



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Policy Memorandum 23-01

To: National Leadership Council
Superintendents

From: Director

Subject: Adoption of Nationally Recognized Building Codes

Purpose and Background

This Policy Memorandum adopts nationally recognized building codes for the National Park Service (NPS) and provides guidance for compliance therewith. Federal agencies are required by [40 USC 3312](#) to adopt a nationally recognized building code. In the United States, the most widely used nationally recognized code is the International Code Council (ICC) family of codes. This family of codes includes both the [International Building Code \(IBC\)](#) and International Fire Code (IFC). Both codes reference many other codes and standards that address all areas of design and engineering.

Policy

A. Adoption of Codes

1. The ICC's family of codes and their appendices are hereby adopted as the nationally recognized building codes for the NPS. Additionally, the National Electrical Code (NEC, [NFPA 70](#), published by the National Fire Protection Association) is adopted as the nationally recognized code for electrical work. The ICC and NFPA currently update their family of codes on a three-year cycle, e.g., 2015 Editions, 2018 Editions, and 2021 Editions. These codes are typically available in October the year before the edition title.
2. The NPS will automatically adopt new editions of the ICC family of codes and the NEC effective the date they become available. The most current version of the code will be applied to a project when the project is initiated.

B. Compliance and Enforcement

1. The IBC identifies a Building Code Official (BCO) who is authorized and directed to enforce requirements of the IBC within the jurisdiction. The IFC identifies a Fire Code Official (FCO) who is authorized and directed to enforce requirements of the IFC within the jurisdiction. See, [Director's Order #58: Structural Fire Management](#).

Regional directors are hereby designated as the BCO for their respective regions. BCOs will be the individuals responsible for enforcing the ICC's family of codes (excluding the IFC). Regional directors may delegate this authority, in writing, to other qualified individuals within their region. The BCO will be responsible for resolving conflicts between codes or standards and issuing formal waivers or variances from the IBC and NEC as necessary.

2. A Building Code Leadership Council (BCLC), modeled after the Structural Fire Leadership Council (SFLC), will be created to address non-fire protection related code issues. This group will be comprised of regional BCOs and subject matter experts (SMEs) from the Park Planning, Facilities and Lands (PPFL) Directorate. This council will work closely with the SFLC; the two groups will work together, e.g., on Certificates of Occupancy, code issues, variances, and waivers.

3. PPFL divisions will work with the regional BCOs to recommend to the Associate Director (AD), PPFL exceptions and modifications that should be adopted to meet NPS management goals.

C. Supplemental Guidance

The AD, PPFL is hereby delegated authority to issue such supplemental guidance as may be necessary in furtherance of this Memorandum. For example, the AD, PPFL may develop training and certification recommendations for BCOs.

D. Code Amendments

Amendment of certain ICC codes or the NEC specific to the NPS may be necessary. Such amendments for non-fire protection issues will be developed and managed by the BCLC.

E. Variances and Waivers

Pursuant to the ICC family of codes, BCOs will issue variances and waivers for non-fire protection related issues. PPFL SMEs will advise regional BCOs as needed. FCOs will continue to issue variances and waivers for fire protection related issues.

F. Certificates of Occupancy

Pursuant to the ICC family of codes, the BCO will issue certificates of occupancy with the support of technical experts and the FCO. Issuance of a certificate of occupancy requires an inspection and acceptance of the construction project. Certificates of occupancy will be issued by the regional BCO with the concurrence of the regional FCO.

G. No Third-Party Enforceability

This Memorandum is intended only to improve the internal management of the NPS, and is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

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