



2021 INTERNATIONAL EXISTING BUILDING CODE (IEBC)

Permitting Learning Guide

2025

What Is The Code Development Section?

Roles & Responsibilities

- Code Adoptions
- Alternate Methods
- Code Interpretations
- General Code Support
- Legislation



Notes

2021 INTERNATIONAL EXISTING BUILDING CODE

Purpose

To accomplish this objective, and to make the rehabilitation process easier, this chapter allows for a controlled departure from full compliance with the technical codes, without compromising the minimum standards for the fire prevention and life safety features of the rehabilitated building.



Notes

RESOURCES & OTHER INFORMATION

Houston Permitting Center Website

The screenshot shows the Houston Permitting Center website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Houston Permitting Center logo on the left and links for REGISTER | LOG IN, ACCESSIBILITY, and ENGLISH on the right. Below the navigation bar, there are menu items: ABOUT - PERMITS A TO Z RESOURCES - CONTACT - ESERVICES - and a search icon. The main content area features a large banner with the text "WE ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS" in blue and orange, followed by "Monday - Friday: 8:00am - 5:00pm" in a blue rounded rectangle. Below the banner is a "Welcome to the Houston Permitting Center" section with a paragraph of text. At the bottom, there are four service tiles: "Office of the City Engineer", "Building Code Enforcement", "Infrastructure & Development Services", and "Open Records".

HOUSTON PERMITTING CENTER

REGISTER | LOG IN ACCESSIBILITY ENGLISH

ABOUT - PERMITS A TO Z RESOURCES - CONTACT - ESERVICES -

WE ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Monday - Friday: 8:00am - 5:00pm

Welcome to the Houston Permitting Center

The Houston Permitting Center combines the majority of the City of Houston's permitting and licensing into one convenient location. We opened in June 2011 with a mission to help customers achieve their goals while complying with the City's regulations. Providing excellent service, streamlining business processes, implementing innovative technologies, and proactively engaging customers are all cornerstones of our mission.

Office of the City Engineer

The Office of the City Engineer (OCE) implements and administers the provisions in the City's Code of Ordinances state and federal regulations relating to floodplain management, street cuts, and storm water quality.

Building Code Enforcement

- Code Development
- Commercial Plan Review
- Construction Services
- Building Code Enforcement | BCE Investigations
- Electrical Inspections

Infrastructure & Development Services

The Infrastructure & Development Services agency is part of the Houston Water service line.

Open Records

The Open Records section is responsible for processing Texas Public Information Act (TPA) requests for the Building Code Enforcement and the Office of the City Engineer service lines.

www.HoustonPermittingCenter.org

Notes

RESOURCES & OTHER INFORMATION

Houston Permitting Center Website

Search “2021 Code Amendments”

The screenshot shows the Houston Permitting Center website with a search bar containing the text "2021 Code Amendments". The search results are displayed below the search bar, listing five items related to 2021 code amendments. Each item includes a title, a brief description, and a date. The first item is "2021 International Building Code | IBC Houston Amendments", the second is "2021 International Residential Code | IRC Houston Amendments", the third is "2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) Houston Amendments", the fourth is "2021 International Energy Conservation Code | IECC Houston Amendments", and the fifth is "2021 International Existing Building Code | IEBC Houston Amendments". Two orange arrows point to the search bar and the fifth result.

Search

2021 Code Amendments **Apply**

2021 International Building Code | IBC Houston Amendments
The 2021 International Building Code (IBC) Houston Amendments were adopted on October 25, 2023, and became effective on January 1, 2024.
Last updated: 12/26/2023

[2021 International Building Code | IBC Houston Amendments](#)

2021 International Residential Code | IRC Houston Amendments
The 2021 International Residential Code was adopted on October 25, 2023, and became effective on January 2, 2023.
Last updated: December 26, 2023

[2021 International Residential Code | IRC Houston Amendments](#)

2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) Houston Amendments
International Energy Conservation Code Amendments (IECC)
Updated August 17, 2023

[2021 International Energy Conservation Code \(IECC\) Houston Amendments](#)

2021 International Energy Conservation Code | IECC Houston Amendments
The 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) was adopted on October 25, 2023, and became effective on January 2, 2023.
Last updated: December 26, 2023

