

BUILDING CODES AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS



Building codes provide rules and standards for the design, construction, alteration, materials, maintenance, and performance of buildings. The main purpose of building codes is to protect public health, safety, and general welfare in the construction and occupancy of buildings. The rehabilitation of historic buildings often triggers compliance requirements within building codes. Such requirements can be met while also preserving or minimizing alterations to historically listed buildings. The following information provides links to information related to building codes and historic buildings.

The International Code Council

The International Code Council was established in 1994 with the goal of developing a single set of national model construction codes. The council creates International Codes (I-Codes) that help ensure the engineering of safe, sustainable, affordable and resilient structures.

I-Codes relevant to historic buildings are as follows:

International Existing Building Code

The code encourages the use and reuse of existing buildings as opposed to new construction. Chapter 12 of the code governs repairs, alterations, and additions to historic buildings. It provides exceptions to standard compliance requirements, allowing for alternative, less restrictive, or code-modified solutions to preserve the historical character of buildings that are officially designated or certified by state/local authorities.

Chapter 12 provides information in the following sections:

- Section 1201: General
- Section 1202: Repairs

- Section 1203: Fire Safety
- Section 1204: Change of Occupancy
- Section 1205: Structural
- Section 1206: Relocated Buildings
- Appendix B: Accessibility Requirements

Chapter 12 and Appendix B are accessible as follows: <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IEBC2024V1.0/chapter-12-historic-buildings>

International Residential Code

The code establishes minimum regulations for one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses and is founded on broad-based principles that make possible the use of new materials and new building designs. Chapter 11 provides design requirements that promote efficient utilization of energy in buildings. Below is relevant to historic buildings:

- Section N1109.5 (R501.5) Historic Buildings

Chapter 11 is accessible as follows: <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IRC2024V2.0/chapter-11-re-energy-efficiency>

International codes have been adopted by the city and included within the Las Vegas, Nevada Municipal Code, Title 16 - Buildings and Construction: https://library.municode.com/nv/las_vegas/codes/code_of_ordinances

Also see the National Park Service Preservation Brief No. 51, Building Codes for Historic and Existing Buildings: Planning and Maximizing their Application: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/preservation-briefs.htm>

