

# NOTICE

## New Alberta Building, Fire and Energy Efficiency Codes

### New Codes Coming into Effect on April 1, 2019

The 2019 editions of the Alberta Building Code and Alberta Fire Code based on the 2015 editions of the National Building Code and National Fire Code were adopted in February 2019 by provincial regulation. Also adopted by regulation is the 2017 edition of the National Energy Code for Buildings (NECB).

The new codes come into effect on April 1, 2019 and there is a transition period to facilitate transition to the new codes from the previous codes. In support of greater harmonization to the national codes, both the Alberta building and fire codes have also been renamed.

The Building Code Regulation adopts two codes:

- **National Building Code – 2019 Alberta Edition** - This code provides the minimum safety standards for the design and construction of new buildings and energy efficiency in construction for new housing and small buildings.
- **National Energy Code for Buildings – 2017 Edition** - This code provides the minimum requirements for energy efficiency in construction for new buildings other than housing and small buildings.

The Fire Code Regulation adopts:

- **National Fire Code – 2019 Alberta Edition** - This code provides minimum fire safety requirements for buildings, structures and areas where hazardous materials are used, and addresses fire protection and fire prevention in the ongoing operation of buildings and facilities. This code also provides for minimum safety standards for storage tank fuel systems.

### Transition Period for building and energy efficiency codes

The objective of a transition period is to facilitate safe new construction and installation with minimum undue hardship or cost during the transition period. While the new edition of the fire code applies to construction under the new building code, both the building and energy efficiency codes require a period of transition so that existing construction and plans are not unreasonably disrupted. There are three conditions that allow for construction to proceed under the previous building code edition when a new building code edition comes into effect (becomes law):

1. If construction has been permitted by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) and is underway, this construction is to proceed under the previous building code edition. Unless an unsafe condition exists in the opinion of the AHJ, construction in progress is not required to be updated to the new building code. The person having care and control over the construction (i.e. contractor) may choose to update to the new building code edition.
2. There is a six-month transition period related to building permits once a new building code edition comes into effect. Construction may continue under the previous building code edition if the AHJ **received** the building permit application prior to the new building code edition coming into effect for a period of up to six months from the coming into effect date. For example, as the coming into effect date of the National Building Code – 2019 Alberta Edition is April 1, 2019, the building permit application shall be received by the AHJ (i.e. municipality) prior to October 1, 2019, for construction to be allowed under the Alberta Building Code 2014 edition. At any time during this six-month period, a person may choose to construct to the new building code edition.

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3. If the AHJ is satisfied that the preparation of plans and specifications for the project began prior to April 1, 2019 and the AHJ receives the building permit application prior to October 1, 2019, construction is allowed under the Alberta Building Code 2014 edition. The person having care and control may also choose to change their plans and specifications to meet the new building code edition.

These transition periods also apply to Section 9.36 energy efficiency for housing and small buildings under the National Building Code – 2019 Alberta Edition and the National Energy Code for Buildings - 2017 Edition.

## Timely Code Adoption

The Building Code Regulation and Fire Code Regulation have been amended to allow for timely code adoption. Under timely code adoption, a code, standard or body of rules under regulation is adopted automatically upon publication and comes into effect on the first day of the month after 12 months from the publication date.

For example, if the National Energy Code for Buildings is published by the National Research Council on November 30, 2020, it will automatically be adopted in Alberta on November 30, 2020 and come into effect (become law) on December 1, 2021. The Minister by order may bring a code into effect earlier or later should that be necessary. Timely code adoption will apply to the 2020 publication of the national building, fire, plumbing and energy efficiency codes.

Along with national code consultations, code changes will continue to be reviewed by Municipal Affairs and the Safety Codes Council during the normal 5-year cycle between code editions. With timely code adoption stakeholders such as municipalities, safety codes officers, educational institutions, industry, accredited organizations and the public can reliably plan for when the codes come into effect, and be able to prepare and train for any changes to the codes ahead of time including safety codes officer training.

## Information on Purchasing the Codes and Code Highlights

The National Building and National Fire Codes – 2019 Alberta Editions are not yet available for purchase. Once they become available, they can be purchased from the National Research Council.

The National Energy Code for Buildings – 2017 Edition is available from the National Research Council, both online and in hard copy. Follow this link for purchase information [www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/publications](http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/publications).

Mandatory code update training is not required for updates to the 2019 Alberta editions of the National Building Code and National Fire Code or to the 2017 edition of the National Energy Code for Buildings.

An overview of key code updates is at the National Research Council site at:

[www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/solutions/advisory/codes\\_centre/technical\\_changes\\_2015.html](http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/solutions/advisory/codes_centre/technical_changes_2015.html)

National Research Council online video and handbooks on the proposed code changes are available at:

[www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/solutions/advisory/codes\\_centre/code\\_seminars.html](http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/solutions/advisory/codes_centre/code_seminars.html)

A new power point presentation for changes in building and energy codes is available on the Municipal Affairs site at: [www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/CP\\_Energy\\_Codes\\_Information](http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/CP_Energy_Codes_Information)

Additional code information sessions and guidance documents including Alberta specific updates will be provided by Municipal Affairs over the coming months.