



PROPERTY MAINTENANCE



Summary of the International Property Maintenance Code

The International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) has been adopted by the City of Warren Property Maintenance Ordinance and it governs the maintenance of existing buildings through model code regulations. The provisions of the IPMC apply to all existing structures and to all existing premises and constitute minimum requirements and standards for premises, structures, equipment and facilities for light, ventilation, space, heating, sanitation, protection from the elements, life safety, safety from fire and other hazards, and for safe and sanitary maintenance; the responsibility of owners, operators, and occupants; the occupancy of existing structures and premises, and for administration, enforcement and penalties.

The following is a summary of each chapter in the IPMC:

Chapter 1 Scope and Administration

This chapter contains provisions for the application, enforcement, and administration of all subsequent requirements of the code. In addition to establishing the scope of the code, Chapter 1 identifies which buildings and structures come under its purview. Chapter 1 is largely concerned with maintaining “due process of law” in enforcing the property maintenance criteria contained in the body of the code. Only through careful observation of the administrative provisions can the building official reasonably expect to demonstrate that “equal protection under the law” has been provided.

Chapter 2 Definitions

All terms that are defined in the code are listed alphabetically in Chapter 2. While a defined term may be used in one chapter or another, the meaning provided in Chapter 2 is applicable throughout the code.

Where understanding of a term’s definition is especially key to or necessary for understanding of a particular code provision, the term is shown in italics wherever it appears in the code. This is true only for those terms that have a meaning that is unique to the code. In other words, the generally understood meaning of a term or phrase might not be sufficient or consistent with the meaning prescribed by the code; therefore, it is essential that the code-defined meaning be known.

Guidance regarding tense, gender and plurality of defined terms as well as guidance regarding terms not defined in this code is provided.

Chapter 3 General Requirements

Chapter 3, “General Requirements,” is broad in scope. It includes a variety of requirements for the exterior property areas as well as the interior and exterior elements of the structure. This chapter provides requirements that are intended to maintain a minimum level of safety and sanitation for both the general public and the occupants of a structure, and to maintain a building’s structural and weather-resistance performance. Chapter 3 provides specific criteria for regulating the installation and maintenance of specific building components; maintenance requirements for vacant structures and land; requirements regulating the safety, sanitation and appearance of the interior and exterior of structures and all exterior property areas; accessory structures; vehicle storage regulations and establishes who is responsible for complying with the chapter’s provisions. This chapter also contains the requirements for swimming pools, spas and hot tubs and the requirements for protective barriers and gates in these barriers. Chapter 3 establishes the responsible parties for exterminating insects and rodents, and maintaining sanitary conditions in all types of occupancies.

Chapter 4 Light, Ventilation and Occupancy Limitations

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to set forth these requirements in the code and to establish the minimum environment for occupiable and habitable buildings, by establishing the minimum criteria for light and ventilation and identifies occupancy limitations including minimum room width and area, minimum ceiling height and restrictions to prevent overcrowding. This chapter also provides for alternative arrangements of windows and other devices to comply with the requirements for light and ventilation and prohibits certain room arrangements and occupancy uses.

Chapter 5 Plumbing Facilities and Fixture Requirements

Chapter 5 establishes the minimum criteria for the installation, maintenance and location of plumbing systems and facilities, including the water supply system, water heating appliances, sewage disposal system and related plumbing fixtures.

Sanitary and clean conditions in occupied buildings are dependent upon certain basic plumbing principles, including providing potable water to a building, providing the basic fixtures to effectively utilize that water and properly removing waste from the building. Chapter 5 establishes the minimum criteria to verify that these principles are maintained throughout the life of a building.

Chapter 6 Mechanical and Electrical Requirements

The purpose of Chapter 6 is to establish minimum performance requirements for heating, electrical and mechanical facilities and to establish minimum standards for the safety of these facilities.

This chapter establishes minimum criteria for the installation and maintenance of the following: heating and air-conditioning equipment, appliances and their supporting systems; water-heating equipment, appliances and systems; cooking equipment and appliances; ventilation and exhaust equipment; gas and liquid fuel distribution piping and components; fireplaces and solid fuel-burning appliances; chimneys and vents; electrical services; lighting fixtures; electrical receptacle outlets; electrical distribution system equipment, devices and wiring; and elevators, escalators and dumb-waiters.

Chapter 7 Fire Safety Requirements

The purpose of Chapter 7 is to address those fire hazards that arise as the result of a building's occupancy. It also provides minimum requirements for fire safety issues that are most likely to arise in older buildings.

This chapter contains requirements for means of egress in existing buildings including path of travel, required egress width, means of egress doors and emergency escape opening.

Chapter 7 establishes the minimum requirements for fire safety facilities and fire protection systems, as these are essential fire safety systems.

Chapter 8 Referenced Standards

The code contains numerous references to standards that are used to regulate materials and methods of construction. Chapter 8 contains a comprehensive list of all standards that are referenced in the code. The standards are part of the code to the extent of the reference to the standard. Compliance with the referenced standard is necessary for compliance with this code. By providing specifically adopted standards, the construction and installation requirements necessary for compliance with the code can be readily determined. The basis for code compliance is, therefore, established and available on an equal basis to the code official, contractor, designer and owner.

Chapter 8 is organized in a manner that makes it easy to locate specific standards. It lists all of the referenced standards, alphabetically, by acronym of the promulgating agency of the standard. Each agency's standards are then listed in either alphabetical or numeric order based upon the standard identification. The list also contains the title of the standard; the edition (date) of the standard referenced; any addenda included as part of the ICC adoption; and the section or sections of this code that reference the standard.

For more information regarding property maintenance requirements, contact the City of Warren Building & Codes Department at 814-723-6300 ext. 116 or e-mail codes@cityofwarrenpa.gov.