[2021 International Energy Conservation Code | IECC Houston Amendments](#)

2021 International Existing Building Code | IEBC Houston Amendments
The 2021 International Existing Building Code was adopted on October 25, 2023, and became effective on January 2, 2023.
Last updated: December 26, 2023

[2021 International Existing Building Code | IEBC Houston Amendments](#)

Notes

RESOURCES & OTHER INFORMATION

Houston Permitting Center Website

Search Code Amendments

The screenshot shows the Houston Permitting Center website's search results page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'ABOUT', 'PERMITS A TO Z', 'RESOURCES', 'CONTACT', and 'ESERVICES'. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the navigation bar, the search results are displayed under the heading 'Search'. The search term 'Code Amendments' is entered in the search bar, and an 'Apply' button is visible. The results list several code amendments, each with a document icon and a link to the document. The first result is '2012 Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) Houston Amendments', which is highlighted with an orange arrow. The second result is '2023 National Electrical Code (NEC) Administrative Amendments', which is also highlighted with an orange arrow. The third result is '2021 International Building Code | IBC Houston Amendments', which is highlighted with a blue arrow. The fourth result is '2021 Houston Building Code & Residential Code for ASCE Houston Amendments', which is highlighted with an orange arrow. The fifth result is 'PATSA Code Amendments Redline', which is highlighted with a blue arrow. The search results also include the date of the last update for each amendment.

REGISTER | LOG IN | ACCESSIBILITY

HOUSTON PERMITTING CENTER

ABOUT - PERMITS A TO Z RESOURCES - CONTACT - ESERVICES -

Search

Code Amendments Apply

2012 Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) Houston Amendments
2012 Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) Houston Amendments.
Last updated: 2/1/2016

2012 Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) Houston Amendments

2023 National Electrical Code (NEC) Administrative Amendments
2023 NEC (National Electrical Code) Administrative Amendments
Updated August 17, 2023

2023 National Electrical Code (NEC) Administrative Amendments

2023 National Electrical Code (NEC) Administrative Amendments

2021 International Building Code | IBC Houston Amendments
The 2021 International Building Code (IBC) Houston Amendments were adopted on October 25, 2023, and became effective on January 1, 2024.
Last updated: 12/26/2023

2021 International Building Code | IBC Houston Amendments

2021 Houston Building Code & Residential Code for ASCE Houston Amendments
Last updated: January 1, 2024

2021 Houston Building Code & Residential Code for ASCE Houston Amendments

PATSA Code Amendments Redline

PATSA Code Amendments Redline


Notes

RESOURCES & OTHER INFORMATION

Houston Permitting Center Website

Search Code Amendments

**Houston Amendments to
the *2021 International
Existing Building Code***



Adopted by Ord. No. 2023-907¹
Passed October 25, 2023²
Effective January 1, 2024³

1. The City Secretary shall insert the number of the adopting ordinance.
2. The City Secretary shall insert the date passage and approval of the adopting ordinance.
3. The City Secretary shall insert the effective date of the adopting ordinance.



Notes

International Existing Building Code | IEBC Chapter 1 - Amendments

[A] 101.3 Purpose. The intent of this code is to provide flexibility to permit the use of alternative approaches to achieve compliance with minimum requirements to provide a reasonable level of safety, health, property protection and general welfare insofar as they are affected by the repair, alteration, change of occupancy, addition to and relocation of existing buildings. **The provisions of this code shall not apply to any activity for which local regulation is preempted by federal or state law.**

Notes

Work Exempt – Sidewalk And Driveways Stricken

[A] 105.2 Work exempt from permit. Exemptions from building permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant exemption from permits required by other codes or ordinances, and shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any ~~other codes,~~ laws or ordinances of this jurisdiction.

~~Permits~~ Building permits shall not be required for the following:

Building:

1. ~~Sidewalks and driveways~~ Uncovered decks accessory to a one- or two-family dwelling, not more than 30 inches (762 mm) above grade and not over any basement or story below and that are not part of an accessible route.

