

City of Westwood – 2024 Building Code Update

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Agenda

- What are Building Codes?
- Key Terminology
- The Update Process
- Why Update the Codes?
- Guiding Principles for Westwood's Update
- Summary of Recommended Amendments
- Next Steps
- Questions/Discussion

What are Building Codes?

- Minimum standards for safety, health, accessibility, energy efficiency, and durability
- Adopted at the local level (based on ICC model codes) and Kansas home rule
- Provide consistency for builders, designers, and inspectors

Key Terminology

- **Model Code** – The standard code published by the International Code Council (ICC) before local amendments.
- **Code Cycle** – The regular 3-year update period when new editions of the IBC and related codes are released.
- **Adoption by Reference** – Legal process of making the model code enforceable through a local ordinance.
- **Permit** – Official approval required before construction can begin, ensuring compliance with codes.
- **Inspection** – On-site verification that work meets the adopted code and approved plans.

Key Terminology

- **Life Safety** – Requirements designed to protect occupants in emergencies (fire exits, alarms, sprinklers).
- **Accessibility** – Provisions ensuring buildings are usable by people with disabilities (based on ICC A117.1 & ADA standards).
- **Fire Separation / Fire Rating** – Required distance or construction features that slow fire spread between spaces or buildings.
- **Egress** – Safe path for occupants to exit a building in an emergency (doors, corridors, stairs).
- **Structural Loads** – Forces buildings must withstand, such as snow, wind, or seismic activity.

Key Terminology

- **Zoning vs. Building Code** – Zoning regulates land use and placement of buildings; the building code regulates how structures are built.
- **Deferred Submittal** – Portions of the design (like trusses or fire sprinklers) approved after the main permit application.
- **Certificate of Occupancy (CO)** – Issued once a building passes final inspections and is deemed safe for use.
- **International Existing Building Code (IEBC)** – Companion code guiding renovations, remodels, and additions.
- **Special Inspections** – Technical inspections (usually for structural scope) done by a third-party, not the City.

The Update Process

- International Code Council (ICC) hearings to discuss potential updates to code editions (approx. 5 years prior to publishing). Input from public employees, industry, designers, and builders.
- ICC publishes new code editions, occurs every 3 years.
- Local jurisdictions review and amend to fit community needs (usually every *other* edition)
- Collaboration with other building officials in Johnson County to synchronize
- Public input and stakeholder feedback
- City adoption by ordinance

← We are here

Why Update The Codes?

- Ensure alignment with latest safety & construction practices
- Support energy efficiency & sustainability goals
- Maintain eligibility for certain funding/insurance programs
- Consistency with neighboring jurisdictions
- Improve clarity and enforceability

Guiding Principles for Westwood's Update

- Balance safety, cost, and practicality
- Reflect local conditions and community goals
- Increase energy conservation
- Minimize unnecessary complexity
- Coordinate with Johnson County and regional standards

Recommended Changes (Amendments)

- Administrative updates to work exempt from permits, appendices,
- Potential adoption for the Pool and Spa code (ISPSC).
- Storm protection areas in residential occupancies.
- Increased physical security provisions (doors, locks, etc).
- Energy code modifications (appliances, equipment, and envelope) to match current building practices in the KC metro area.
- Location for EV charging stations in parking garages to allow for better access for first responders.

Significant Changes

- Updates to climate and geological data to better improve the design criteria for new projects (wind, seismic, snow, etc).
- Updates to regulations for new construction technologies (mass timber, 3D printing, etc)
- Updates to regulations for new operations and storage (lithium-ion batteries, more expansive use of plastics, etc).
- Increased energy efficiency requirements for renovations and new buildings (but relaxed and streamlined from 2021 editions).
- Change in the refrigeration process and materials available (A2L, mainly).
- Electrical service protection mechanisms to better protect utility workers and fire department first responders.

Next Steps

- City review & feedback.
- Continued public/stakeholder input.
- Finalize amendments.
- Ordinance adoption and publication process (adoption in early November & implementation for January 1, 2026).

Questions/Discussion