

2021 Building Code Adoption Tracking: FEMA Region 3

This fact sheet provides a high-level overview of the status of hazard-resistant building code adoption in each state and territory within a FEMA region. The regional fact sheets show an annual metric of the percent of communities adopting hazard-resistant¹ building codes.

Why Building Codes?

Disaster resilience starts with building codes because they enhance public safety and property protection.

Why Track Codes?

- Represent the best evidence for disaster resistance
- Create best overall return on investment
- Comply with Technology Transfer Act
- Cornerstone of effective mitigation
- Codes = better built buildings, better performance
- Codes enable uniformity, efficiencies, and predictable performance
- Recognize the disaster preparedness of communities when determining level of federal funding

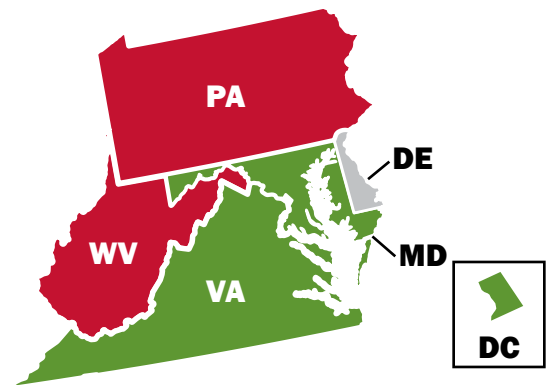


Figure 1. FEMA Region 3

Purpose of the Building Code Adoption Tracking

- Track the adoption rate of the latest consensus-based codes across the nation
- Track the results of adoption in improving disaster-resistant buildings in natural hazard areas
- Use the emerging data to inform FEMA policies and laws in pre-disaster and post-disaster goals
- Federal funding assistance requirements may be correlated to adoption of the latest published building code editions as required by legislation and/or FEMA policies such as the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 and the associated Federal Cost Share Reform Incentive

¹ Hazard-resistant codes mean the 2015 or later International Building Code and International Residential Code, without weakening of any resilience provisions related to any of the five tracked hazards for which the jurisdiction is at high risk.



FEMA's Role Will Be Continuous

- Proposing building code changes to maintain consistency with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and to incorporate best practices identified in post-disaster investigations.
- Defending against changes that weaken flood, wind, and seismic provisions.
- Contributing to requests for interpretations by International Code Council.
- Supporting the training of state, local, tribal and territorial officials.



Figure 2. Building Code Adoption Tracking Process

The following percentages indicate the tracked jurisdictions which have adopted hazard-resistant² building codes within each state. The percentages are based upon jurisdictions within each state which are at high risk³ to one or more hazard types (Region 3's hazards are flood, damaging wind, hurricane wind, and tornado):

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

100%

HIGHER RESISTANCE

IBC District adopts the 2015 International Building Code (IBC), with Appendix G (Flood-Resistant Construction).

IRC District adopts the 2015 International Residential Code (IRC).

MARYLAND

99.7%

HIGHER RESISTANCE

IBC State adopts the 2018 IBC but allows jurisdictions to modify it with wide discretion.

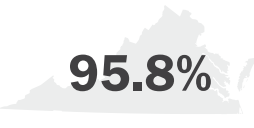
IRC State adopts the 2018 IRC but allows jurisdictions to modify it with wide discretion.

Note: State is not fully resistant because some jurisdictions with high flood risk do not participate in the NFIP.

² Hazard-resistant codes mean the 2015 or later IBC and IRC, without weakening of any resilience provisions related to any of the five tracked hazards for which the jurisdiction is at high risk.

³ High-risk is defined according to national consensus-based standards, the National Flood Insurance Program, and the Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule. For a detailed description of the high-risk methodology, visit the FEMA Building Code Adoption Tracking landing page at www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management/building-science/bcat/.

VIRGINIA



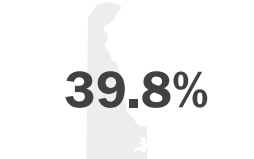
95.8%

HIGHER RESISTANCE

- IBC** Commonwealth adopts the 2015 IBC.
- IRC** Commonwealth adopts the 2015 IRC.

Note: Commonwealth is not fully resistant because some jurisdictions with high flood risk do not participate in the NFIP.

DELAWARE

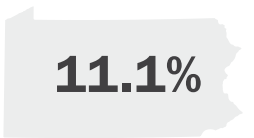


39.8%

MODERATE RESISTANCE

- IBC** No statewide building code.
- IRC** No statewide residential code.

PENNSYLVANIA

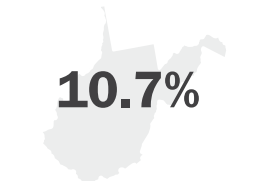


11.1%

LOWER RESISTANCE

- IBC** Commonwealth adopts the 2015 IBC. Commonwealth removes NFIP-related criteria for issuance of a variance in flood hazard areas (Sec. 104.10.1), however.
- IRC** Commonwealth adopts the 2015 IRC. Commonwealth weakens flood resistance by removing +1 foot requirements in A Zones (R322.2.1) and by only requiring +1 foot requirements in V Zones depending on the orientation to wave approach (R322.3.2).

WEST VIRGINIA



10.7%

LOWER RESISTANCE

- IBC** State adopts the 2015 IBC but does not require jurisdictions to adopt it, in which case it does not apply in those jurisdictions.
- IRC** State adopts the 2015 IRC but does not require jurisdictions to adopt it, in which case it does not apply in those jurisdictions.