

Building Codes

What is a “Code”?

A Code is a collection of requirements that regulates 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 remodeling buildings.

The Historical Background and Uses of Codes

Codes are not a product of modern civilization but, rather, have evolved from the distant past. One of the earliest requirements regarding regulation of a structure is found in Babylonia in the Code of Hammurabi. One of the articles held the builder liable stating that if the house collapsed and killed the householder, the builder “shall be slain”.

By the latter part of the 19th Century, widespread loss of life and property by fire led to the first set of building regulations in North America.

In 1905, the first modern code laid the basis for testing methodology, specifications and various formats used in today’s codes. Its specific purpose was to reduce fire hazards; but it had a more general and humanitarian purpose: to protect the public health, safety and welfare of all persons who might be in or adjacent to a building.

Today’s National Building Code carries this early 20th Century philosophy one step further. It ensures uniformity in building codes and provides a process for code regulations to reflect current technology in construction methods and materials.

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 and 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 - you and I!

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 the building.

The Uses 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 that can be seriously jeopardized through code violations. Plan 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.

The property owner is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the standards of the National Building Code (1995) are met. It is important to note that these regulations are only the minimum requirements for health and safety.

Who Administers the Building Code?

Provincial Regulation

The Province of Saskatchewan is responsible for the development of 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 in which it has jurisdiction.

Individuals may access these Acts through Building Standards website: www.cpsp.gov.sk.ca/Building-Standards. Brochures and advisories published by Building Standards are also available through this link. Everyone involved in the construction industry is encouraged to visit this site on a regular basis for updates.

Building Officials

The Building Official must demonstrate knowledge of building code and construction before being issued a license by the Province to work as a building official.