

Building Codes in Effect for South Carolina

Every municipality and county in South Carolina must enforce the mandatory building codes referenced in [Section 6-9-50](#) of the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976 as Amended (SC Code), after they are reviewed and adopted by the Building Codes Council (Council). Municipalities and counties are restricted from writing or publishing any other building code, in whole or in part or adopting and enforcing building codes other than those referenced in Section 6-9-50 of the SC Code. Unless modified by the Council, all chapters (except the Administrative Chapter) of all codes must be enforced in their entirety. Under the provisions of SC Code 6-9-30, a municipality or county may be able to “opt out” of the Code Enforcement Program if it can qualify under the terms of that section.

Only the mandatory building codes listed below are adopted by the Council and enforced at the local level. Any code used to regulate the construction or alteration of buildings or structures, including their systems or components, not listed below are not valid and cannot be legally promulgated, adopted or enforced by a local jurisdiction.

On August 26, 2014 the Council updated the mandatory building codes to be used within South Carolina. The Council established the implementation date for local jurisdictions as July 1, 2016 for all codes. All local jurisdictions must enforce the mandatory codes, and may adopt and enforce the permissive codes.

Mandatory Building Codes adopted for current use in South Carolina and which must be enforced by all municipalities and counties, beginning July 1, 2016, include the:

- 2015 South Carolina or International Building Code with SC modifications;
- 2015 South Carolina or International Residential Code with SC modifications;
- 2015 South Carolina or International Fire Code with SC modifications;
- 2015 South Carolina or International Plumbing Code with SC modifications;
- 2015 South Carolina or International Mechanical Code with SC modifications;
- 2009 International Energy Conservation Code;
- 2015 South Carolina or International Fuel Gas Code with SC modifications; and,
- 2014 National Electrical Code.

The latest edition of ICC/ANSI A117.1, Accessible and Useable Buildings and Facilities, is adopted by the [Accessibility Act](#) and mandatory for use in all municipalities and counties within the state. Although other standards for building accessibility exist, the latest published edition of the ICC/ANSI A117.1 is the only accessibility document required by state law to be enforced by the local building officials. All plan reviews and inspections conducted by local Building Inspection Departments, therefore, will be based on ICC/ANSI A117.1. It is important to note, however, that other accessibility documents are also law and cannot be ignored. Legal action can be taken against a building owner, manager or any person involved in design or construction/renovation of a building or structure requiring accessibility, under any of the accessibility laws. Therefore, before construction or renovation of a building or structure that requires accessibility, all applicable accessibility laws should be considered.

Additional accessibility laws that must be considered and their enforcement entities include the: [Americans With Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) published and enforced by the US Department of Justice (DOJ); [Fair Housing Act Amendments](#) of 1988, published and enforced by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and, South Carolina [Fair Housing Law](#) published and enforced by the SC Human Affairs Commission.

The Building [Energy Efficiency Standards Act](#) is adopted by statute and mandatory for use in all jurisdictions within the state.

The codes are to be used in conjunction with the latest [code modifications](#) authorized by the Council and approved by the South Carolina Legislature. Only the modifications authorized and listed on this website are valid for use in the state. Building code modifications that have not received prior approval by the Council are invalid and cannot be adopted, employed or enforced by local jurisdictions.

As permitted by Section 6-9-60 of the SC Code, “permissive codes” may be used as needed by a local jurisdiction, but the codes must first be adopted by ordinance before enforcement can begin. The permissive codes are the latest editions of the International Property Maintenance Code; International Performance Code; and International Swimming Pool and Spa Code.

Adoption of the mandatory and permissive codes does not include the chapters, sections or provisions addressing administrative policies or procedures. Administrative policies and procedures are the sole responsibility of each local jurisdiction. If the governing body of a local jurisdiction desires to use the administrative provisions in one or more of the adopted building codes, it must first adopt the chapters or sections by ordinance. In lieu of adopting the administrative provisions contained in the adopted building codes, the governing body of a local jurisdiction may develop specific administrative policies and procedures for the operation of its Building Inspection Department. If administrative policies and procedures are developed at the local level, they must be adopted by ordinance before they can take effect.

Appendixes to the mandatory codes may not be used at the local level unless specifically adopted or authorized as a local modification, by the Building Codes Council. Currently, With the 2016 code series, Appendix H (Patio Covers) and Appendix J (Existing Buildings) of the International Residential Code and Appendix H (Signs) of the 2015 International Building Code are adopted for use statewide. Greenville County is authorized a local modification to use Appendix F in the 2012 International Residential Code (Radon Control Methods).

