

March 2023

Know Your State and Local Energy Codes

The creation and adoption of a state or local energy code can be a long and complicated process. There is one predominate energy code adopted in the United States, which is the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) developed by the International Code Council (ICC). The ICC is focused on providing a wide variety of model codes and standards used in the design, build and compliance process to construct safe, sustainable, affordable, and resilient structures. The ICC has thousands of members that include state, county and municipal code enforcement and fire officials, architects, engineers, builders, contractors, elected officials, manufacturers, and others in the construction industry. The ICC also produces the International Building Code (IBC) which governs the structural design of metal buildings. A few states such as California have their own energy codes. While the state version is typically similar to the IECC, there can be significant differences.

The other important document for energy codes is the ASHRAE 90.1 standard. ASHRAE, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers, takes a more technical and in-depth approach to energy codes.

Once the IECC codes and the ASHRAE 90.1 standards are approved and published, they are available for the individual states to adopt. The IECC and ASHRAE documents are published every three years. It is important to note that the IECC specifically references the ASHRAE 90.1 standard, so the builder can use either document. In rare cases a state may decide to exclude ASHRAE 90.1, so be sure to check the state energy code. The ASHRAE standard permits semi-heated buildings, which is extremely beneficial for warehouses and buildings where the inside temperature is not critical.

Typically, it can take a state anywhere from one year to six years to adopt a new energy code once it has been published. That means each state can have a different edition of the energy code. The color-coded map shows which commercial building energy codes are enforced in various states. [Find the latest information](#) and be sure to check with your local code officials to confirm the latest adopted code.