Notes

Time Limitation Of Application

[A] 105.3.2 Time limitation of application. An application for which no permit is issued within 180 days following the date of application shall become inactive, and plans and other data submitted for review thereafter shall be returned to the applicant or destroyed by the building official. The building official is authorized to grant one or more extensions of time for additional periods not to exceed 180 days each, for a maximum of two years from the date of the original application, upon written request and justifiable cause demonstrated by the applicant. If an application for permit does not result in a permit within two years after the date of original application, the permit application shall expire.

Notes

Validity Of Permit

[A] 105.5 Expiration. Every permit issued shall become invalid inactive on the 180th day after its issuance unless the work on the site authorized by such permit is has commenced and been inspected by a city inspector within 180 days after its issuance, or if the work authorized on the site by such permit is suspended or abandoned for a period of 180 days after the time date the work is was commenced. The building official is authorized to grant, in writing, one or more extensions of time for periods not more than 180 days each. The extension shall be requested in writing, and justifiable cause demonstrated.

Notes

International Existing Building Code | IEBC Chapter 1 - Amendments

SECTION 115 UNSAFE STRUCTURES AND EQUIPMENT

~~[A] 115.1 Unsafe conditions. Structures or existing equipment that are or hereafter become unsafe, insanitary or deficient because of inadequate means of egress facilities, inadequate light and ventilation, or that constitute a fire hazard, or are otherwise dangerous to human life or the public welfare, or that involve illegal or improper occupancy or inadequate maintenance, shall be deemed an unsafe condition. Unsafe structures shall be taken down and removed or made safe as the code official deems necessary and as provided for in this code. A vacant structure that is not secured against unauthorized entry shall be deemed unsafe.~~ **Unsafe buildings or structures.** All buildings or structures regulated by this code that are structurally inadequate or unsafe, do not have adequate egress, that constitute a fire hazard, or are otherwise dangerous to human life are, for the purposes of this section, unsafe buildings or structures. Any use of buildings or structures constituting a hazard to safety, health, or public welfare by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, obsolescence, fire hazard, disaster, damage, or abandonment is, for the purposes of this section, an unsafe use. Parapet walls, cornices, spires, towers, tanks, statuary and other appendages or structural members that are supported by, attached to, or a part of a building and that are in deteriorated condition or otherwise unable to sustain the design loads that are specified in this code are hereby designated as unsafe building appendages.

Notes

Chapter 2 - Definitions

[A] ALTERATION. Any construction or renovation to an *existing structure* other than a *repair* or *addition*. Also, a change to an existing building, or an electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system that involves an extension, addition or change to the arrangement, type or purpose of the original installation that requires a permit. Alterations are classified as Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 in this code.

AUTHORITY HAVING JURISDICTION. The City of Houston, Texas. The definition shall include the director of Houston Public Works as the jurisdiction's duly authorized representative.

BUILDING CODE. The City of Houston Building Code, as adopted and amended by this jurisdiction.

BUILDING OFFICIAL. The director of Houston Public Works or the duly authorized representative designated by the director to act as the chief construction code enforcement official of the jurisdiction. The term also includes the Houston Airport Systems building official who may be designated by the building official to perform Construction Code permitting and enforcement activities on Houston Airport Systems premises.

Notes

Chapter 3 - Provisions for All Compliance Methods

SECTION 302 GENERAL PROVISIONS

302.6 Airport sound attenuation. Where an airport land use permit is required, all alterations, repairs, additions, relocations of structures and changes of occupancy shall comply with appropriate provisions of the *Construction Code* and Chapter 9, Article VI, of the *City Code* to achieve an interior sound level of 45 dBA for the scope of work proposed.

302.7 Lake Houston structures. Where a Lake Houston Permit is required, all alterations, repairs, additions, relocations of structures and changes of occupancy shall comply with appropriate provisions of the *Construction Code*, Chapter 62 of the *Building Code*, and Chapter 23 of the *City Code* for the scope of work proposed.

Notes

Chapter 4 - Repairs

SECTION 401 GENERAL

[BS] 401.3 Flood hazard areas. ~~See Chapter 19 of the City Code. In flood hazard areas, repairs that constitute substantial improvement shall require that the building comply with Section 1612 of the International Building Code, or Section R322 of the International Residential Code, as applicable.~~

SECTION 405 STRUCTURAL

[BS] 405.2.6 Flood hazard areas. ~~See Chapter 19 of the City Code. In flood hazard areas, buildings that have sustained substantial damage shall be brought into compliance with Section 1612 of the International Building Code, or Section R322 of the International Residential Code, as applicable.~~

SECTION 408 PLUMBING

408.2 Water closet replacement. The maximum water consumption flow rates and quantities for all replaced water closets shall be ~~4.6~~ 1.28 gallons (~~64.85~~ L) per flushing cycle.

