

## TOPIC 1 – CODES, STANDARDS AND EXECUTIVE ORDERS

**PURPOSE:** The Public Buildings Amendment Act of 1988, Public Law (Pub. L.) 100-678 requires Federal agencies to follow national recognized "model" building codes. The Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Standards, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-119, requires all executive agencies to rely on voluntary standards, both domestic and international, whenever feasible, and to participate in voluntary standard bodies.

**GENERAL:** VA has adopted the latest edition of the following codes and standards as a minimum for all projects performed in the modernization, alteration, addition, or improvement of its real property and the construction of new structures. VA design Manuals and Master Specifications specify other codes and standards that VA follows on its projects:

- VA Directives, Design Manuals, Master Specifications, VA National CAD Standard Application Guide, and other Guidance on the Technical Information Library (TIL) ([www.cfm.va.gov/til/](http://www.cfm.va.gov/til/)).
- International Building Code (IBC) (Only when specifically referenced in VA Design Documents, see notes below)
- NFPA 101 Life Safety Code (see notes below)
- NFPA National Fire Codes, with the exception of NFPA 5000 and NFPA 900
- Occupational, Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Standards.
- VA Seismic Design Requirements, H-18-8
- National Electrical Code (NEC)
- International Plumbing Code (IPC)
- Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators, American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) A 17.1.
- ASME Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code
- ASME Code for Pressure Piping
- Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS) including VA supplement, Barrier Free Design Guide (PG-18-13)
- Building Code Requirements for Reinforced Concrete, American Concrete Institute and Commentary (ACI 318)
- Manual of Steel Construction, Load and Resistance Factor Design Specifications for Structural Steel Buildings, American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC)



- Energy policy Act of 2005 (EPAAct)
- DOE Interim Final Rule: Energy Conservation Standards for New Federal, Commercial and Multi-Family High-Rise Residential Buildings and New Low-Rise Residential Buildings, 10 CFR Parts 433, 434 and 435.
- Federal Leadership in High Performance and Sustainable Buildings: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Executive Order 13423: Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management.
- The Provisions for Construction and Safety Signs. Stated in the General Requirements Section 01010 of the VA Master Construction Specification.
- Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality – ASHRAE Standard 62.1- 2004.
- Safety Standard for Refrigeration Systems – ASHRAE Standard 15 – 2007.

**Local Codes:** As an agency of the federal government, VA is not subject to local imposition of code enforcement procedures (drawing reviews, building permits, inspections, fees, etc.). VA must function as the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) and thus has the responsibility to guard public health and safety through enforcing its adopted codes. However, local authorities should be notified about planned projects and given opportunity to review drawings provided that VA does not pay for review or inspection fees.

**NOTES:**

1. NFPA 101 primarily addresses life safety and fire protection features while the IBC addresses a wide range of considerations, including, but not limited to, structural strength, seismic stability, sanitation, adequate light and ventilation, and energy conservation. VA buildings must meet the requirements of NFPA 101 and documents referenced by NFPA 101 in order to comply with the accreditation requirements of The Joint Commission. Therefore, designs shall comply with the requirements of the latest edition of NFPA 101 and documents referenced therein. Design features not addressed by NFPA 101 or documents referenced therein shall comply with the requirements of the latest edition of the IBC or as otherwise addressed above in this Program Guide. For design features that are addressed by both the IBC as well as NFPA 101 or a document referenced by NFPA 101, the requirements of NFPA 101 or the document referenced by NFPA 101 shall be used exclusively (this applies even if the IBC requirements are different).
2. Conflicts between Nationally Recognized Codes and Standards and VA Requirements – Should a conflict exist between VA requirements and VA adopted nationally recognized codes and standards, the conflict shall be brought to the attention of VA. The resolution of the conflict shall be made by the authority having jurisdiction for VA to ensure a consistency system wide.