[Order copies](#) of the International Codes, the National Electrical Code or the ICC/ANSI A117.1 document.

Jurisdiction that are currently, legally opted out of the code enforcement program:

None.

Code Adoption History:

The following information is provided for research purposes and may used to verify the official dates for which local jurisdictions were or are required to enforce certain editions of the mandatory building codes.

The International Code Series was developed as a joint project by the Southern Building Code Congress, International, the International Conference of Building Officials and the Building Officials and Code Administrators, International (referred to as model code organizations) and replaced the Standard, National and Uniform Building Code Series. The 1997 Editions of the Standard, National and Uniform Codes (which were regional), and the 1995 Edition of the CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code (which was national) were the last to be published. The International Building Code Series replaced those documents and provided a single set of National Codes. Simultaneously, the three model code organizations merged and created the International Code Council. All codes training and Code Enforcement Officer Certification examinations for the State of South Carolina are now based on the International Code series.

Prior to June 13, 1997, local jurisdictions that desired to adopt building codes were permitted to do so by local ordinance. If a jurisdiction did adopt building codes, it was required to adopt only the codes authorized by the Building Codes Act. Once adopted, the jurisdiction was obligated to continue adoption of each new edition within one year after it was made available by the publisher. The implementation date for enforcement was established by the local jurisdiction.

Starting July 13, 1997, all local jurisdictions that did not legally “opt out” of the mandatory building code program were required to adopt building codes by local ordinance, after they were authorized by the Council. The Council was also required to establish the date of implementation for each of the adopted codes.

Starting July 2, 2003, the Council was charged with the responsibility for adopting all mandatory building codes and establishing the date of implementation for the local jurisdictions.

Starting with the 2006 code adoption cycle, the Council local jurisdictions no longer adopt appendices.

Building codes authorized or adopted by the Building Codes Council, and their corresponding implementation dates, starting with the current codes and going back to the 2000 International Code Series include the following.

Codes Adopted	Adoption Date	Implementation Date
2015 International Residential Code	August 26, 2014	July 1, 2016
2015 International Building Code	August 26, 2014	July 1, 2016
2015 International Fire Code	August 26, 2014	July 1, 2016
2015 International Plumbing Code	August 26, 2014	July 1, 2016
2015 International Mechanical Code	August 26, 2014	July 1, 2016
2015 International Fuel Gas Code	August 26, 2014	July 1, 2016
2009 International Energy Conservation Code ¹	April 2, 2012	January 1, 2013
2014 National Electrical Code ²	August 26, 2014	July 1, 2016
2012 International Residential Code	August 29, 2012	July 1, 2013
2012 International Building Code	August 29, 2012	July 1, 2013
2012 International Fire Code	August 29, 2012	July 1, 2013
2012 International Plumbing Code	August 29, 2012	July 1, 2013
2012 International Mechanical Code	August 29, 2012	July 1, 2013
2012 International Fuel Gas Code	August 29, 2012	July 1, 2013
2009 International Energy Conservation Code ¹	April 2, 2012	January 1, 2013
2011 National Electrical Code ²	August 29, 2012	July 1, 2013
2009 International Residential Code	March 22, 2010	Not Implemented ³
2009 International Building Code	March 22, 2010	Not Implemented ³
2009 International Fire Code	March 22, 2010	Not Implemented ³
2009 International Plumbing Code	March 22, 2010	Not Implemented ³
2009 International Mechanical Code	March 22, 2010	Not Implemented ³
2009 International Fuel Gas Code	March 22, 2010	Not Implemented ³
2008 National Electrical Code	March 30, 2009	July 1, 2009
2006 International Residential Code ⁴	November 28, 2007	July 1, 2009
2006 International Building Code	November 28, 2007	July 1, 2008
2006 International Fire Code	November 28, 2007	July 1, 2008
2006 International Plumbing Code	November 28, 2007	July 1, 2008
2006 International Mechanical Code	November 28, 2007	July 1, 2008
2006 International Fuel Gas Code	November 28, 2007	July 1, 2008
2006 International Energy Conservation Code ¹	November 28, 2007	July 1, 2008
2005 National Electrical Code	February 22, 2006	July 1, 2007
2003 International Residential Code	May 26, 2004	July 1, 2005
2003 International Fuel Gas Code	May 26, 2004	July 1, 2005
2003 International Building Code	May 26, 2004	January 1, 2005
2003 International Fire Code	May 26, 2004	January 1, 2005
2003 International Plumbing Code	May 26, 2004	January 1, 2005
2003 International Mechanical Code	May 26, 2004	January 1, 2005
2003 International Energy Conservation Code	May 26, 2004	January 1, 2005
2002 National Electrical Code	May 22, 2002	July 1, 2002
2000 International Residential Code	May 24, 2000	July 1, 2002
2000 International Energy Conservation Code	May 24, 2000	July 1, 2001
2000 International Building Code	May 24, 2000	July 1, 2001
2000 International Fire Code	May 24, 2000	July 1, 2001
2000 International Plumbing Code	May 24, 2000	July 1, 2001
2000 International Mechanical Code	May 24, 2000	July 1, 2001
2000 International Fuel Gas Code	May 24, 2000	July 1, 2001

