



Code Outreach Program – Codes History

This edition of the Code Outreach program is intended to provide a timeline summary of code adoption in New York State.

Building codes have typically developed in response to a building failure and the loss of life and property. Peter Stuyvesant, Governor of New Amsterdam (which later became New York City), is credited with enacting in 1647 the first fire prevention code in the United States. In 1867, the Tenement House Act was enacted in response to overcrowding and unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions in New York City. It was superseded in 1929 by the Multiple Dwelling Law, and in 1952 by the Multiple Residence Law. Some communities chose to adopt a variety of national model codes and others didn't have an adopted code, leading to inconsistent enforcement. Historic codes might be found in the Law Libraries and the New York State Library.

The International Code Council and Merger of Major Codes Organizations

The International Code Council (ICC) was formed in 1994 and incorporated in 2003 by three legacy organizations: the Building Officials and Code Administrators (BOCA), the Southern Building Code Congress (SBCCI), and the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO), thus creating the first truly national code.

Model (optional) New York State Codes

With the purpose of providing consistent standards, NY State promulgated the State Building Construction Code Applicable to One- and Two-Family Dwellings, effective on November 1, 1951, with Subchapter B applicable to multiple dwellings in 1954, Subchapter C applicable to General Building Construction in 1956, and the plumbing provisions of Subchapter P in 1958. These were updated and expanded during the following 25 years. These early State building codes were not mandatory but were adopted by municipalities that chose to enact a resolution.

The Uniform Code

The first version of the Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (Uniform Code) took effect on January 1st, 1984. The Uniform Code is applicable in all parts of the State, except New York City (which has its own building/construction codes). Since 2003 the Uniform Code has been based on a family of model code books published by a recognized publisher (current publisher is ICC), with New York State-specific amendments. The table below shows recent updates to the Uniform Code. Occasionally, a new provision is added to the Uniform Code between code cycles as a stand-alone rule making. For more information see the DBSC site and TB-2014.

The Energy Code

The New York State Energy Law became effective on July 26, 1976. It required the formulation of the first mandatory statewide Energy Code, which became effective on January 1st, 1979. Since 2002, the Energy Code has been based on the ICC's Energy Conservation Code (IECC) with NYS modifications. In general, residential buildings are required to comply with the "residential provisions" in the IECC, and commercial buildings with the "commercial provisions" of the IECC, or with ASHRAE 90.1.

Transition Periods

Typically, a 90-day transition period is provided between code adoption cycles, as indicated in the table below. During this period, applicants may choose to submit construction permit applications based on either the newly adopted or the previous version of the code.

Table with 3 columns: Effective Date, Transition Period, and Uniform Code. It lists updates to the Uniform Code and Energy Code from 1984 to 2016.

Please look for our next edition of the Code Outreach Program at the beginning of next month.

In-Service Training

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How to View Your Training Credits in SLMS: https://youtu.be/jgMPIQtVI7c

DBSC - A Division of Department of State
OFPC – An Office of the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services

If you have questions pertaining to the Code Outreach Program, email us at COP.codes@dos.ny.gov
If you have questions pertaining to the Uniform Code or Energy Code, email our technical support group at: codes@dos.ny.gov.
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