

Building Codes

What is a "Code"?

A Code is a collection of requirements which regulate specific practices. A Building Code is a collection of regulations, such as exit sign and smoke detector requirements, which pertain to specific subjects such as designing, constructing or remodelling buildings.

The Purpose of Codes

No matter what the specific subject may be - construction, property maintenance, fire prevention, or plumbing - all codes have the same purpose: to protect the health, safety and welfare of the building occupants.

How Do Codes Help You?

Codes protect the public's health, safety & welfare. We all need protection from tragedy due to fire, structural collapse and general deterioration of the structures that surround us; our homes, schools, stores and manufacturing facilities. Building codes provide protection by reducing potential hazards to building occupants.

Codes keep construction costs down. Codes provide uniformity in the construction industry. This uniformity permits builders and material manufacturers to do business on a larger scale - provincially, regionally or nationally - than if construction was unregulated. Larger scale allows cost savings which are ultimately passed on to the consumer.

Codes provide consistent standards in construction. Codes establish predictable and consistent minimum standards which are applied to the quality and durability of construction and construction materials.

Codes contribute to the well-being of a community. The preservation of life and safety and the maintenance of property values over time are a direct result of the application and enforcement of the codes related to building.

The Use of Codes

Codes provide standards for the design and construction of homes and businesses. Codes are used by architects, engineers, contractors, builders and materials manufacturers to ensure safety, economy and consistency of construction. Homeowners, landlords and business owners, have a substantial investment which can be seriously jeopardized through code violations. Plans review and approval of building plans are a part of the building permit process. Follow up inspections made during construction verify that building code regulations have been followed.

Who Administers the Building Code?

Provincial Regulation: The Province of Alberta is responsible for the development of cost effective building regulations which include the Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act and the Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Regulations. Each municipality is responsible for the enforcement of The Act and regulations in the area which it has jurisdiction.

Permit Fees: Building permits are on a fee-for-service basis. Permit fees have been established to compensate in part for the cost of building plan review and approval as well as for building inspection. Generally, fees account for less than one per cent of the overall costs of a building project. Public protection is thus obtained in a cost-effective manner with the entire process, from plan review to field inspection, carried out by professionals.