



City of Palm Desert
Department of Building & Safety
73-510 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 760-6420
Fax (760) 776-6392

FAQ'S REGARDING THE NEW 2019 CALIFORNIA BUILDING STANDARDS CODE

Q: ***What is the California Building Standards Code?***

A: The California Building Standards Code (CBSC) is maintained by the California Building Standards Commission (www.bsc.ca.gov) and contains the codes and laws that regulate the construction of all buildings and structures in the State of California. The CBSC is Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) and consists of twelve parts: Five (5) parts are authored by the State of California and seven (7) parts are based on model codes that are authored by various model code writing bodies.

The new 2019 California Building Standards Code includes:

- Part 2, **2019 California Building Code (CBC)**, which is based on the 2018 International Building Code (IBC) published by the International Code Council (ICC).
- Part 2.5, **2019 California Residential Code (CRC)**, which is based on the 2018 International Residential Code (IRC) published by the International Code Council (ICC).
- Part 3, **2019 California Electrical Code (CEC)**, which is based on the 2017 National Electrical Code (NEC) published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).
- Part 4, **2019 California Mechanical Code (CMC)**, which is based on the 2018 Uniform Mechanical Code (UMC) published by the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO).
- Part 5, **2019 California Plumbing Code (CPC)**, which is based on the 2018 Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) published by the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO).
- Part 6, **2019 California Energy Code (CEC)**, which is written by the California Energy Commission (CEC), and published by the California Building Standards Commission.
- Part 9, **2019 California Fire Code (CFC)**, which is based on the 2018 International Fire Code (IFC) published by the International Code Council (ICC).
- Part 11, **2019 California Green Building Standards Code (CGBSC)**, which is published by the California Building Standards Commission.

Q: *When is the new 2019 California Building Standards Code effective?*

A: The new 2016 California Building Standards Code will become effective January 1, 2020.

All *Over-the-Counter* permits issued after January 1, 2020 must comply with the new 2019 California Building Standards Code. All projects submitted for plan check to the Building Department after January 1, 2020 must comply with the new 2019 California Building Standards Code.

Q: *If a project is submitted for plan check to the Building Department prior to January 1, 2020, what codes are applicable to the project?*

A: The codes applicable to the project will be the current California Building Standards Codes:

- 2016 California Building Code
- 2016 California Electrical Code
- 2016 California Mechanical Code
- 2016 California Plumbing Code
- 2016 California Fire Code.
- 2016 California Energy Code

Q: *Can a project that is submitted for plan check to the Building Department prior to January 1, 2020 be reviewed for compliance with the new 2019 California Building Standards Code?*

A: The Building Department will consider requests by an applicant, on a case-by-case basis for projects submitted for plan check to voluntarily utilize the new 2019 California Building Standards Code in lieu of the 2016 California Building Standards Code.

Q: *My application to the Planning Department (Design Review, Administrative Site Plan, Conditional Use Permit, etc.) has been determined to be complete and/or approved prior to January 1, 2020. What codes are applicable to my project?*

A: The submittal/approval dates to/from any other City Department has no bearing on which California Building Standards Code a project must comply with. The specific edition of California Building Standards Code a project must comply with is solely determined by the date of building permit application to the Building Department. (Health & Safety Code Section 18938.5)

Q: *Why did the codes change?*

A: In compliance with State law, the California Building Standards Code is revised and updated every three (3) years. The newest edition of the California Building Standards Code is the 2019 edition with an effective date of January 1, 2020. The City of Palm Desert is required by State law to enforce the new code.

Q: *Can specific sections and/or parts from both the old code and the new code be used in the design and construction of a building or structure?*

A: No... A construction project must comply with the code that is applicable to the project. Sections and/or parts from different editions of the codes cannot be intermixed.

Q: *How will the new 2019 Building Standards Code affect existing approved building tract plans?*

A: All existing approved tract plans will expire and become null and void at 180 days from the date of enforcement (January 1, 2020) for the new 2019 California Codes, which will be July 1, 2020, or unless otherwise expired in accordance with other provisions of the codes. All tract plans will need to be updated to comply with the new 2019 CBC and submitted for a new plan check. The Director of Building & Safety may extend the time for action by the applicant for a period not exceeding 180 days on request by the applicant showing circumstances beyond control of the applicant that prevented action from being taken (January 1, 2021). (CBC Section 105.3.2).