Footnotes:

¹. The 2006 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) was adopted by the SC Legislature as the minimum standard for compliance with the State Energy Standard, thus removing it from the normal adoption process. The legislature updated the IECC to the 2009 Edition during the 2012 legislative session (Act 143) with an effective date of January 1, 2013. Future updated versions must also be adopted by statutory amendment.

². The Building Codes Council included the adoption of the National Electrical Code with the International Code Series, starting with the 2012 Code Adoption Cycle.

³. The 2009 International Code Series was formally adopted by the Building Codes Council May 10, 2010. Implementation did not occur, however, due to a request to remove the regulations from the administrative procedures process by the South Carolina House Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee.

⁴. The implementation date for the International Residential Code was delayed until July 1, 2009 by 2008/2009 budget proviso 182 (65.10).

History of the SC Energy Standards

The SC Energy Standards started as House Bill 2863 (Act 156) and became effective 7/6/79. The standards were adopted as state law and were applicable and mandatory in every municipality and county in South Carolina.

In 1979, the state standard referenced “the current addition of Appendix J Energy Conservation’ of the 1979 edition of the Standard Building Code, which in turn referenced the “Code for Energy Conservation in New Buildings” (published jointly by the Southern Building Code Congress, International Conference of Building Officials and Building Officials, Code Administrators International and National Conference of States for Building Codes and Standards) and “ASHRAE Standard 90” as methods of compliance with state law.

In 1982, the state standard automatically updated to reference Appendix J of the 1982 edition of the Standard Building Code, which referenced the “Code for Energy Conservation in New Buildings” and “ASHRAE Standards 90A and 90B” as methods of compliance.

In 1985, the state standard automatically updated to reference Appendix J of the 1985 edition of the Standard Building Code, which referenced the “CABO Model Energy Code” (published by the Council of American Building Officials) and “ASHRAE Standards 90A and 90B” as methods of compliance.

In 1988, the state standard automatically updated to reference Appendix J of the 1988 edition of the Standard Building Code, which referenced the “CABO Model Energy Code” and “ASHRAE Standards 90A and 90B” as methods of compliance.

In the 1991 edition of the Standard Building Code, the Energy Conservation provisions were moved from Appendix J to Appendix E. The state standard, however, continued to reference Appendix J of the Standard Building Code. Appendix E referenced the “CABO Model Energy Code” and “ASHRAE Standards 90.1” as methods of compliance.

In the 1994 edition of the Standard Building Code, the Energy Conservation provisions remained in Appendix E. The state standard continued to reference Appendix J of the Standard Building Code. Appendix E referenced the “CABO Model Energy Code” and “ASHRAE Standards 90.1” as methods of compliance.

In the 1997 edition of the Standard Building Code, the Energy Conservation provisions remained in Appendix E. The state standard continued to reference Appendix J of the Standard Building Code. Appendix E referenced the “CABO Model Energy Code” and “ASHRAE Standards 90.1” as methods of compliance.

On July 1, 2001 the state implemented the 2000 edition of the International Building Code and on July 1, 2002; the state implemented the 2000 edition of the International Residential Code. The state standard, however, continued to reference Appendix J of the Standard Building Code.

In 2005, the state implemented the 2003 editions of the International Building and Residential Codes. The state standard continued to reference Appendix J of the Standard Building Code.

In 2008 the state implemented the 2006 edition of the International Building Code and in 2009; the state implemented the 2006 edition of the International Residential Code. The state standard, however, continued to reference Appendix J of the Standard Building Code.

On July 1, 2009, by Act 46 (H3550) The SC Energy Standard was updated to the 2006 International Energy Conservation Code for all commercial and residential buildings.

On April 2, 2012, by Act 143 (H4639) The SC Energy Standard was updated to the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code for all commercial and residential buildings.