



2012

INTERNATIONAL  
PROPERTY  
MAINTENANCE  
CODE®

*A Member of the International Code Family®*

IPMC®

IPMC

2012 International Property Maintenance Code®

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# PREFACE

## Introduction

Internationally, code officials recognize the need for a modern, up-to-date property maintenance code governing the maintenance of existing buildings. The *International Property Maintenance Code*®, in this 2012 edition, is designed to meet this need through model code regulations that contain clear and specific property maintenance requirements with required property improvement provisions.

This 2012 edition is fully compatible with all of the *International Codes*® (I-Codes®) published by the International Code Council (ICC)®, including the *International Building Code*®, *International Energy Conservation Code*®, *International Existing Building Code*®, *International Fire Code*®, *International Fuel Gas Code*®, *International Green Construction Code*™ (to be available March 2012), *International Mechanical Code*®, *ICC Performance Code*®, *International Plumbing Code*®, *International Private Sewage Disposal Code*®, *International Residential Code*®, *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code*™ (to be available March 2012), *International Wildland-Urban Interface Code*® and *International Zoning Code*®.

The *International Property Maintenance Code* provisions provide many benefits, among which is the model code development process that offers an international forum for code officials and other interested parties to discuss performance and prescriptive code requirements. This forum provides an excellent arena to debate proposed revisions. This model code also encourages international consistency in the application of provisions.

## Development

The first edition of the *International Property Maintenance Code* (1998) was the culmination of an effort initiated in 1996 by a code development committee appointed by ICC and consisting of representatives of the three statutory members of the International Code Council at that time, including: Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc. (BOCA), International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO) and Southern Building Code Congress International (SBCCI). The committee drafted a comprehensive set of regulations for existing buildings that was consistent with the existing model property maintenance codes at the time. This 2012 edition presents the code as originally issued, with changes reflected through the previous 2006 editions and further changes developed through the ICC Code Development Process through 2010. A new edition of the code is promulgated every three years.

This code is founded on principles intended to establish provisions consistent with the scope of a property maintenance code that adequately protects public health, safety and welfare; provisions that do not unnecessarily increase construction costs; provisions that do not restrict the use of new materials, products or methods of construction; and provisions that do not give preferential treatment to particular types or classes of materials, products or methods of construction.

## Adoption

The *International Property Maintenance Code* is available for adoption and use by jurisdictions internationally. Its use within a governmental jurisdiction is intended to be accomplished through adoption by reference in accordance with proceedings established in the jurisdiction's laws. At the time of adoption, jurisdictions should insert the appropriate information in provisions requiring specific local information, such as the name of the adopting jurisdiction. These locations are shown in bracketed words in small capital letters in the code and in the sample ordinance. The sample adoption ordinance on page xiii addresses several key elements of a code adoption ordinance, including the information required for insertion into the code text.

## Maintenance

The *International Property Maintenance Code* is kept up to date through the review of proposed changes submitted by code enforcing officials, industry representatives, design professionals and other interested parties. Proposed changes are carefully considered through an open code development process in which all interested and affected parties may participate.

The contents of this work are subject to change both through the Code Development Cycles and the governmental body that enacts the code into law. For more information regarding the code development process, contact the Codes and Standards Development Department of the International Code Council.

While the development procedure of the *International Property Maintenance Code* ensures the highest degree of care, ICC, its membership and those participating in the development of this code do not accept any liability resulting from compliance or noncompliance with the provisions because ICC does not have the power or authority to police or enforce compliance with the contents of this code. Only the governmental body that enacts the code into law has such authority.

## Code Development Committee Responsibilities (Letter Designations in Front of Section Numbers)

In each code development cycle, proposed changes to this code are considered at the Code Development Hearings by the International Property Maintenance/Zoning Code Development Committee, whose action constitutes a recommendation to the voting membership for final action on the proposed changes. Proposed changes to a code section having a number beginning with a letter in brackets are considered by a different code development committee. For example, proposed changes to code sections that have the letter [F] in front of them (e.g., [F] 704.1) are considered by the International Fire Code Development Committee at the Code Development Hearings.