(See the next question "*HOW WILL APPLICATIONS FOR PLAN CHECK THAT REFERENCE EXISTING APPROVED TRACT PLANS –SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING PHASING PROJECTS, CONDOMINIUM PROJECTS, ETC. – BE AFFECTED BY THE NEW 2016 BUILDING STANDARDS CODE?*" for additional information.)

Q: *How will applications for plan check that reference existing approved Tract plans for Single Family Dwelling phasing projects, condominium projects, etc. – be effected by the new 2016 Building Standards Code?*

A: Which edition of the California Building Standards Code an application for building permit must comply with is solely determined by the date of the building permit application to the Building Department.

- If the application is submitted **before** January 1, 2020 it must comply with the current California Building Standards Code and can reference existing approved tract plans.
- If the application is submitted **on or after** January 1, 2020 it must comply with the new 2019 California Building Standards Code and cannot reference existing approved tract plans. The application must reference tract plans that have been updated to comply with the new 2019 California Building Standards Code and have been approved by the Building Department. (See the previous question "*HOW WILL THE NEW 2019 BUILDING STANDARDS CODE AFFECT EXISTING APPROVED TRACT PLANS?*" for additional information.)

Q: *How will permits that have been issued prior to January 1, 2020 that reference existing approved plans – Single Family Dwelling phasing projects, condominium projects, etc. – be affected by the new 2019 Building Standards Code?*

A: The new 2019 California Building Standards Code will not affect a permit that was issued prior to January 1, 2020 as long as the permit does not expire. If a permit issued under the “old” 2016 California Building Standards Code expires, a onetime extension (180 days) may be granted. Before a new permit can be issued the plans must be updated to comply with the new 2019 California Building Standards Code, and submitted for plan check and approved by the Building Department. (See “*IF MY PERMIT WAS ISSUED UNDER THE “OLD” 2016 CALIFORNIA BUILDING STANDARDS CODE, WHEN WILL IT EXPIRE?*” for information regarding when a permit expires.)

Q: *If my project was permitted under the “old” 2016 California Building Standards Code and I need to revise my approved plans, which edition of the codes will be applicable?*

A: The only answer to this question is: It depends on the type of revisions being made. A simple minor clarification will not necessitate the need to revise the plans to comply with the new 2019 California Building Standards Code. A major change and/or addition to a project will need to comply with the new 2019 California Building Standards Code. Each specific case will need to be reviewed by the Building Department to determine which edition of the California Building Standards Code the revisions must comply with.

Q: *If I applied for a building permit prior to January 1, 2020, when will my building permit application expire?*

A: Applications for building permit (plan check process) for which a permit is not issued within 180 days (1 year for all residential occupancies) following the date of initial submission shall expire by limitation and become null and void. The Director of Building & Safety may extend the time for action by the applicant for a period not exceeding 180 days on request by the applicant showing circumstances beyond control of the applicant that prevented action from being taken. No building permit application shall be extended more than once (CBC Section 105.5).

Q: *If my permit was issued under the “old” 2016 California Building Standards Code, when will it expire?*

A: Permits expire by limitation and become null and void, if the building or work authorized by the permit is not commenced within:

- 180 days (1 year for all residential occupancies) from the date of issuance; or
- If the building or work authorized by the permit is suspended or abandoned at any time after the work is commenced for a period of 180 days; or
- Any permittee holding an unexpired permit may apply for an extension of time (180 days) within which work may commence under the “old” 2016 California Building Standards Code. The Building Official may grant an extension for periods not extending not more than 90 days. (CBC Section 105.5).

Q: *How can I find out what the changes are from the old code to the new code?*

A: By studying the new codes themselves; buying and studying the various handbooks, training manuals, code change analyses available; and attending classes and training seminars on the new codes offered by various professional organizations: www.iccsafe.org, www.iapmo.org; www.calbo.org, www.icbolabc.org , or contact the Building Department for assistance.

Q: *Where can I find and/or purchase the new 2019 California Building Standards Code?*

A: The new 2019 CBSC is currently available for purchase from technical book stores or directly from the International Code Council, at www.iccsafe.org. As of January 1, 2020, the new 2019 California Building Standards Code, as adopted by the City of Palm Desert will be available for public inspection at the Building Department counter.



Should you have any additional questions that have not been covered in the FAQ's, please contact the City of Palm Desert Building Department @ (760) 776-6420