



VIRGINIA  
REHABILITATION  
CODE

PART II OF THE  
VIRGINIA UNIFORM STATEWIDE  
BUILDING CODE

2006

Effective May 1, 2008

## PREFACE

### Introduction

The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) is a state regulation promulgated by the Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development, a Governor-appointed board, for the purpose of establishing minimum regulations to govern the construction and maintenance of buildings and structures.

The provisions of the USBC are based on nationally recognized model building and fire codes published by the International Code Council, Inc.. The model codes are made part of the USBC through a regulatory process known as incorporation by reference. The USBC also contains administrative provisions governing the use of the model codes and establishing requirements for the enforcement of the code by the local building departments and other code enforcement agencies.

In keeping with the designations of the USBC used previously, since the 2006 editions of the International Codes are incorporated by reference into this version of the USBC, it is known as the 2006 edition of the USBC.

### Arrangement

The USBC is part of the Virginia Administrative Code (VAC), the official compilation of state regulations published under the authority and guidance of the Virginia Code Commission. Due to the difference in the section numbering system between the VAC and the model codes incorporated by reference into the USBC, the USBC utilizes a dual section numbering system. In the USBC, the VAC section numbers are listed first, followed by a section number matching the model code system. In this printing of the USBC, the VAC section numbers are omitted and only the model code numbering system is utilized. The version of the USBC containing both the VAC section numbers and the model code numbering is available from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and may also be accessed through the website of the Virginia Code Commission or by subscription to the VAC.

### Overview

The USBC is divided into three stand-alone parts. Part I contains regulations specific to the construction of new buildings and structures and alterations, additions and change of occupancy in existing buildings and structures and is known as the Virginia Construction Code. Part II contains optional regulations specific to the rehabilitation of existing buildings that may be used as an acceptable alternative to the Virginia Construction Code. Part II is known as the Virginia Rehabilitation Code. Part III of the USBC contains the regulations for the maintenance of existing structures which is enforced at the option of the local governments. It is known as the Virginia Maintenance Code.

### State Pamphlets and Codes Purchased from ICC

The 2006 edition of the USBC is being made available in pamphlet form as in past editions of the USBC. In the state pamphlet version, a single line is placed in the margin to delineate changes between the 2003 edition of the USBC and the 2006 edition of the USBC.

New for the 2006 edition are versions of the Virginia Construction Code, Virginia Rehabilitation Code, Virginia Maintenance Code and a series of Virginia specific trade codes published by the International Code Council (ICC). In the ICC published versions, marginal markings are provided to distinguish between text which is part of the International Codes and text which is part of the state regulations. Double vertical lines in the margins within the body of the codes indicate state amendments to the International Codes. As in the standard printings of the International Codes, a single vertical line in the margins within the body of the code indicates a technical change from the previous edition of the International Codes. Deletions from the previous editions of the International Codes are indicated in the form of an arrow ( → ) in the margin where an entire section, paragraph, exception or table has been deleted or an item in a list of items or a table has been deleted.

### Technical Assistance

The local building departments and enforcing agencies may be contacted for further information concerning the USBC. Contact information for the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development is below.



**Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development**  
**Division of Building and Fire Regulation**  
**501 North 2nd Street**  
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## Chapter 1 ADMINISTRATION

### SECTION 101 GENERAL

**101.1 Short title.** The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, Part II, Rehabilitation, may be cited as the Virginia Rehabilitation Code.

**101.2 Incorporation by reference.** Chapters 2 – 15 of the 2006 International Existing Building Code, published by the International Code Council, Inc., are adopted and incorporated by reference to be an enforceable part of the Virginia Rehabilitation Code. The term “IEBC” means the 2006 International Existing Building Code, published by the International Code Council, Inc. Any codes and standards referenced in the IEBC are also considered to be part of the incorporation by reference, except that such codes and standards are used only to the prescribed extent of each such reference.

**101.3 Numbering system.** A dual numbering system is used in the Virginia Rehabilitation Code to correlate the numbering system of the Virginia Administrative Code with the numbering system of the IEBC. IEBC numbering system designations are provided in the catch-lines of the Virginia Administrative Code sections and cross references between sections or chapters of the Virginia Rehabilitation Code use only the IEBC numbering system designations. The term “chapter” is used in the context of the numbering system of the IEBC and may mean a chapter in the Virginia Rehabilitation Code, a chapter in the IEBC or a chapter in a referenced code or standard, depending on the context of the use of the term. The term “chapter” is not used to designate a chapter of the Virginia Administrative Code, unless clearly indicated.