The content of sections in this code that begin with a letter designation is maintained by another code development committee in accordance with the following:

- [A] = Administrative Code Development Committee;
- [F] = International Fire Code Development Committee;
- [P] = International Plumbing Code Development Committee; and
- [B] = International Building Code Development Committee (IBC—Fire Safety, General, Means of Egress or Structural);

Note that, for the development of the 2015 edition of the I-Codes, there will be two groups of code development committees and they will meet in separate years. The groupings are as follows:

<b>Group A Codes (Heard in 2012, Code Change Proposals Deadline: January 3, 2012)</b>	<b>Group B Codes (Heard in 2013, Code Change Proposals Deadline: January 3, 2013)</b>
International Building Code	Administrative Provisions (Chapter 1 all codes except IRC and ICC PC, administrative updates to currently referenced standards, and designated definitions)
International Fuel Gas Code	International Energy Conservation Code
International Mechanical Code	International Existing Building Code
International Plumbing Code	International Fire Code
International Private Sewage Disposal Code	International Green Construction Code
	ICC Performance Code
	International Property Maintenance Code
	International Residential Code
	International Swimming Pool and Spa Code
	International Wildland-Urban Interface Code
	International Zoning Code

Code change proposals submitted for code sections that have a letter designation in front of them will be heard by the respective committee responsible for such code sections. Because different committees will meet in different years, it is possible that some proposals for this code will be heard by a committee in a different year than the year in which the primary committee for this code meets.

For instance, Section 502.1 is designated as the responsibility of the International Plumbing Code Development Committee, along with most of the provisions in Chapter 5. This committee will meet in 2012 to consider all code change proposals to the *International Plumbing Code* and any portions of other codes that it is responsible for, including Section 502.1 and most of the provisions of Chapter 5 (designated with [P] in front of those sections.) Therefore, any proposals to Section 502.1 in Chapter 5 will be needed to be submitted by January 3, 2012, for consideration in 2012 by the International Plumbing Code Committee.

Note that every section of Chapter 1 of this code is designated as the responsibility of the Administrative Code Development Committee, and that committee is part of the Group B portion of the hearings. This committee will hold its code development hearing in 2013 to consider all code change proposals for Chapter 1 of this code and proposals for Chapter 1 of all I-Codes except the *International Residential Code* and *ICC Performance Code*. Therefore, any proposals received for Chapter 1 of this code will be assigned to the Administrative Code Development Committee for consideration in 2013.

It is very important that anyone submitting code change proposals understand which code development committee is responsible for the section of the code that is the subject of the code change proposal. For further information on the code development committee responsibilities, please visit the ICC web site at [www.iccsafe.org/scoping](http://www.iccsafe.org/scoping).

## Marginal Markings

Solid vertical lines in the margins within the body of the code indicate a technical change from the requirements of the previous edition. Deletion indicators in the form of an arrow ( ➡ ) are provided in the margin where an entire section, paragraph, exception or table has been deleted or an item in a list of items or a table has been deleted.

## **Italicized Terms**

Selected terms set forth in Chapter 2, Definitions, are italicized where they appear in code text. Such terms are not italicized where the definition set forth in Chapter 2 does not impart the intended meaning in the use of the term. The terms selected have definitions which the user should read carefully to facilitate better understanding of the code.

# EFFECTIVE USE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE

The *International Property Maintenance Code* (IPMC) is a model code that regulates the minimum maintenance requirements for existing buildings.

The IPMC is a maintenance document intended to establish minimum maintenance standards for basic equipment, light, ventilation, heating, sanitation and fire safety. Responsibility is fixed among owners, operators and occupants for code compliance. The IPMC provides for the regulation and safe use of existing structures in the interest of the social and economic welfare of the community.

## Arrangement and Format of the 2009 IPMC

Before applying the requirements of the IPMC it is beneficial to understand its arrangement and format. The IPMC, like other codes published by ICC, is arranged and organized to follow sequential steps that generally occur during an inspection. The IPMC is divided into eight different parts:

Chapters	Subjects
1	Administration
2	Definitions
3	General Requirements
4	Light, Ventilation and Occupancy Limitations
5	Plumbing Facilities and Fixture Requirements
6	Mechanical and Electrical Requirements
7	Fire Safety Requirements
8	Referenced Standards

The following is a chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the scope and intent of the provisions of the *International Property Maintenance Code*:

**Chapter 1 Scope and Administration.** This chapter contains provisions for the application, enforcement and administration of subsequent requirements of the code. In addition to establishing the scope of the code, Chapter 1 identifies which buildings and structures come under its purview. Chapter 1 is largely concerned with maintaining “due process of law” in enforcing the property maintenance criteria contained in the body of the code. Only through careful observation of the administrative provisions can the building official reasonably expect to demonstrate that “equal protection under the law” has been provided.

