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Harford County, Maryland Adoption of 2021 I-Codes and 2023 National Electrical Code Announcement

August 1, 2023

As mandated by the Annotated Code of Maryland, Harford County Government through the Department of Inspections Licenses and Permits will commence the process of reviewing and adopting the applicable 2021 International Codes and the 2023 National Electrical Code, NFPA 70 – 2023. Harford County Code Chapters 82, 105, and 202 currently contain the 2018 International Code and the 2020 National Electric Code, NFPA 70-2020. The review of these documents by the Department is intended to identify necessary modifications relevant to Harford County, Maryland. Conclusion of the code development process through the International Code Council, the National Fire Protection Association and the State of Maryland has resulted in changes to the model code documents that must be reviewed and considered prior to adoption. The Department has established a tentative timeline and intends to partner with stakeholders through out the process. This year the Department intends to also provide an opportunity for public input and dialogue as the process progresses to final adoption.

The County's review and adoption of the International Building Code, the International Energy Conservation Code and the International Swimming Pool and Spa Code must follow the provisions outlined in the Maryland Building Performance Standards (MBPS) and the Maryland Swimming Pool and Spa Standards contained in the Public Safety Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. In accordance with Title 12 subtitle 5 and subtitle 12 of the Public Safety Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, local jurisdictions shall implement and enforce the most current version of the MBPS and Maryland Swimming Pool and Spa Code and any local amendments to the MBPS and Maryland Swimming Pool and Spa Code no later than 12 months after the modifications are adopted by the State.

For Harford County, Maryland to maintain relevant local amendments found within the current 2018 I-Code adoption, the County must take action to adopt the MBPS with local amendments prior to May 29, 2024. Furthermore, State law prohibits any local amendments that would;

1. Prohibit the minimum implementation and enforcement activities set forth in §12-505;
2. Weaken energy conservation and efficiency provisions contained in the MBPS;

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3. Weaken the automatic fire sprinkler systems provisions for townhouses and one- and two-family dwellings contained in the MBPS except for properties not connected to an electrical utility; or
4. Weaken wind design and wind-borne debris provisions contained in the MBPS.

As established in §12-505 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Harford County shall ensure that implementation and enforcement of the MBPS includes provisions to;

1. Review and accept appropriate plans for permitting;
2. Issue building permits;
3. Inspect work authorized by the building permits; and
4. Issue use and occupancy certificates.

On May 29, 2023, the Maryland Codes Administration under rule making authority finalized adoption of the 2021 International Building Code and the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code. This adoption can be found in COMAR 09.12.51. <https://www.dlrr.state.md.us/labor/build/comar091251.pdf> With the 12-month deadline now established, it is time for Harford County to initiate the adoption process. The established timetable is tentative and could be subject to change at any time. This comment period will commence on August 1, 2023 and run through August 31, 2023. Public Comments can be emailed to DILPCODEADOPTION@harfordcountymd.gov.

The Maryland Swimming Pool and Spa Standards are currently being adopted under rule making authority. That process is anticipated to be completed by the end of this calendar year.

Commencing in July the Department will start to review the relevant listed codes in preparation for reviewing public input received during the August period. Legislation will be drafted and shared with each of the advisory Boards for additional feedback. Upon conclusion of the Departmental review, the draft legislation will then be forwarded to the County Administration for final review prior to submittal to the County Council

Under consideration for adoption by the County in full or in part are the following codes. Free public digital access to review these documents is available at the identified links;

2021 International Building Code	https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IBC2021P2
2021 International Residential Code	https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IRC2021P2
2021 International Mechanical Code	https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IMC2021P3
2021 International Existing Building Code	https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IEBC2021P2
2021 International Energy Conservation Code	https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IECC2021P2
2021 International Fuel Gas Code	https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IFGC2021P2
2021 International Plumbing Code	https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IPC2021P3
2021 International Swimming Pool and Spa Code	https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/ISPSC2021P3
NFPA 70 – 2023 (National Electric Code)	https://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/all-codes-and-standards/list-of-codes-and-standards/detail?code=70

Upon completion of the legislative process the Department will provide training opportunities for stakeholders to be updated on local amendments and significant changes that will affect the construction industry.

The Department looks forward to working with applicable stakeholders and the public as we move through the adoption process. The 2021 model code adoption will bring the next level of public safety to the built environment in Harford County. Adoption of the lasted model codes helps to ensure and protect public health, safety and welfare.