**101.4 Arrangement of code provisions.** The Virginia Rehabilitation Code is comprised of the combination of (i) the provisions of Chapter 1, Administration, which are established herein, (ii) Chapters 2 – 15 of the IEBC, which are incorporated by reference in Section 101.2, and (iii) the changes to the text of the incorporated chapters of the IEBC that are specifically identified. The terminology “changes to the text of the incorporated chapters of the IEBC that are specifically identified” shall also be referred to as the “state amendments to the IEBC.” Such state amendments to the IEBC are set out using corresponding chapter and section numbers of the IEBC numbering system. In addition, since Chapter 1 of the IEBC is not incorporated as part of the Virginia Rehabilitation Code, any reference to a provision of Chapter 1 of the IEBC in the provisions of Chapters 2 - 15 of the IEBC is generally invalid. However, where the purpose of such a reference would clearly correspond to a provision of Chapter 1 established herein, then the reference may be construed to be a valid reference to such corresponding Chapter 1 provision.

**101.5 Use of terminology and notes.** The term “this code,” or “the code,” where used in the provisions of Chapter 1, in Chapters 2 – 15 of the IEBC or in the state amendments to the IEBC means the Virginia Rehabilitation Code, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. The term “this code,” or “the code,” where used in a code or standard referenced in the IEBC means that code or standard, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. The term “USBC” where used in this code means Part I of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, also known as the “Virginia Construction Code,” unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. In addition, where the phrase “of the International Building Code under which the building was constructed” is used in the IEBC, it shall be construed to mean the USBC or other code that was in effect when the building was built. Further, the use of notes in Chapter 1 is to provide information only and shall not be construed as changing the meaning of any code provision. Notes in the IEBC, in the codes and standards referenced in the IEBC and in the state amendments to the IEBC may modify the content of a related provision and shall be considered to be a valid part of the provision, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

**101.6 Order of precedence.** The provisions of Chapter 1 of this code supersede any conflicting provisions of Chapters 2 – 15 of the IEBC and any conflicting provisions of the codes and standards referenced in the IEBC. In addition, the state amendments to the IEBC supersede any conflicting provisions of Chapters 2 – 15 of the IEBC and any conflicting provisions of the codes and standards referenced in the IEBC. Further, the provisions of Chapters 2 – 15 of the IEBC supersede any conflicting provisions of the codes and standards referenced in the IEBC.

**101.7 Administrative provisions.** The provisions of Chapter 1 establish administrative requirements, which include but are not limited to provisions relating to the scope and enforcement of the code. Any provisions of Chapters 2 – 15 of the IEBC or any provisions of the codes and standards referenced in the IEBC that address the same subject matter to a lesser or greater extent are deleted and replaced by the provisions of Chapter 1. Further, any administrative requirements contained

in the state amendments to the IEBC shall be given the same precedence as the provisions of Chapter 1. Notwithstanding the above, where administrative requirements of Chapters 2 – 15 of the IEBC or of the codes and standards referenced in the IEBC are specifically identified as valid administrative requirements in Chapter 1 of this code or in the state amendments to the IEBC, then such requirements are not deleted and replaced.

**Note:** The purpose of this provision is to eliminate overlap, conflicts and duplication by providing a single standard for administrative, procedural and enforcement requirements of this code.

**101.8 Definitions.** The definitions of terms used in this code are contained in Chapter 2 along with specific provisions addressing the use of definitions. Terms may be defined in other chapters or provisions of the code and such definitions are also valid.

## SECTION 102 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

**102.1 Purpose.** In accordance with Section 36-99.01 of the Code of Virginia, the General Assembly of Virginia has declared that (i) there is an urgent need to improve the housing conditions of low and moderate income individuals and families, many of whom live in substandard housing, particularly in the older cities of the Commonwealth; (ii) there are large numbers of older residential buildings in the Commonwealth, both occupied and vacant, which are in urgent need of rehabilitation and which must be rehabilitated if the State's citizens are to be housed in decent, sound, and sanitary conditions; and (iii) the application of those building code requirements currently in force to housing rehabilitation has sometimes led to the imposition of costly and time-consuming requirements that result in a significant reduction in the amount of rehabilitation activity taking place.

