



10-21-2003

Tennessee Building and Fire Codes

Ray Crouch

Municipal Technical Advisory Service

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Recommended Citation

Crouch, Ray, "Tennessee Building and Fire Codes" (2003). *MTAS Publications: Hot Topics*.
http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_mtastop/133

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Tennessee Officials

FROM: Ray Crouch
UT-MTAS Fire Management Consultant

DATE: October 21, 2003

RE: **Hot Topic:** Tennessee Building and Fire Codes

The current building and fire codes adopted by the state of Tennessee under the authority of *Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.)* 68-120-101 et seq. are the 1999 SBCCI Building Code, and the 2000 NFPA # 1 Fire Prevention Code. However, the state is in the middle of its rule-making process to adopt new building and fire codes.

The proposed rules provide for the adoption of the 2002 International Building Code and the 2003 NFPA Uniform Fire Code. The state plans to hold an additional public forum on the International Building Code. The purpose of that forum is to allow more discussion on the seismic requirements in the IBC.

Exempt cities have two choices: (1) They can wait until new building and fire codes come out of the rule-making process and adopt codes that mirror the new state codes, or (2) they can adopt building and fire codes under the authority given them by Public Acts 2003, Chapter 29, which amended *T.C.A.* 68-120-101(b)(2)(A). That amendment added the International Building Code and the International Fire Code to the list of standard codes a city can adopt and enforce to maintain its local building safety program.

Non-exempt cities should wait until the rule-making process is complete and the state has adopted new building and fire codes. Until then, they can continue to enforce their existing building codes. Cities will be notified when the new state codes are adopted.

For fire inspectors or other fire or building officials that would like to see a comparison between the NFPA Uniform Fire Code and the IBC Fire Code, the Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association has

arranged a two day seminar on October 27-28, 2003, in Murfreesboro at the Doubletree Hotel. The seminar is free, but each attendee must pay for their own lodging and meals.

Commissioner Paula Flowers of the Department of Commerce and Insurance has extended the comment period on the rule-making process for adopting new Fire and Building Codes until **October 31, 2003** to allow more input from cities. If you have comments that you want to make, you still have time before the end of the month.