants should continue to complete the online and PDF portions of the application based upon the occupancy and construction classifications in the pre-2019 code.

## Maximum Capacity Signs (Occupancy Placards)

Maximum capacity signs for rooms or spaces permitted under the pre-2019 code will continue to be issued using the occupant load and egress capacity factors in the pre-2019 code for applications submitted through the end of 2020, unless the application includes drawings and supporting calculations which clearly and correctly apply the occupant load and egress capacity factors from the 2019 Chicago Building Code. Rooms or spaces in buildings permitted under the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes must use the 2019 Chicago Building Code factors when applying for maximum capacity signs.

Applications for new maximum capacity signs submitted on or after **January 1, 2021**, will be reviewed using the occupant load factors in Section 1004 of the 2019 Chicago Building Code (14B-10-1004) and egress capacity factors in Section 1005 of the 2019 Chicago Building Code (14B-10-1005).

Maximum capacity signs issued based on the pre-2019 codes may continue to be reprinted so long as the space is not modified. Applicants seeking to recalculate the capacity of an existing space must submit an application for new maximum capacity signs and surrender the old signs upon issuance.

## Other Review Activities

The Department will continue to release updated forms and guidelines for various review processes, reflecting the terminology of the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes, over the coming months.

Applications may continue to be submitted under the following programs, even though the guidelines for these programs have not yet been updated:

- The Photovoltaic Panel Permitting Guidelines and Solar Express program (October 2013)
- The Chicago Porch and Deck Design Construction Guidelines (May 2011)

The requirements in these guidelines have been determined to be at least as strict as the equivalent provisions in the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes.

## Minor Revisions and Phased Permitting

The transition ordinance allows a permit application for minor revisions to a permit issued under the pre-2019 code, submitted after August 1, 2020, to be reviewed and approved under the pre-2019 code. For the purpose of this requirement, a revision will be considered minor unless:

- The revision will introduce a new occupancy or auxiliary use (per Chapter 13-56)
- The revision will increase the building height or building area (per Chapter 13-48)
- The revision will change the building's construction type (per Chapter 13-60)
- The revision will increase the number of dwelling units (as defined in Section 13-4-010)

The transition ordinance also allows a permit application for the second or subsequent phase of a project using phased permitting to be reviewed under the same code which was applied to the first phase permit. For this provision to apply, the following conditions must be met:

- The first phase construction documents or reference-only application materials must clearly identify the intent to use phased permitting and the scope of work to be permitted in subsequent phases (for example, a "foundation for a 12-story residential building with 27 dwelling units" or "interior demolition to prepare for built out a new 27,000 mercantile space")
- Subsequent phase permits may not increase the height, area, or number of dwelling units identified in the scope of earlier phases by more than ten percent without written approval of the Building Commissioner.
- Subsequent phase permits may not introduce new occupancy types not identified in earlier phase permits without written approval of the Building Commissioner.
- Permits issued under the easy permit program are not considered phased permits.

## Building Rehabilitation Code: Performance Compliance Method

Use of the Performance Compliance Method (Chapter 13) of the Chicago Building Rehabilitation Code requires submission of a report which must be approved by the Department before the permit application will be reviewed. To request an intake meeting to discuss the procedure for use of the Performance Compliance Method and obtaining departmental approval for a report, please email [Claudette.Hillock@cityofchicago.org](mailto:Claudette.Hillock@cityofchicago.org).

## Deferred Provision: Special Inspections

As authorized by ordinance, the Department is deferring the effective date of Sections 1704 and 1705 of the 2019 Chicago Building Code, which require structural observation or third-party inspections and tests for certain scopes of work, until **January 1, 2021**. The Department will be posting optional compliance forms related to these provisions in August and encourages projects to begin voluntarily complying with the requirements before they become mandatory.

## Questions and Comments

Questions and comments about the Department's implementation of the 2019 Chicago Construction Codes can be sent to [DOBCommissioner@cityofchicago.org](mailto:DOBCommissioner@cityofchicago.org).

To receive information about upcoming training and educational opportunities about the Chicago Construction Codes, subscribe to the Department of Buildings' email alerts at <http://www.chicago.gov/buildings>.