**Chapter 2 Definitions.** All terms that are defined in the code are listed alphabetically in Chapter 2. While a defined term may be used in one chapter or another, the meaning provided in Chapter 2 is applicable throughout the code.

Where understanding of a term’s definition is especially key to or necessary for understanding of a particular code provision, the term is shown in italics wherever it appears in the code. This is true only for those terms that have a meaning that is unique to the code. In other words, the generally understood meaning of a term or phrase might not be sufficient or consistent with the meaning prescribed by the code; therefore, it is essential that the code-defined meaning be known.

Guidance regarding tense, gender and plurality of defined terms as well as guidance regarding terms not defined in this code is provided.

**Chapter 3 General Requirements.** Chapter 3, “General Requirements,” is broad in scope. It includes a variety of requirements for the exterior property areas as well as the interior and exterior elements of the structure. This chapter provides requirements that are intended to maintain a minimum level of safety and sanitation for both the general public and the occupants of a structure, and to maintain a building’s structural and weather-resistance performance. Chapter 3 provides specific criteria for regulating the installation and maintenance of specific building components; maintenance requirements for vacant structures and land; requirements regulating the safety, sanitation and appearance of the interior and exterior of structures and all exterior property areas; accessory structures; vehicle storage regulations and establishes who is responsible for complying with the chapter’s provisions. This chapter also contains the requirements for swimming pools, spas and hot tubs and the requirements for protective barriers and gates in these barriers. Chapter 3 establishes the responsible parties for exterminating insects and rodents, and maintaining sanitary conditions in all types of occupancies.

**Chapter 4 Light, Ventilation and Occupancy Limitations.** The purpose of Chapter 4 is to set forth these requirements in the code and to establish the minimum environment for occupiable and habitable buildings, by establishing the minimum criteria for light and ventilation and identifies occupancy limitations including minimum room width and area, minimum ceiling height and restrictions to prevent overcrowding. This chapter also provides for alternative arrangements of windows and other devices to comply with the requirements for light and ventilation and prohibits certain room arrangements and occupancy uses.

**Chapter 5 Plumbing Facilities and Fixture Requirements.** Chapter 5 establishes the minimum criteria for the installation, maintenance and location of plumbing systems and facilities, including the water supply system, water heating appliances, sewage disposal system and related plumbing fixtures.

Sanitary and clean conditions in occupied buildings are dependent upon certain basic plumbing principles, including providing potable water to a building, providing the basic fixtures to effectively utilize that water and properly removing waste from the building. Chapter 5 establishes the minimum criteria to verify that these principles are maintained throughout the life of a building.

**Chapter 6 Mechanical and Electrical Requirements.** The purpose of Chapter 6 is to establish minimum performance requirements for heating, electrical and mechanical facilities and to establish minimum standards for the safety of these facilities.

This chapter establishes minimum criteria for the installation and maintenance of the following: heating and air-conditioning equipment, appliances and their supporting systems; water-heating equipment, appliances and systems; cooking equipment and appliances; ventilation and exhaust equipment; gas and liquid fuel distribution piping and components; fireplaces and solid fuel-burning appliances; chimneys and vents; electrical services; lighting fixtures; electrical receptacle outlets; electrical distribution system equipment, devices and wiring; and elevators, escalators and dumb-waiters.

**Chapter 7 Fire Safety Requirements.** The purpose of Chapter 7 is to address those fire hazards that arise as the result of a building’s occupancy. It also provides minimum requirements for fire safety issues that are most likely to arise in older buildings.

This chapter contains requirements for means of egress in existing buildings, including path of travel, required egress width, means of egress doors and emergency escape openings.

Chapter 7 establishes the minimum requirements for fire safety facilities and fire protection systems, as these are essential fire safety systems.

**Chapter 8 Referenced Standards.** The code contains numerous references to standards that are used to regulate materials and methods of construction. Chapter 8 contains a comprehensive list of all standards that are referenced in the code. The standards are part of the code to the extent of the reference to the standard. Compliance with the referenced standard is necessary for compliance with this code. By providing specifically adopted standards, the construction and installation requirements necessary for compliance with the code can be readily determined. The basis for code compliance is, therefore, established and available on an equal basis to the code official, contractor, designer and owner.

