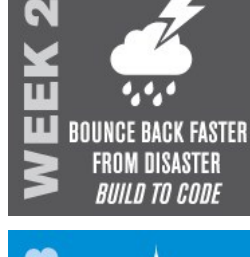




BUILDING SAFETY MONTH MAY

INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL

Volume 4, Spring 2015



Building Safety Month 2015:

"Resilient Communities Start With Building Codes"

To help raise awareness of building safety, the department of Community Development and Code Compliance proudly celebrates Building Safety Month during May. The theme for this year's celebration is "Resilient Communities Start With Building Codes"

All communities need building codes to protect their citizens from every day disasters like fires, weather-related events such as floods and structural collapse that follows deterioration over time of buildings of all kinds. Model building codes, adopted and enforced by well-trained professional code officials are society's best way of protecting homes, offices, schools, manufacturing facilities, stores and places of entertainment. Building Safety Month is a month-long celebration of all aspects of building safety that helps families, employers and leaders understand and appreciate the best practices that keep the places where we live, work and play, safe.

Click on one of the logos above or visit the BSM website for more information.

Code Change Corner (2012 USBC Update)

The 2012 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) became effective July 14, 2014. There is a one year period (until July 13, 2015) during which a permit applicant can choose to construct under the 2009 USBC or the 2012 USBC. All permits applied for after July 13, 2015 must be constructed under the 2012 USBC.

Significant changes have been made to the 2012 USBC and to the model codes (IRC, IBC, IPC, IMC, NEC, Energy Code, etc.) that are incorporated as part of the USBC. It is always best to learn about the code changes before attempting to construct under the new codes. Code changes can effect the cost of a job, and not understanding new code requirements may result in doing a job more than once to get it approved.



Click here for free 2012 Editions online!

Please contact Jeff Brown at 804.722.8659 or by email for further information or if you have questions about the 2012 Virginia Codes.

2012 CODE UPDATE TRAINING OPPORTUNITY!



Region VI of the Virginia Building and Code Officials Association is offering training to anyone interested in learning about the code changes. Training will be offered in Prince George, Chesterfield and Richmond. Each location will host two days of training covering residential, commercial, plumbing, mechanical and fuel gas code changes.

Sign up

2012 Code Update Training

Dates/Locations:

RICHMOND

May 27th:

IRC/IBC

May 28th:

IPC/IMC/IFGC

CHESTERFIELD

June 2nd:

IRC/IBC

June 3rd:

IPC/IMC/IFGC

PRINCE GEORGE

June 10th:

IRC/IBC

June 11th:

IPC/IMC/IFGC



Environmental Corner

What can you do to....help the planet? clean a nearby stream? reduce runoff? reduce pollutants? cool your house in summer? prevent erosion?

Plant More Plants!

Why plants? Plants are the first line of defense in preventing erosion and managing stormwater. Plants hold soil in place and protect it from the force of falling raindrops, and when strategically placed, can shelter a home from sun and wind. Studies show that you can reduce annual heating and cooling costs between \$100 and \$250 by planting just 3 properly placed trees. [U.S. Department of Energy]

Help the planet. According to Virginia Cooperative Extension, one tree can remove up to 26 pounds of carbon dioxide each year. That's equal to 11,000 miles of car emissions!

Which plants? Not all plants are equal. Choose the right plant for your site: big or small, moist or dry, grass, tree, or shrub, annual or perennial. Evaluate your site for sun, shade, wind direction, and soil moisture then take a soil sample to see if any amendments are needed to insure plant success. Develop a plan based on your needs (play area, garden, lawn, orchard, etc.), the soil types present, and climate. In Prince George County the U.S.D.A. Hardiness Zone is 7b. Selecting plants within this Hardiness Range will save you money that you won't have to spend on replacing plants that melt in summer heat or die back in winter. If you spend a lot of time pruning, watering, and fertilizing then perhaps you have the wrong plant for the space. Match the mature size of a tree or plant to its place in your yard.

Why native plants? Native plants are better adapted to local conditions: they need less water, fertilizer, and fussing over. And **most importantly**, they are more useful to native wildlife, birds, and insects.

Non-native plants are often selected from areas of the world with similar climate or latitude. But they have not evolved with the same pests and diseases. As a result, they can bring in new pests and diseases and because they have no natural enemies they may be able to out-compete native plants.

So what do I need to do?

- Make a plan
- Choose the right (native) plants for your site based on your needs and the mature size of the plant
- Have your soil tested and make any needed amendments
- Plant new plants at the correct depth
- Mulch plants correctly (no mulch volcanos) to control weeds and stabilize moisture



Code Enforcement Update: Grass Cutting Season

The winter weather is behind us and the grass is growing. Tall grass and weeds create hazards to neighborhood residents and contribute to an unkempt look and feel to a neighborhood. Tall grass can harbor trash and hazards which can be dangerous to neighborhood occupants and children. Pests are more comfortable in these overgrown conditions. A highly overgrown lot becomes very dry in the heat of summer and is a potential for a fire hazard. County Code requires that tall grass and weeds be kept under 15 inches in height. The Code Enforcement Division of the Community Development and Code Compliance Department investigates all complaints of tall grass and issues notices when a violation is found. A property owner is given ten days to correct a tall grass violation. If the violation is not corrected within ten days, the County may contract a grass cutting service to remedy the violation. The cost incurred by the County for grass cutting services is required to be paid by the property owner. For more information on this or other Property Maintenance topics, please visit the [Code Compliance Web Page](#) or call the Department of Community Development and Code Compliance at 804.722.8659.



Summer Safety Tips From NFPA



There's nothing like outdoor grilling. It's one of the most popular ways to cook food. But, a grill placed too close to anything that can burn is a fire hazard. They can be very hot, causing burn injuries. Follow these simple tips and you will be on the way to safe grilling.

SAFETY TIPS

- » Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- » The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- » Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.
- » Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- » Never leave your grill unattended.
- » Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

CHARCOAL GRILLS

- » There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- » If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- » Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- » There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.
- » When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.

Your Source for SAFETY Information
NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

PROPANE Grills

Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off the gas tank and grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department. **If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department.** Do not move the grill.

If the flame **goes out**, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least **15 minutes** before re-lighting it.

FACTS

- ! July is the peak month for grill fires.
- ! Roughly half of the injuries involving grills are thermal burns.



www.nfpa.org/education

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Questions or comments? E-mail us at inspections@princegeorgecountyva.gov or call 804.722.8659