

Division of Building Standards and Codes

We have witnessed significant progress over the past hundred years or more in both the quantity and quality of construction regulations and fire prevention practices. As a result, buildings constructed with today's codes are safer, both structurally and from a fire protection point of view.

Since the inception of the statewide code in 1984, the State of New York has gained national prominence in the development, administration and enforcement of building, fire prevention and energy codes.

Background

In 1981, the New York State Legislature enacted a new law directing the development and implementation of an integrated building and fire code for the state. One of the primary reasons for establishing an integrated code was to ensure that all communities in the state had effective standards in place to protect against perils posed by fire or inadequate building construction. Prior to the enactment of this law, the decision of whether to enforce a building or fire prevention codes was left to the discretion of each local government. This law also set the process by which the code would be developed, maintained, administered and enforced. (Exec. Law, Sections 370-383).

The Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (Uniform Code) took effect on January 1, 1984, prescribing statewide minimum standards for building construction and fire prevention. The Uniform Code is applicable in all municipalities of the state except the City of New York, which is permitted to retain its own code.

On January 1, 2003, New York State updated the Uniform Code and Energy Code with several sub-units, based upon national model codes developed by the International Code Council (ICC). The International Codes, which are widely used throughout the country, provide a greater level of consistency and allow us to keep pace with emerging technology in today's fast paced construction industry. The latest update to the Uniform Code was effective December 28, 2010 and is based on the 2006 International Codes with New York State amendments. The Energy Code, effective December 28, 2010, is based on the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code with New York State amendments.

Local governments (cities, towns, villages and counties) are responsible for enforcing the Uniform Code and Energy Code (Exec. Law Section 381). Changes to the Uniform Code and Energy Code, such as those enacted in 2010, do not have to be adopted by a municipality. They fall under the statewide mandate that has been in effect since 1984.