Chapter 8 is organized in a manner that makes it easy to locate specific standards. It lists all of the referenced standards, alphabetically, by acronym of the promulgating agency of the standard. Each agency's standards are then listed in either alphabetical or numeric order based upon the standard identification. The list also contains the title of the standard; the edition (date) of the standard referenced; any addenda included as part of the ICC adoption; and the section or sections of this code that reference the standard.



# LEGISLATION

The *International Codes* are designed and promulgated to be adopted by reference by legislative action. Jurisdictions wishing to adopt the 2012 *International Property Maintenance Code* as an enforceable regulation governing existing structures and premises should ensure that certain factual information is included in the adopting legislation at the time adoption is being considered by the appropriate governmental body. The following sample adoption legislation addresses several key elements, including the information required for insertion into the code text.

## SAMPLE LEGISLATION FOR ADOPTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A[N] [ORDINANCE/STATUTE/REGULATION] of the [JURISDICTION] adopting the 2012 edition of the *International Property Maintenance Code*, regulating and governing the conditions and maintenance of all property, buildings and structures; by providing the standards for supplied utilities and facilities and other physical things and conditions essential to ensure that structures are safe, sanitary and fit for occupation and use; and the condemnation of buildings and structures unfit for human occupancy and use, and the demolition of such existing structures in the [JURISDICTION]; providing for the issuance of permits and collection of fees therefor; repealing [ORDINANCE/STATUTE/REGULATION] No. \_\_\_\_\_ of the [JURISDICTION] and all other ordinances or parts of laws in conflict therewith.

The [GOVERNING BODY] of the [JURISDICTION] does ordain as follows:

**Section 1.** That a certain document, three (3) copies of which are on file in the office of the [TITLE OF JURISDICTION'S KEEPER OF RECORDS] of [NAME OF JURISDICTION], being marked and designated as the *International Property Maintenance Code*, 2012 edition, as published by the International Code Council, be and is hereby adopted as the Property Maintenance Code of the [JURISDICTION], in the State of [STATE NAME] for regulating and governing the conditions and maintenance of all property, buildings and structures; by providing the standards for supplied utilities and facilities and other physical things and conditions essential to ensure that structures are safe, sanitary and fit for occupation and use; and the condemnation of buildings and structures unfit for human occupancy and use, and the demolition of such existing structures as herein provided; providing for the issuance of permits and collection of fees therefor; and each and all of the regulations, provisions, penalties, conditions and terms of said Property Maintenance Code on file in the office of the [JURISDICTION] are hereby referred to, adopted, and made a part hereof, as if fully set out in this legislation, with the additions, insertions, deletions and changes, if any, prescribed in Section 2 of this ordinance.

**Section 2.** The following sections are hereby revised:

Section 101.1. Insert: [NAME OF JURISDICTION]

Section 103.5. Insert: [APPROPRIATE SCHEDULE]

Section 112.4. Insert: [DOLLAR AMOUNT IN TWO LOCATIONS]

Section 302.4. Insert: [HEIGHT IN INCHES]

Section 304.14. Insert: [DATES IN TWO LOCATIONS]

Section 602.3. Insert: [DATES IN TWO LOCATIONS]

Section 602.4. Insert: [DATES IN TWO LOCATIONS]

**Section 3.** That [ORDINANCE/STATUTE/REGULATION] No. \_\_\_\_\_ of [JURISDICTION] entitled [FILL IN HERE THE COMPLETE TITLE OF THE LEGISLATION OR LAWS IN EFFECT AT THE PRESENT TIME SO THAT THEY WILL BE REPEALED BY DEFINITE MENTION] and all other ordinances or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**Section 4.** That if any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this legislation is, for any reason, held to be unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The [GOVERNING BODY] hereby declares that it would have passed this law, and each section, subsection, clause or phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses and phrases be declared unconstitutional.

**Section 5.** That nothing in this legislation or in the Property Maintenance Code hereby adopted shall be construed to affect any suit or proceeding impending in any court, or any rights acquired, or liability incurred, or any cause or causes of action acquired

or existing, under any act or ordinance hereby repealed as cited in Section 3 of this law; nor shall any just or legal right or remedy of any character be lost, impaired or affected by this legislation.

**Section 6.** That the [JURISDICTION'S KEEPER OF RECORDS] is hereby ordered and directed to cause this legislation to be published. (An additional provision may be required to direct the number of times the legislation is to be published and to specify that it is to be in a newspaper in general circulation. Posting may also be required.)

**Section 7.** That this law and the rules, regulations, provisions, requirements, orders and matters established and adopted hereby shall take effect and be in full force and effect [TIME PERIOD] from and after the date of its final passage and adoption.