Exception: ~~Blowout design water closets [3.5 gallons (13 L) per flushing cycle].~~

Notes

Chapter 8 - Alterations - Level 2

SECTION 804 MEANS OF EGRESS

804.7 Dead-end corridors. Dead-end corridors in *any work* area shall not exceed ~~35~~ 20 feet (~~40670~~ 6096 mm). In Group I-2 occupancies, dead-end corridors shall not exceed 30 feet (9 144 mm).

Exceptions:

1. Where dead-end corridors of greater length are permitted by the *International Building Code*.
- ~~2. In other than Group A, I-2 and H occupancies, the maximum length of an existing dead-end corridor shall be 50 feet (15 240 mm) in buildings equipped throughout with an automatic fire alarm system installed in accordance with the *International Building Code*.~~
- ~~3.~~ 2. In other than Group A, I-2 and H occupancies, the maximum length of an existing dead-end corridor shall be ~~70~~ 50 feet (~~21356~~ 15240 mm) in buildings equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with the *International Building Code*.
- ~~4.~~ 3. In other than Group A, I-2 and H occupancies, the maximum length of an existing, newly constructed, or extended dead-end corridor shall not exceed 50 feet (15 240 mm) on floors equipped with an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with the *International Building Code*.

Notes

Chapter 8 - Alterations - Level 2

804.13 Stair construction. All required stairs shall have a minimum run of 9 inches (229 mm) and a maximum rise of 8 inches (203 mm) and shall have a minimum width of 30 inches (762 mm) exclusive of handrails. Every stairway shall have at least one handrail. A landing having a minimum 30-inch (762 mm) run in the direction of travel shall be provided at each point of access to the stairway.

Exception: Fire escapes as provided for in this section.

Exterior stairs shall be of noncombustible construction.

Exception: On buildings of Types III, IV and V construction, provided the exterior stairs are constructed of wood of not less than 2-inch (51 mm) nominal thickness.

Notes

Chapter 13 Performance Compliance not Adopted

- Chapter 13 uses a complex, project-specific performance methodology that is difficult to standardize and consistently verify through our normal plan review process.
- To avoid inconsistent application and excessive review effort, it was deliberately left unadopted, and instead, any use of a performance-based approach must go through the Alternate Method review process, where the proposal can be fully documented, evaluated on its own merits, and conditioned as needed to meet the intent of the IEBC.

Notes

Chapter 14 - Relocated Or Moved Buildings

SECTION 1401 GENERAL

1401.2 Conformance. ~~The building shall be safe for human occupancy as determined by the *International Fire Code* and the *International Property Maintenance Code*. Any repair, alteration, or change of occupancy undertaken within the moved structure shall comply with the requirements of this code applicable to the work being performed. Any field fabricated elements shall comply with the requirements of the *International Building Code* or the *International Residential Code* as applicable. Relocated or moved housing shall comply with Chapter 10, Article III and Chapter 33, Article VII of the *City Code*, and be brought into compliance with all applicable *Construction Code* requirements as for new construction for the designated occupancy within 150 calendar days after the building was moved onto the property. The issuance of any permit by the *jurisdiction* shall not be construed to extend the time to bring the building into compliance with the *Construction Code* beyond 150 calendar days after the building was moved onto the property.~~

Relocated or moved buildings and housing outside the scope of the *Houston Residential Code* shall comply with the *Building Code* for new construction.

Exception: Relocated or moved buildings complying with Chapter 10, Article VI, of the *City Code* and constructed under the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) Industrialized Housing and Buildings (IHB) Program.

Notes

Appendix D

APPENDIX D
BOARD OF
APPEALS



APPENDIX D
LIFE-SAFETY
REQUIREMENTS
FOR EXISTING
BUILDINGS

Notes

Contact Us & Follow Us



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Instagram
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YouTube
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Live Chat Available: Monday - Friday | 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM



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