

2023 Building Code Adoption Tracking: FEMA Region 9

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 to reduce losses in future disasters
- Codes = better built buildings, better performance
- Hazard codes for seismic, high winds, water and fire enable uniformity, efficiencies, and predictable performance
- Recognize the disaster preparedness of communities when determining level of federal funding



Figure 1. FEMA Region 9

Purpose of 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 2018 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 and territory. The percentages are based upon jurisdictions within each state and territory which are at high risk³ to one or more hazard types (Region 9’s hazards are flood, damaging wind, hurricane, and seismic):

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

100%

HIGHER RESISTANCE

IBC
IRC

Territory adopts the 2018 International Building Code (IBC), with Appendix G.

Territory adopts the 2018 International Residential Code (IRC).

CALIFORNIA

98.6%

HIGHER RESISTANCE

IBC
IRC

State adopts the 2021 IBC.

State adopts the 2021 IRC.

Note that state does not adopt R327.1 (containing flood design specifications for manufactured homes) nor R327.1 (requiring, via application of the International Swimming Pool and Spa Code, swimming pools in coastal high-hazard areas to conform to ASCE 24).

² Hazard-resistant codes mean the 2018 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/.

NEVADA

50.0%

MODERATE RESISTANCE

IBC

State has adopted the 2018 IBC for state construction, with some exceptions. There is no statewide mandatory building code for new non-residential construction generally.

IRC

State has adopted the 2018 IRC for state construction, with some exceptions. There is no statewide mandatory residential code for new residential construction generally.

ARIZONA

28.6%

MODERATE RESISTANCE

IBC

No statewide IBC.

IRC

No statewide IRC.

AMERICAN SAMOA

0.0%

LOWER RESISTANCE

IBC

No territory-wide IBC. Territory has instead adopted an outdated, non-resistant code (1964 UBC).

IRC

No territory-wide IRC.

GUAM

0.0%

LOWER RESISTANCE

IBC

Territory adopts an outdated IBC (2009 edition).

IRC

Territory adopts an outdated IRC (2009 edition).

HAWAII

0.0%

LOWER RESISTANCE

IBC

Hawaii's State Building Code Council adopted the 2018 IBC effective April 20, 2021. Hawaii counties have two years from that date to amend and adopt it themselves before it becomes automatically applicable as the county building code. Until then, the 2012 IBC as previously adopted by the counties remains in effect. Hawaii weakens hurricane protection in Section 1609.2, item 5, exception 3 by excepting from the openings protection requirement certain Risk Category II buildings that would have required openings protection under the model version.

IRC

Hawaii's State Building Code Council adopted the 2018 IRC effective November 17, 2020. Hawaii counties had two years from that date to amend and adopt it themselves before it became automatically applicable as an interim county building code until the county adopts its own version.