

DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS CODE BULLETIN OF INFORMATION No. B-2501	CODE OF GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA TITLE 4 — BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPANCY CODE
SUBJECT OF BULLETIN: IMPLEMENTATION OF 2021 INTERNATIONAL CODES FOR PHILADELPHIA	REFERENCE CODE SECTION(S): PA UCC
ISSUED BY	
NAME: Elizabeth Baldwin, P.E.	ISSUE DATE October 20, 2025
TITLE: Chief Code Official	Page 1 of 2

BACKGROUND:

This Code Bulletin serves to inform stakeholders of upcoming changes to the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code (UCC) and impacts to construction projects within Philadelphia. These changes stem from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's adoption of the 2021 International Code provisions, as amended through the regulatory review process under the Pennsylvania Construction Code Act (Act 45 of 1999).

The updated code will take effect on January 1, 2026.

It is important to note that enforcement of the 2021 accessibility provisions contained within the International Codes has been enjoined by a 2022 ruling of the Commonwealth Court. As a result, the accessibility requirements set forth in the 2018 edition of the International Codes will remain in effect until the Commonwealth enacts new, enforceable provisions.

The Pennsylvania Construction Code Act contains provisions that address the status of permits and contracts initiated before the effective date of new code regulations. Section 304(c)(4), titled "Prior Permits, Contracts, and Construction," allows a permit to be issued under the code in effect at the time a design or construction contract was executed, provided the application is submitted within six months following the effective date of the new regulations.

In recognition of the time typically required between finalizing a construction contract and submitting a permit application, the Department will continue its practice of allowing a grace period during the transition between code editions. During this time, applicants may choose to have their projects reviewed under either the new or previously adopted code. This approach provides clarity and flexibility to the construction and design community as the 2021 codes are implemented.

POLICY:

Beginning January 1, 2026, the following construction codes, as amended by the Commonwealth and through local ordinance, will be adopted:

- 2021 International Building Code (IBC)
- 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)

- 2021 International Existing Building Code (IEBC)
- 2021 International Fire Code (IFC) – applicable only to provisions referenced by the IBC and IEBC
- 2021 International Fuel Gas Code (IFGC)
- 2021 International Mechanical Code (IMC)
- 2021 ICC Performance Code for Buildings and Facilities (ICCPC)
- 2021 International Plumbing Code (IPC)
- 2021 International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings (IRC)

This includes the following referenced standards:

- 2020 NFPA 70 (National Electrical Code)
- 2019 NFPA 72 (National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code)

The accessibility provisions referenced in the 2018 International Building Code, Existing Building Code, Plumbing Code, and Swimming Pool and Spa Code remain in effect until alternate provisions are adopted by the Commonwealth. This includes the referenced standard ICC A117.1-09, Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities.

The Philadelphia Administrative Code shall continue as a local construction code and remains a component of the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) as applicable within the City of Philadelphia.

Permit Application Review Timeline

Permit applications received before July 1, 2026, may be reviewed under either the 2018 or 2021 editions of the applicable codes. Applicants choosing a specific edition must clearly identify the code edition on the application or within the submitted plans. If no edition is specified, the application will be reviewed under the 2018 code provisions by default.

All applications received on or after July 1, 2026, must comply with the 2021 editions of the adopted codes. This requirement applies to all construction-related permits, including trade permit applications. The issuance of earlier permits for demolition, foundation, site grading, or excavation will not affect the applicable code edition for subsequent permit filings.

Cited application dates are based on the date that a complete application is received. Refer to the [Permit Filing Date Regulation](#) for requirements of a complete application.

Additional Considerations

Amendments to issued permits will be reviewed under the same code edition as the original permit, provided the proposed changes fall within the scope permitted under departmental regulations.

Any permits that have expired and are resubmitted for review will be subject to the 2021 code requirements.

Projects that received Master Permit Approval under the 2018 Codes must ensure that all associated building permits are filed before July 1, 2026. The Master Permit Approval will not be valid for permit applications submitted after that date.

Furthermore, decisions made under preliminary plan reviews based on the 2018 Codes and associated variances will only remain valid if the full permit application is filed before July 1, 2026.