



Ontario Eastern Municipal Conference
Building Code Update
September 11, 2013

Building Regulation in Ontario: Legal Framework

- The *Building Code Act, 1992* governs the construction, renovation, demolition and change of use of buildings
- The Building Code is a regulation under the Act and sets out minimum technical and administrative requirements
- The Building Code is a “go forward” standard:
 - Does not mandate the retrofit of existing buildings, with certain limited exceptions (septic systems)
- New editions of Ontario’s Building Code are released on a regular basis (the 2012 Code replaces the 2006 edition)
- In addition, interim changes to the Code are made frequently
- Enforcement of the Act and the Code assigned to local “principal authorities”

2012 Building Code Release

- On November 2, 2012, the 2012 Building Code was filed as O.Reg. 332/12
- Most of the 2012 Building Code will come into effect on January 1, 2014, impacting the following areas:
 - Fire safety
 - Harmonization and consistency
 - Property protection and health
 - Water conservation
 - Energy conservation
 - Environmental protection, including on-site sewage systems, and
 - Knowledge maintenance
- MMAH will continue to review potential Building Code changes related to the following:
 - Mid-rise wood construction
 - Levels of radon

2012 Building Code Release

- The 2012 Building Code changes provide a balanced package that:
 - Builds on health and safety and environmental protection requirements
 - Helps the competitiveness of Ontario's building sector through:
 - New and updated standards
 - Clarifying Building Code requirements
 - Allowing for the use of new products
 - Recognition of best practices
 - More flexible requirements
 - Maintaining Ontario's harmonization with model National Building Code requirements in areas such as structural design
 - Maintains Ontario's leadership in energy and water conservation
 - Has a moderate impact on costs of construction
 - Has some potential for operating cost savings over time (through energy and water savings)
 - Streamlines regulations affecting industry

Potential Accessibility Changes

- Ontario recently conducted public consultation on enhanced accessibility requirements in the Building Code, as part of the government's commitment to accessibility standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- Consultation addressed potential changes in a range of areas, including:
 - Barrier-Free Path of Travel
 - Vertical Access / Elevators
 - Washrooms
 - Visitable Suites in Multi-Unit Residential Buildings
 - Adaptable Design and Construction
 - Visual Fire Alarms and Smoke Detectors
 - Renovations

Potential Accessibility Changes

- Public consultation was open from December 21, 2012 – March 1, 2013
 - A wide range of stakeholders provided feedback through public consultation, with approximately 600 comments received in total
- Technical Advisory Committees (TAC) met in May 2013 to review potential changes and all comments received from the public
 - TAC are composed of broad, balanced and independent representatives of stakeholder organizations
 - Members are selected based on their leadership and technical expertise in building design and construction
 - TAC for barrier-free design includes members of organizations representing people with disabilities
- Government is reviewing all comments received and recommendations of TAC
- Any changes made as a result of consultation are anticipated to be made as an amendment to the 2012 Building Code

Other Recent Building Code Consultations

Joint Public Consultation on Enhanced Fire Safety

- MMAH together with the Office of the Fire Marshal (Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services) recently invited public comment on proposals to enhance fire safety in occupancies that house seniors, people with disabilities, and vulnerable Ontarians
- Changes affect both the Fire Code and the Building Code
- Consultation closed February 28, 2013
- The Building Code was amended regarding this issue in spring 2013 with O.Reg 151/13
- Changes are scheduled to come into effect with the 2012 Code, January 1, 2014

Building Code Exams Update

- A range of building practitioners, including municipal building officials, are required to pass Building Code examinations in order to practice
- Examinations are established by MMAH, and cover technical and administrative requirements
- Exams are delivered by third parties under agreement with MMAH (HR Associates in Southern Ontario, and Contact North in Northern Ontario)
- MMAH is updating all qualification examinations to reflect changes included in the new (2012) edition of the Building Code
- Starting January 1, 2014, anyone qualifying for the first time or qualifying in a new category will be required to pass examinations on the new Code

Building Code Knowledge Maintenance

- Knowledge maintenance assessments are designed to evaluate a practitioner's knowledge of changes between editions of the Building Code
- Knowledge maintenance assessments will **not** be required immediately on January 1, 2014:
 - The Director of the Building and Development Branch will advise affected practitioners when the knowledge maintenance program is being implemented
 - At that time, practitioners would have eighteen months to comply with the requirements
- The ministry is developing educational material to help practitioners understand and apply the 2012 Building Code, and to prepare for future knowledge maintenance assessments:
 - An overview presentation on the 2012 Building Code, as well a series of detailed presentations are available on the MMAH website

Building Code Training

- To support the building industry and assist practitioners in passing MMAH exams, the Ministry currently produces/maintains a broad range of Building Code training courses
- The courses are currently delivered by a range of stakeholder organizations and educational institutions including a number of community colleges
- For the new Building Code, it is proposed that responsibility for Building Code training (course development, course updating and delivery) be transferred to Ontario's community colleges
- Colleges would be responsible for both updating and delivering training materials, although they may subcontract delivery to other parties
- Colleges have the infrastructure in place to support a modernized delivery model, with both on-line and classroom delivery
- Colleges will also be responsible for the development and sale of self-study manuals, which may be purchased by practitioners who do not wish to register for training courses

Building Code Compendium

- The hard copy binder of the 2012 Building Code compendium is now available from [Publications Ontario](#)
- Cost is \$195 (plus applicable taxes and shipping).
- The Compendium includes:
 - [The Building Code Act, 1992](#)
 - [Ontario Regulation 332/12](#) (the 2012 Building Code)
 - Supplementary Standards
 - Appendix Notes
 - Guide to the use of the code
 - Highlights of major technical code changes to the new code
 - General history of code amendments

E-version of the Building Code Compendium

- Only the Building Code Act, 1992 and the Building Code regulation are currently available in electronic formats (on e-Laws):
 - E-laws does not provide access to any of the supporting materials (i.e. guidelines and standards) contained in the Compendium that the province produces to support the legislation.
- To address this need MMAH has created an e-version of the Compendium which will be available shortly

Other Service Modernization Initiatives

- MMAH is undertaking a review of its services in a number of areas; potential changes include:
 - Streamlining practitioner registration through e-payment and on-line registration
 - Potential on-line delivery of examinations

For Further Information

- Visit www.ontario.ca/BuildingCode regularly for new examination dates.
- Follow us on Twitter [@OntMMAH](https://twitter.com/OntMMAH).