



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS, LICENSES AND PERMITS


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Subject: Testimony Regarding Adoption of 2012 Codes

To: Lonnie Robbins
Chief Administrative Officer

From: Robert J. Frances, P.E., Director 
Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits

Date: March 19, 2012

The Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits has proposed legislation to adopt the 2012 version of the Howard County Building Code. The intent of this legislation is to update the model codes with the most recent editions. This will keep Howard County up to date with the latest codes that are currently being used in the construction industry.

This code adoption will also update the International Energy Conservation Code to the 2012 edition (IECC). By State law we are not allowed to adopt amendments that lessen the requirements of the IECC. The 2012 edition will provide energy efficiency approximately 30% greater than 2006 edition. The current 2009 edition provided approximately 15% greater energy efficiency as compared to the 2006 edition.

The Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits has proposed legislation to adopt the 2011 version of the National Electrical Code (NEC) as the Howard County Electrical Code. We have made very few changes, mostly corrective language to maintain current construction practices. The only significant amendment change is exempting sump pumps and similar devices from needing ground fault circuit interrupter protection. This will allow these types of devices to remain energized in case they are needed.

The amendments as proposed enable us to stay current with the most up to date construction codes and allow us to maintain our current construction practices. I have attached a detailed list of all code changes that were made that are different from the previously approved code amendments. If you have any questions, I can be reached at ext 3946.

Copy: Donald L. Mock, P.E., Chief, DILP Plan Review
Marilyn Weeks, Chief, DILP Operations
Jennifer Sager, County Administration

Proposed Code Changes to the Building Code

The Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits proposes the following changes to the Howard County Building Code.

- 1) **Update all code references from the 2009 Edition to the 2012 Edition.**
- 2) **Exempt building permits for all canopies that project less than 48 inches from the Building. This is so we can allow small canopies to be installed without a permit.**
- 3) **Exempt replacement outdoor light fixtures and interiors ceiling fans, light fixtures or receptacles from permitting requirements.**
- 4) **Exempt from permitting requirements for freestanding decks less 25 square feet (for example stairs on mobile homes). Previously, such a structure did not require a permit.**
- 5) **Amend the wording under Section 107.2.5.2 (site plan) to allow us the ability to issue a building permit before the SDP is signed. In the past and in conjunction with DPZ, we have issued a foundation permit to allow the developer to proceed only when plans are technically approved and just waiting for signatures.**
- 6) **Amend Section 310.3 thru 310.5 (Residential groups) to maintain our current sprinkler regulations for assisted livings and group homes. All one and two family dwellings must now be sprinkled. This local amendment will continue to require sprinklers in assisted living and group homes, which is consistent with current practice.**
- 7) **Amend IRC Section R301.6 and Table R301.6 to be consistent with the IBC roof live load requirements.**
- 8) **Amend handrail grip size to stay consistent with current practices. We also removed our local amendment for planters on decks that may allow a safety hazard to be constructed as currently written. We do propose a new section that will allow us to approve an alternative design.**
- 9) **Amend Tables R404.1.2 (3) and R404.1.2 (4), related to structural reinforcement required for basement walls, to be consistent with previous Local Amendment to Table R404.1.2 (8). All three tables provide the same structural requirements now they will all be consistent with each other. (This change is complimentary to number 8 above)**
- 10) **Amend a factor used in R802.10.2.1, related to roof-ceiling construction, to stay consistent with R301.6, related roof loads. This Item is complementary with item #8 above.**
- 11) **In accordance with State law, we will not be proposing any amendments to the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) at this time. However, we will need to create a second administrative chapter because of the way the IECC was reorganized.**

Proposed Code Changes to the 2011 Electrical Code

- 1) Update references to the 2011 National Electrical Code NFPA 70.
- 2) Exempt sump pumps, condensate pumps, sewer ejector pumps from ground circuit interrupter protection required by Section 210.8(A).
- 3) Arc fault protection will not be required for new smoke detectors in Section 210.12.
- 4) **Re-worded Section 334.10 and 334.12 to stay consistent with current practices that allow romex wiring in combustible commercial buildings in certain situations.**
- 5) **338.10 new section deleted to maintain current practices. This changes reverts us back to the 2005 National Electrical Code allowing SE cable full ampacity when installed inside thermal insulation.**

All items in Bold above are current items in our code that had to be reworked to maintain current construction practices.