The General Assembly further declares that (i) there is an urgent need to improve the existing condition of many of the Commonwealth's stock of commercial properties, particularly in older cities; (ii) there are large numbers of older commercial buildings in the Commonwealth, both occupied and vacant, that are in urgent need of rehabilitation and that must be rehabilitated if the citizens of the Commonwealth are to be provided with decent, sound and sanitary work spaces; and (iii) the application of the existing building code to such rehabilitation has sometimes led to the imposition of costly and time-consuming requirements that result in a significant reduction in the amount of rehabilitation activity taking place.

**102.2 Scope.** In accordance with Section 103.6 of the USBC, this code shall be an acceptable alternative to compliance with the Virginia Construction Code for the rehabilitation of existing buildings and structures.

## SECTION 103 APPLICATION OF CODE

**103.1 General.** The provisions of this code shall control the rehabilitation, alteration, repair, addition and change of occupancy of existing buildings and structures when this code is chosen as an alternative to compliance with the Virginia Construction Code. All administrative provisions of the Virginia Construction Code, including but not limited to, requirements for permits, inspections and approvals by the local building department, provisions for appeals from decisions of the local building department and the issuance of modifications, are applicable to the use of this code, except where this code sets out differing requirements. Where there is a conflict between a general requirement and a specific requirement in the IEBC, the specific requirement shall govern.

**Exception:** The use of this code shall not be permitted for change of occupancy involving Group I-2 or Group I-3.

**103.1.1 Use of performance code.** Compliance with the provisions of a nationally recognized performance code when approved as a modification shall be considered to constitute compliance with this code. All documents submitted as part of such consideration shall be retained in the permanent records of the local building department.

**103.1.2 Preliminary meeting.** When requested by a prospective permit applicant or when determined necessary by the code official, the code official shall meet with the prospective permit applicant prior to the application for a permit to discuss plans for the proposed work or change of occupancy in order to establish the specific applicability of the provisions of this code.

**103.2 Requirements relating to maintenance.** Any requirements of the IEBC requiring the maintenance of existing buildings or structures are invalid.

**Note:** Requirements for the maintenance of existing buildings and structures and for unsafe conditions are contained in Part III of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, also known as the “Virginia Maintenance Code.”

**103.3 Use of Appendix A.** Appendix A of the IEBC provides guidelines for the seismic retrofit of existing buildings. The use of this appendix is not mandatory but shall be permitted to be utilized at the option of an owner, the owner’s agent or the RDP involved in a rehabilitation project. However, in no case shall the use of Appendix A be construed to authorize the lowering of existing levels of health or safety in buildings or structures being rehabilitated.

**103.4 Use of Appendix B.** Appendix B of the IEBC provides supplementary accessibility requirements for existing buildings and facilities. All applicable requirements of Appendix B shall be met in buildings and structures being rehabilitated.

**103.5 Use of Resource A.** Resource A of the IEBC provides guidelines for the evaluation of fire resistance ratings of archaic materials and may be used in conjunction with rehabilitation projects.

## Chapter 2 DEFINITIONS

Change Section 201.3 of the IEBC to read:

**201.3 Terms defined in other codes.** Where terms are not defined in this code and are defined in the other International Codes, such terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them in those codes, except that terms that are not defined in this code and that are defined in the Virginia Construction Code shall take precedence over other definitions.

Change the following definition in Section 202 of the IEBC to read:

**Existing building.** A building for which a legal certificate of occupancy has been issued under any edition of the USBC and that has been occupied for its intended use; or, a building built prior to the initial edition of the USBC.

## Chapter 7 ALTERATIONS – LEVEL 2

Change Section 704.2.1 of the IEBC to read:

**704.2.1 High-rise buildings.** In high-rise buildings, work areas that include either exits or corridors shared by more than one tenant or exits or corridors that serve an occupant load greater than 30 shall be provided with automatic sprinkler protection in the entire area where the work area is located on a floor that has a sufficient sprinkler water supply system from an existing standpipe or a sprinkler riser serving that floor.

Change Section 704.2.2 of the IEBC to read:

**704.2.2 Groups A, E, F-1, H, I, M, R-1, R-2, R-4, S-1 and S-2.** In buildings with occupancies in Groups A, E, F-1, H, I, M, R-1, R-2, R-4, S-1 and S-2, work areas that include either exits or corridors shared by more than one tenant or exits or corridors that serve an occupant load greater than 30 shall be provided with automatic sprinkler protection where all of the following conditions occur:

1. The work area is required to be provided with automatic sprinkler protection in accordance with the International Building Code as applicable to new construction;
2. The work area exceeds 50 percent of the floor area; and
3. The building has sufficient municipal water supply for design of a fire sprinkler system available to the floor without installation of a new fire pump.

