

2021 I-Code Ordinance
April 2026

The City of Philadelphia is governed by the Pennsylvania Construction Code Act (PCCA), which requires statewide adoption of the Uniform Construction Code (UCC). Under the PCCA, the 2021 International Codes, subject to modifications adopted by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, took effect across the Commonwealth on January 1, 2026 with a 6-month grace period. Mandatory application of the 2021 I-Codes shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

These ordinances acknowledge the adoption of the 2021 International Codes, as modified under the UCC. Modifications issued by the Department of Labor & Industry are identified with the clause “Pursuant to the UCC” in the adopting ordinance.

These ordinances encompass the adoption of the following 2021 sub-codes under the Philadelphia Building Construction and Occupancy Code (Title 4): International Building Code (IBC), International Existing Building Code (IEBC), International Residential Code (IRC), International Mechanical Code (IMC), International Fuel Gas Code (IFGC), International Performance Code (ICCPC), and International Swimming Pool and Spa Code (ISPSC).

The PCCA also authorizes municipalities to adopt local amendments that meet or exceed the minimum requirements of the UCC. Accordingly, this ordinance retains existing amendments and introduces new local provisions to the International Building Code (IBC), International Residential Code (IRC), International Mechanical Code (IMC), and the Administrative Code.

Proposed local amendments include:

- Updates to the cool roof ordinance to replace references to the discontinued Energy Star Roof Products Program with performance standards established by the Cool Roof Rating Council (CRRC).
- Establishment of a special inspection category for air leakage to codify the use of qualified air leakage testing professionals and to enhance the tracking and enforcement of air leakage requirements in support of overall energy efficiency goals.
- Incorporation of select 2024 and proposed 2027 ICC refrigerant provisions to accommodate the federally mandated phasedown of HFC refrigerants by expanding the allowable use of alternative refrigerant classes.

In addition, the proposed bills include updates to the Administrative Code to align provisions with current standards and cross-departmental regulations, establish clearer procedures for the commencement and abandonment of construction, and adjust the permit reinstatement fee to reflect current administrative costs.

Please refer to the accompanying table for a complete list of proposed changes.

Note: Updates to the Energy Conservation and Plumbing Codes were previously introduced under Bill Nos. [250644](#) and [250645](#), respectively. Certain maintenance provisions under the 2021 International Fire Code and International Property Maintenance Code, which fall outside the PCCA but are necessary for continuity, will be adopted through separate ordinances.

Administrative Code (Sub-Code A)	Change
A-203.3.2	Updates reference to current ISO accreditation standards.
A-301.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expands excavation permit exemptions to include structures accessory to one- and two-family dwellings, sign structures, and minor work not posing a threat to adjacent properties. • Corrects PWD stormwater management approval threshold. • Adds building permit requirement for site work in steep slope or Wissahickon Watershed areas to verify limits of disturbance.
A-301.2.5	Modifies zoning permit exemptions by aligning accessory structure references with the Zoning Code.
A-302.12	Adds section on abandonment of work to reflect current practice and create a more appropriate violation category.
A-305.2	<p>Modifies prerequisite approvals for building, demolition, and excavation permit issuance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adds requirement for Department of Public Health Dust Control Permit for areas of disturbance $\geq 5,000$ sq ft, consistent with DPH regulations. 2. Corrects DPH water quality approval requirements for on-site wells. 3. Removes requirement for Commerce Department approval of waterfront structures.
A-402.8.1	Establishes a maximum lead time for initial inspection notification to ensure pre-construction review reflects actual site conditions at project start.
A-506 and 601	Updates reference for fine provisions to align with corresponding 2021 code sections.
A-901.11	Increases permit reinstatement fee from \$50 to \$300 to reflect current administrative costs.