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# CHAPTER 1

## SCOPE AND ADMINISTRATION

### PART 1 — SCOPE AND APPLICATION

#### SECTION 101 GENERAL

[A] **101.1 Title.** These regulations shall be known as the *International Property Maintenance Code* of [NAME OF JURISDICTION], hereinafter referred to as “this code.”

[A] **101.2 Scope.** The provisions of this code shall apply to all existing residential and nonresidential structures and all existing *premises* and constitute minimum requirements and standards for *premises*, structures, equipment and facilities for light, *ventilation*, space, heating, sanitation, protection from the elements, life safety, safety from fire and other hazards, and for safe and sanitary maintenance; the responsibility of *owners*, *operators* and *occupants*; the *occupancy* of existing structures and *premises*, and for administration, enforcement and penalties.

[A] **101.3 Intent.** This code shall be construed to secure its expressed intent, which is to ensure public health, safety and welfare insofar as they are affected by the continued *occupancy* and maintenance of structures and *premises*. Existing structures and *premises* that do not comply with these provisions shall be altered or repaired to provide a minimum level of health and safety as required herein.

[A] **101.4 Severability.** If a section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this code is, for any reason, held to be unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this code.

#### SECTION 102 APPLICABILITY

[A] **102.1 General.** Where there is a conflict between a general requirement and a specific requirement, the specific requirement shall govern. Where differences occur between provisions of this code and the referenced standards, the provisions of this code shall apply. Where, in a specific case, different sections of this code specify different requirements, the most restrictive shall govern.

[A] **102.2 Maintenance.** Equipment, systems, devices and safeguards required by this code or a previous regulation or code under which the structure or *premises* was constructed, altered or repaired shall be maintained in good working order. No *owner*, *operator* or *occupant* shall cause any service, facility, equipment or utility which is required under this section to be removed from or shut off from or discontinued for any occupied dwelling, except for such temporary interruption as necessary while repairs or alterations are in progress. The requirements of this code are not intended to provide the basis for removal or abrogation of fire protection and safety systems and devices in existing structures. Except as other-

wise specified herein, the *owner* or the *owner's* designated agent shall be responsible for the maintenance of buildings, structures and *premises*.

[A] **102.3 Application of other codes.** Repairs, additions or alterations to a structure, or changes of *occupancy*, shall be done in accordance with the procedures and provisions of the *International Building Code*, *International Energy Conservation Code*, *International Fire Code*, *International Fuel Gas Code*, *International Mechanical Code*, *International Residential Code*, *International Plumbing Code* and NFPA 70. Nothing in this code shall be construed to cancel, modify or set aside any provision of the *International Zoning Code*.

[A] **102.4 Existing remedies.** The provisions in this code shall not be construed to abolish or impair existing remedies of the jurisdiction or its officers or agencies relating to the removal or demolition of any structure which is dangerous, unsafe and insanitary.

[A] **102.5 Workmanship.** Repairs, maintenance work, alterations or installations which are caused directly or indirectly by the enforcement of this code shall be executed and installed in a *workmanlike* manner and installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

[A] **102.6 Historic buildings.** The provisions of this code shall not be mandatory for existing buildings or structures designated as historic buildings when such buildings or structures are judged by the *code official* to be safe and in the public interest of health, safety and welfare.

[A] **102.7 Referenced codes and standards.** The codes and standards referenced in this code shall be those that are listed in Chapter 8 and considered part of the requirements of this code to the prescribed extent of each such reference and as further regulated in Sections 102.7.1 and 102.7.2.

**Exception:** Where enforcement of a code provision would violate the conditions of the listing of the equipment or appliance, the conditions of the listing shall apply.

[A] **102.7.1 Conflicts.** Where conflicts occur between provisions of this code and the referenced standards, the provisions of this code shall apply.

[A] **102.7.2 Provisions in referenced codes and standards.** Where the extent of the reference to a referenced code or standard includes subject matter that is within the scope of this code, the provisions of this code, as applicable, shall take precedence over the provisions in the referenced code or standard.

[A] **102.8 Requirements not covered by code.** Requirements necessary for the strength, stability or proper operation of an existing fixture, structure or equipment, or for the public safety, health and general welfare, not specifically covered by this code, shall be determined by the *code official*.

[A] **102.9 Application of references.** References to chapter or section numbers, or to provisions not specifically identi-