**Exception:** Work areas in Group R occupancies three stories or less in height.

Change Section 704.2.3 of the IEBC to read:

**704.2.3 Windowless stories.** Work located in a windowless story, as determined in accordance with the International Building Code, shall be sprinklered where the work area is required to be sprinklered under the provisions of the International Building Code for newly constructed buildings and the building has a sufficient municipal water supply available without installation of a new fire pump.

Change Section 704.2.4 of the IEBC to read:

**704.2.4 Other required suppression systems.** In buildings and areas listed in Table 903.2.13 of the International Building Code, work areas that include either exits or corridors shared by more than one tenant or exit or corridors serving an occupant load greater than 30 shall be provided with sprinkler protection under the following conditions:

1. The work area is required to be provided with automatic sprinkler protection in accordance with the International Building Code applicable to new construction; and
2. The building has sufficient municipal water supply for design of a fire sprinkler system available to the floor without installation of a new fire pump.

Change Section 704.2.5 of the IEBC to read:

**704.2.5 Supervision.** Fire sprinkler systems required by this section shall be supervised by one of the following methods:

1. Approved central station system in accordance with NFPA 72;
2. Approved proprietary system in accordance with NFPA 72;
3. Approved remote station system of the jurisdiction in accordance with NFPA 72; or
4. When approved by the code official, approved local alarm service that will cause the sounding of an alarm in accordance with NFPA 72.

**Exception:** Supervision is not required for the following:

1. Underground gate valve with roadway boxes.
2. Halogenated extinguishing systems.
3. Carbon dioxide extinguishing systems.
4. Dry and wet chemical extinguishing systems.
5. Automatic sprinkler systems installed in accordance with NFPA 13R where a common supply main is used to supply both domestic and automatic sprinkler systems and a separate shutoff valve for the automatic sprinkler system is not provided.

Change Exception 2 of Section 705.2 to read:

2. Means of egress conforming to the requirements of the International Building Code under which the building was constructed shall be considered compliant means of egress.

Change Item 7 of Section 705.3.1.1 of the IEBC to read:

7. In Group R-2, H-4, H-5 and I occupancies and in rooming houses and childcare centers, a single exit is permitted in a one-story building with a maximum occupant load of 10 and the exit access travel distance does not exceed 75

feet (22 860 mm). In dwelling units within Group R-2 buildings, an occupant load of 12 shall be permitted to be substituted for the occupant load established above and, in addition, staff of such family day homes shall not be counted for the purposes of establishing occupant loads.

## Chapter 8 ALTERATIONS – LEVEL 3

Change Section 804.1 of the IEBC to read:

**804.1 Automatic sprinkler systems.** Automatic sprinkler systems shall be provided in all work areas when required by Section 704.2 or by this section.

Change Section 804.1.2 of the IEBC to read:

**804.1.2 Rubbish and linen chutes.** Rubbish and linen chutes located in the work area shall be provided with sprinkler protection where protection or other approved fire suppression systems of the rubbish or linen chute would be required under the provisions of the International Building Code for new construction.

## Chapter 9 CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY

Change Exception 4 of Section 912.4.1.1 of the IEBC to read:

- Existing corridor walls constructed on both sides of wood lath and plaster in good condition or 1/2-inch-thick (12.7 mm) gypsum wallboard shall be permitted. Such walls shall either terminate at the underside of a ceiling of equivalent construction or shall extend to the underside of the floor or roof next above.

## Chapter 11 HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Change Section 1101.2 of the IEBC to read:

**1101.2 Report.** The code official shall be permitted to require that an historic building undergoing repair, alteration or change of occupancy be investigated and evaluated by an RDP or other qualified person or agency as a condition of determining compliance with this code.

## Chapter 12 PERFORMANCE COMPLIANCE METHODS

Change Section 1301.2 of the IEBC to read:

**1301.2 Applicability.** Work involving rehabilitation, additions, alterations or changes of occupancy shall be made to conform to the requirements of this chapter or the provisions of Chapters 4 through 12. The provisions in Sections 1301.2.1 through 1301.2.5 shall apply to existing occupancies that will continue to be, or are proposed to be, in Groups A, B, E, F, M, R, S and U. These provisions shall not apply to buildings with occupancies in Group H or I.

Add an exception to Section 1301.2.1 of the IEBC to read:

**Exception:** Plumbing, mechanical and electrical systems in buildings undergoing a change of occupancy shall be subject to any applicable requirements of Section 103.3 of the Virginia Construction Code.