Building Code Section (Sub-Code B)	Change
B-1504.9 (and definitions)	Updates the cool roof ordinance to replace references to the discontinued Energy Star Roof Products Program with performance standards established by the Cool Roof Rating Council (CRRC). Compliance shall be demonstrated using CRRC-rated initial and aged solar reflectance and thermal emittance values, as specified in this Code.
B-1705.21	Establishes a Special Inspection category for air barrier and duct leakage testing, aligning with the specialized testing and certification requirements of the Energy Code. Currently, this testing applies to low-rise residential structures, with testing agency qualifications set by departmental procedure. Under the 2021 Codes, air barrier testing is expanded to all new buildings. This amendment codifies requirements for testing agencies under Section 9-1306, while qualifications for individuals performing the testing will be established by regulation.
Residential Code Section (Sub-Code R)	Change
R-905.18 (and definitions)	Updates the cool roof ordinance to maintain consistency with corresponding IBC provisions.
R-E3901.4.2.1	Corrects Pennsylvania UCC language to include peninsular countertops and islands in the minimum receptacle requirements for kitchen and dining areas.
Mechanical Code (Sub-Code M)	Change
M-307.2.2.1	Modifies condensate discharge provisions to align with the Philadelphia Plumbing Code (Section P-314.2.1.1).
Refrigerants (Varies)	Change
Subcodes B, R and M	Adopts select 2024 and proposed 2027 ICC refrigerant provisions to support the federally mandated phasedown of HFC refrigerants through expanded use of alternative refrigerant classes. Building Code changes are limited to reorganization of flammable gas provisions to align with current standards, and Residential Code mechanical chapters are revised to reflect

	corresponding updates to the Mechanical Code.
M-1101.2.1	Added to specify listing and labeling for any high probability equipment utilizing Group A2L, A2, A3 and B1 refrigerants.
Table M-1103.1	<p>Revised tables to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edits to recognize A2L refrigerants as an independent refrigerant safety group classification • Introduction of new parameters for lower flammability limit considerations and specific LFL points for specified refrigerants • Refrigerant quantity limit reductions for Refrigerant Concentration Limits (RCL) <p>Revised refrigerant safety group classifications based on ASHRAE 34.</p>
M-1104.3.1	Revised to specifically require the use of Group A1 and A2L for any high probability systems used for human comfort, with exceptions based on quantity of refrigerants and occupancy type.
M-1104.3.2	Revised to prohibit the use of Group A3 & B3 refrigerants in high probability systems with additional exceptions based on occupancy types and quantity of refrigerants. Removed Table 1104.3.2 associated with refrigerant quantity limitations based on redundancy with proposed modifications under M1104.3.1 & M1104.3.2.
M-1106.4	<p>Revised provisions for machinery room requirements associated with A2L & B2L refrigerant systems to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detection limits requirements to achieve more accurate detection and response times to refrigerant leaks • Emergency shut-off response times for refrigerant leaks • Revised ventilation requirements, with machinery room ventilation designs to be based on standard ASHRAE 15 <p>Removed previous language associated with required machinery room provisions for Group A2L refrigerant system associated with hazardous locations for electrical requirements</p>

	of NFPA 70.
M1107.4 & M1107.5	Revisions to refrigerant piping and pipe fittings materials.
M1109.2.2	Revisions to pipe enclosure exceptions for pipes installed outside the building where protected from damage.
M1109.2.3	Clarifications to refrigerant piping installation locations to specifically prohibit installations within interior exit stairways when piping is exposed.
M1109.2.5	Revised exceptions to refrigerant pipe shaft requirements to broaden exceptions to all refrigerant safety group classifications where refrigerant quantity limits are not exceeded under Table M-1103.1.
M1109.2.6	Revised provisions to recognize the need to allow authorized personnel access to exposed pipes with very hot or very cold piping surfaces.
M1109.2.7	Revised provisions for piping identification requirements specific to A2L & B2L refrigerant systems.
M1109.3	Revised provisions for use of Group A2L, A2, A3, B2L, B2, and B3 refrigerants, to include specific requirements for continuous mechanical ventilation for the use of Group A2, A3, B2, or B3 refrigerants
M1109.4	Removed provisions for Group A2, A3, B2, and B3 refrigerant systems based on redundancy with the revisions identified in M1109.3
M1109.7	Revised provisions associated with test gases permitted for use in refrigerant piping system testing
M1110.3	Revised provisions associated with test gases permitted for use in refrigerant piping system testing
M1110.5	Revised provisions to revise refrigerant piping system testing requirements