

RCW 19.27.031 State building code—Adoption—Conflicts—Opinions.

(1) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, there shall be in effect in all counties and cities the state building code which shall consist of the following model codes which are hereby adopted by reference:

(a) (i) The International Building Code, published by the International Code Council, Inc.;

(ii) The International Residential Code, published by the International Code Council, Inc.;

(b) The International Mechanical Code, published by the International Code Council, Inc., except that the standards for liquefied petroleum gas installations shall be NFPA 58 (Storage and Handling of Liquefied Petroleum Gases) and ANSI Z223.1/NFPA 54 (National Fuel Gas Code);

(c) The International Fire Code, published by the International Code Council, Inc., including those standards of the National Fire Protection Association specifically referenced in the International Fire Code: PROVIDED, That, notwithstanding any wording in this code, participants in religious ceremonies shall not be precluded from carrying handheld candles;

(d) Only those portions of the International Wildland Urban Interface Code, published by the International Code Council Inc., as specifically referenced in RCW 19.27.560(1), or the model International Wildland Urban Interface Code specifically referenced in RCW 19.27.560(2);

(e) The Uniform Plumbing Code and Uniform Plumbing Code Standards, published by the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials: PROVIDED, That any provisions of such code affecting sewers or fuel gas piping are not adopted;

(f) The rules adopted by the council establishing standards for making buildings and facilities accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities or elderly persons as provided in RCW 70.92.100 through 70.92.160; and

(g) The state's climate zones for building purposes are designated in *RCW 19.27A.020(3) and may not be changed through the adoption of a model code or rule.

(2) In case of conflict among the codes enumerated in subsection (1) of this section, the first named code shall govern over those following.

(3) (a) The model codes enumerated in this section shall be adopted or amended by the council as provided in RCW 19.27.074 and 19.27.032 through 19.27.034 in a three-year state building code adoption cycle. The state building code adoption cycle follows the adoption cycle of the model codes. Substantive changes to the state building code may only be adopted within the three-year cycle except as provided in RCW 19.27.032.

(b) The council shall review the most recent editions of each of the model codes enumerated in subsection (1) of this section and take action on adoption no later than 30 months after the date of publication of each such code. The "date of publication" is the date of publication printed in each model code. If only a month and year are shown, the date of publication for such code shall be the last day of the month shown.

(4) The council may initiate and implement an interim code adoption cycle for all Washington state building codes if a majority of its voting membership determines one is needed to correct errors

and omissions, or eliminate obsolete, conflicting, redundant, or unnecessary regulations as provided in RCW 19.27.032 through 19.27.034.

(5) Petitions for emergency statewide amendments to the building code may be submitted, considered, and adopted at any time in accordance with RCW 34.05.350 and 19.27.032 through 19.27.034.

(6) Off-cycle amendments to any of the Washington state building codes may be initiated and implemented at any time if directed by the legislature.

(7) The council shall solicit input from first responders to ensure that firefighter safety issues are addressed during the code adoption process.

(8) The council may issue opinions relating to the codes at the request of a local official charged with the duty to enforce the enumerated codes. [2024 c 170 s 1; 2024 c 133 s 1; 2018 c 189 s 1; 2015 c 11 s 2; 2003 c 291 s 2; 1995 c 343 s 1. Prior: 1989 c 348 s 9; 1989 c 266 s 1; 1985 c 360 s 5.]

Reviser's note: *(1) RCW 19.27A.020 was amended by 2025 c 1 s 6, changing subsection (3) to subsection (4).

(2) This section was amended by 2024 c 133 s 1 and by 2024 c 170 s 1, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Effective date—2024 c 133: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [March 15, 2024]." [2024 c 133 s 5.]

Finding—Intent—2015 c 11: "The legislature finds that the state building code council adopted by rule changes to the climate zones used in the building codes due to modifications in the 2012 international energy conservation code (IECC). The legislature intends to update the statutes to be more reflective of the national standards." [2015 c 11 s 1.]

Intent—Finding—2003 c 291: "(1) The intent of the adoption of the International Building Code by the legislature is to remain consistent with state laws regulating construction, including electrical, plumbing, and energy codes established in chapters 19.27, 19.27A, and 19.28 RCW. The International Building Code references the International Residential Code for provisions related to the construction of single and multiple-family dwellings. No portion of the International Residential Code shall supersede or take precedent over provisions in chapter 19.28 RCW, regulating the electrical code; nor provisions in RCW 19.27.031(4), regulating the plumbing code; nor provisions in chapter 19.27A RCW, regulating the energy code.

(2) It is in the state's interest and consistent with the state building code act to have in effect provisions regulating the construction of single and multiple-family residences. It is the legislative intent that the state building code council adopt the International Residential Code through rule making granted in RCW 19.27.074, consistent with state law regulating construction for electrical, plumbing, and energy codes, and other state and federal laws regulating single and multiple-family construction.

(3) In accordance with RCW 19.27.020, the state building code council shall promote fire and life safety in buildings consistent with accepted standards. In adopting the codes for the state of Washington, the state building code council shall consider provisions related to firefighter safety published by nationally recognized organizations. The state building code council shall review all nationally recognized codes as set forth in RCW 19.27.074.

(4) The legislature finds that building codes are an integral component of affordable housing. In accordance with this finding, the state building code council shall consider and review building code provisions related to improving affordable housing." [2003 c 291 s 1.]

Severability—1989 c 348: See note following RCW 90.54.020.

Rights not impaired—1989 c 348: See RCW 90.54.920.