



Code Outreach Program – Codes, Supplements and Reference Standards

A common misconception among code users is that the “code” is found in the “code books”. The Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (the Uniform Code) is actually contained in 19 NYCRR Parts 1220 through 1228 and its incorporated references. Likewise, the State Energy Conservation Construction Code (the Energy Code) is contained in 19 NYCRR Part 1240 and its incorporated references. This means, code requirements are not always found in a “code book” but are sometimes contained solely in the NYCRR. The NYCRR is the starting point for all codes and must be examined first, prior to reviewing an ICC code book or other reference standard.

Had the ICC code books and other reference standards not been incorporated by reference into the NYCRR, they would not be legally enforceable and the “codes” would be entirely contained in the NYCRR. Perhaps the most important and overlooked reference standards are the Uniform Code Supplement and Energy Code Supplement. These documents modify, replace, and delete portions of the ICC code books and other reference standards and describe how the ICC code books are applied in New York State. For this reason, the appropriate Supplement should be reviewed next, before referring to an ICC code book (or other reference standard).

The State Fire Prevention and Building Code Council (Code Council) recently adopted a new 2017 Uniform Code Supplement (2017 UCS), publication date July 2017, to completely replace the 2016 Uniform Code Supplement (2016 UCS). The effective date of the new Supplement was October 31st, 2017. On and after October 31st, regulated parties submitting building permit applications must comply with the 2017 UCS. The Division of Building Standards and Codes has prepared a document showing the changes that have been made to the 2016 UCS by the 2017 UCS. This document, which can be obtained by clicking here, is for informational purposes only. Provided local governments have properly referenced the Uniform Code in their local enforcement program, no additional action is necessary for such local governments to adopt or make the new Supplement affective.

The previously adopted 2016 Energy Code Supplement (2016 ECS), revised August 2016, referenced the “old” 2016 UCS. To avoid publishing a new Energy Code Supplement for the sake of correcting a reference, the correction was made directly in 19 NYCRR Part 1240. On and after October 31st, 2017, all references in the 2016 ECS to the 2016 UCS shall be interpreted to be a reference to the “new” 2017 UCS. The method by which this correction was made reinforces the point that the NYCRR is the starting point for all codes and must be examined first, prior to reviewing a Supplement, code book, or other reference standard.

As a reminder to certified code enforcement officials and building inspectors, don’t forget to get your annual in-service training requirements as mandated by 19 NYCRR 1208-3.3. Click here to access our training website.

Please look for our next edition of the Code Outreach Program at the beginning of next month.

DBSC - A Division of Department of State
OFPC – An Office of the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services

If you have questions related to this program or the Uniform Code/Energy Code, e mail our technical support group at codes@dos.ny.gov.

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