

### **What is “The Building Code”?**

In general, a building code is a written agreement on the *minimum* standards for the design and construction of a home, office building, school, shopping mall, factory, hospital... anything in the built environment. Due to the complexity of the different systems going into the design of a building, “the building code” is actually a set of multiple books that cover commercial, residential, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, green building, and the fire codes.

### **Who writes the building code books?**

The building code is written by the International Code Council (ICC), a non-profit organization dedicated to the development of a single comprehensive construction standard. The International Code Council members are building officials and construction industry representatives from across the country. All meetings are open to the public. Any interested individual or group may submit a code change proposal and participate in the proceedings, but only eligible voting members can determine the final action. New editions of the code are published every 3 years. [Find out more about ICC.](#)

### **Why is this building code enforced in Scottsdale?**

On December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Scottsdale City Council passed and adopted the following building codes. These ordinances went into effect on January 7, 2013:

- International Fire Code (IFC), Ordinance 4045
- International Building Code (IBC), Ordinance 4059  
Includes the following codes by reference: 2012 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), the 2012 International Fuel Gas Code (IFGC), the 2012 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC), the 2012 International Existing Building Code (IEBC), and 2012 ICC 300.
- International Residential Code (IRC), Ordinance 4060
- International Plumbing Code (IPC), Ordinance 4061
- International Mechanical Code (IMC), Ordinance 4062
- International Green Construction Code (IgCC), Ordinance 4063
- 2011 National Electrical Code (NEC), Ordinance 4064

City Council adopted our first building codes in February and March 1952, less than one year after the City was incorporated (June 21, 1951). The City has continuously maintained building codes since that time.

### **Why do we need a building code?**

To protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. For example, if you are in a movie theatre and the fire alarm sounds – what would you do? City Building and Fire officials hope that you would immediately look for the exit signs and follow them to a safe place until you are given the all-clear. In this instance, the standards of the Building and Fire Code ensured that:

- The fire was quickly detected.
- Systems to stop or prevent the fire from spreading (such as sprinklers) were activated
- The fire department was notified.
- Occupants were told to exit by a visible and/or audible notification system.
- Occupants had a safe, well-defined path to a place out of harm’s way.

The goal of the building codes is to provide safe, sustainable structures and to protect and preserve the life and safety of people in our community during a crisis.

### **Why should I get a building permit?**

Because we are on your side. We are here to ensure that properties within the City have been built and remodeled using recognized construction standards. A community that values maintaining minimum standards of quality benefits everyone. In order to get a building permit, you must present a plan for your intended work and submit it to staff for review. Building Plan Review staff will review your plan to make sure it meets the intent of the code. City Building Inspectors will verify that work done in the field also meets code standards.

### **Will I have to bring my whole structure up to the current building code?**

It depends on the planned scope of work . The scope of work is determined by the percent of work on the valuation of the structure as determined by published data.

- If the scope of work is greater than 25% of the value of the structure, you will be required to install sprinklers if it is not already sprinkled. We have forms (<http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/bldgresources/forms#f>) for residential and commercial construction to determine if fire sprinklers are needed.
- In commercial construction, if the scope of work is less than 50%, no code upgrades are required. All new construction will be required to meet current code
- In commercial construction, if your scope of work exceeds 50%, you will be required to update the entire structure.
- In residential construction, it shall be at the discretion of the building official.

### **Important Dates in Scottsdale Building History**

- July 6, 1951 -- First Town Council meeting. Adoption of a building code was one of the duties listed for the new Town Council. Scottsdale was incorporated on June 21, 1951 -- just 15 days prior to this meeting.
- February 13, 1952 – Council passes Ordinance No.8 providing for adoption of a building code and Ordinance No.9 providing for the adoption of a plumbing code. The ordinances do not specifically state which building and plumbing code is to be adopted. Minutes from previous Council meetings indicate that Council intended to adopt the Uniform Building Code and the Uniform Plumbing Code (no year given).
- March 3, 1952 – Council passed Ordinance No. 10 providing for the adoption of an electrical code. Again, the ordinance does not specifically state the electrical code to be adopted. Meeting minutes indicate that Council discussed amending the 1950 City of Phoenix Electrical Code. Council also appointed Scottsdale’s first building official, Hurley Pruitt, to be paid \$50 per month.
- November 12, 1958 – Council passes Ordinance No. 54 adopting the 1955 Uniform Mechanical Code
- November 29, 1960 – Council passes Ordinance No. 99 adopting the 1960 Fire Protection Code
- July 20, 1987– Council passes City Ordinance No. 1974 requiring sprinklers in single family residences. Ordinance went into effect November 18, 1987.
- July 5, 2011 – Council adopts the International Green Construction Code, Version 2.0.