



Highlights of Phase 2 Building Code Modernization Ordinance (Adopted April 10, 2019)

Following on the City's successful modernization of its electrical and conveyance device (elevator) codes in 2018, the Department of Buildings and Mayor Emanuel introduced an ordinance at the March 2019 meeting of the city council to align Chicago's construction requirements with the 2018 edition of the *International Building Code* and *International Existing Building Code* while preserving longstanding local requirements that respond to the unique built environment of Chicago. The ordinance was adopted unanimously on April 10, 2019 and represents the first comprehensive revision to the Chicago Building Code since 1949.

For over a year, the Department of Buildings worked closely with the Chicago Fire Department and other City departments, and more than 150 volunteer technical experts and industry leaders to develop the technical basis for the Phase 2 Building Code Modernization ordinance.

The new code will be phased in gradually, beginning June 1 and completely replacing the current Building Code by August 1, 2020. During the implementation period, DOB will continue to work closely with a wide range of industry stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition.

A new, modern Chicago Building Code will:

- Add more flexibility and options for construction materials.
- Enable safer and more affordable construction for projects of all sizes in Chicago, including single-family homes, affordable housing units, two- and three flats and tall buildings.
- Further streamline the permitting process.
- Bring down the cost of projects like the adaptive re-use of schools, retail buildings, and vacant buildings throughout the city by replacing the one-size-fits-all approach of the current code with a more flexible framework of requirements for rehab work.
- Promote energy efficiency and sustainability in all building projects.
- Adopt common terminology used in every other major U.S. city, making it easier for architects, designers and builders to understand Chicago's requirements.
- Coordinate existing accessibility requirements, including recently-revised requirements under the Illinois Accessibility Code, with the new building code, which will provide incremental improvements over the current state of Chicago's accessibility requirements.
- Maintain the key unique life safety features of the existing code such as the requirement to use non-combustible materials to enhance fire protection.

Broad Support for Phase 2 Ordinance

There was broad support for this ordinance throughout the building community including architects, designers, builders, developers, affordable housing advocates, tradespeople, real estate professionals, non-profit organizations, chambers of commerce, and preservationists. The Department of Buildings led a consensus-based approach to develop this ordinance, which is reflected in more than 25 letters of support, containing more than 350 signatures.

Plans for Phase 3

The Chicago Fire Department is continuing to evaluate provisions of the *International Fire Code* related to special hazards and industrial occupancies. In 2019 and 2020, the Department of Buildings intends to initiate a process to update requirements for mechanical (HVAC) systems, natural gas, plumbing, stormwater, signs, and trade licenses. The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities continues to study further reforms to the City's accessibility requirements. Thoughts and suggestions should be sent to DOBCommissioner@cityofchicago.org.



Key Implementation Dates

2019

June 1 **Updated Energy Conservation Code**
Chicago's Energy Conservation requirements updated from 2015 to 2018 edition of *International Energy Conservation Code*

Oct 15 **Code Publication**
Code books will be published in print and electronic formats by International Code Council. Free read-only version will be available online. Full versions will be available for purchase and for free at Chicago Public Libraries.

Dec 1 **Accessibility Provisions Mandatory**
Accessibility-related provisions of the new codes will become mandatory for all new permit applications, whether under the new code or old code. The new accessibility provisions are drafted to align with the 2018 ADA Standards and 2018 Illinois Accessibility Code.

July 1 **Administrative Provisions**
New administrative provisions (Title 14A) will supersede existing administrative provisions of Chicago Building Code regarding fees, enforcement, permit issuance, etc.

Dec 1 **New Building Code Optional**
The new Building Code (Title 14B) and Building Rehabilitation Code (Title 14R) will become optional for permit applicants. Permit applicants must fully comply with either the old or new code and cannot mix-and-match.

Dec 2 **Self-Certification Training**
1-day update training for existing self-certification professionals and 3-day training program for new and renewing self-certification professionals.

2020

Jan 1 **Residential Sprinklers Mandatory**
Sprinklers will be required in all new residential buildings with 4 or more units, whether permitted under the new or old code.

Aug 1 **New Building Code Mandatory**
The new codes will be mandatory for all permit applications started on or after this date, with limited exceptions for phased-permit projects and minor revisions to permits applied for prior to August 1.

June 1 **Existing Buildings (Title 14X)**
Revised standards for existing buildings (retroactive provisions) will replace existing provisions on a date selected by the Commissioner but no later than June 1, 2020. The new requirements are substantively very similar to the existing requirements in Chapter 13-196.

* Permit application date is determined based on online payment of the permit deposit fee (\$300).