



*Working with Oregonians
to ensure safe building
construction while
supporting a positive
business climate.*

Building Codes and the Regulatory Environment

Fast Facts

- Over 44,000 jurisdictions across America adopt and/or enforce some set of building codes and standards.
- Oregon's building code for residential and commercial construction is based on the International Code Council's model building code.
- There are 130 local building departments providing inspection services across Oregon.
- BCD works with seven volunteer advisory boards to adopt codes and develop regulations.

BCD's Role

- Adopting codes for all building construction in Oregon.
- Assisting local jurisdictions to provide uniform code administration and inspection services.
- Issuing final code interpretations, approving alternate building methods, and hearing code appeals.
- Providing plan review, permitting, and inspection services in areas of the state where local governments choose not to provide these services.
- Licensing inspectors, electricians, plumbers, and other trades to ensure a qualified construction workforce.
- Taking licensing enforcement actions and supporting local enforcement needs.

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The fundamental purpose of all the building codes is to safeguard the public's health, welfare, and life safety in buildings. The code prescribes a minimum life safety standard for construction.

The state adopts all codes used in construction including codes regulating residential and commercial structures, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, boilers, elevators, recreational vehicles, manufactured housing, and amusement rides. Those codes are statewide standards that are administered at the local level. Local governments may not amend the state-adopted codes.

Inspection process

Construction is a continuous process with periodic inspections that are initiated by the permit holder. A typical residential construction project requires the permit holder to call for inspections of the foundation, framing, insulation and vapor barrier, and plumbing, mechanical, and electrical installations. Inspections are typically focused on whether construction practices meet the minimum safety requirements of the code.

Initial BCD changes to improve moisture problems

- Develop "best practices" and installation guidelines consistent with code and manufacturers' instructions.
- Explore rainscreen technology as a construction approach.
- If work will be done by a contractor, require that contractor to get the permit in his/her name (as opposed to the homeowner).
- Establish specialized inspection and training for building-envelope work.
- Require additional mechanical venting of moisture from interior spaces (e.g., bathrooms and kitchens).
- Require moisture content not exceed a defined level before closing the cavity.
- Require a "Certificate of Occupancy" for residential construction.

