

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The history of the Governors Council on Fire Prevention and Control dates back to the 1969 Legislative, and today operates under executive order no. 03-04 signed by Governor Pawlenty April 4th, 2003.

Our Current Mission is to:

- Provide a focal point for the exchange of information
- Develop the best possible fire education, protection, and prevention services for the people of Minnesota, and
- Coordinate the delivery of this information.

The continuing mission of the Council is to review new technology and capabilities in protecting life and property from fire and how we are affected by day to day changes in fire safety.

Current Goal

Adoption of the Minnesota State Building Code as the minimum standard for fire and life safety for all of the citizens of Minnesota.

The Purpose of Building Codes:

The code has had a long history with a purpose of providing minimum safety standards for buildings. The 1927 edition of the Uniform Building code stated that its purpose was to provide certain minimum standards, provisions and requirements for safe and stable design methods of construction and uses of materials in building and occupancy of all buildings. This is consistent with the Minnesota State Building code which states: The purpose of this code is to establish the minimum standards to safe guard the public health, safety and general welfare through structural strength, means of egress facilities, stability, sanitation, adequate light and ventilation, energy conservation, and safety to life and property from fire and other hazards attributed to the built environment. The common Theme of these codes from 1927 to the present is to provide minimum standards to safeguard life and limb, health, and public welfare by regulating and controlling the design and construction of buildings.

The History of Code Enforcement

The history of code enforcement in Minnesota started with state laws enacted in 1971. The first State Building Code became effective in 1972 and superseded all municipal building codes. Currently, the code is administered in 420 of Minnesota's 854 cities, 69 of the state's 1,790 townships, and 20 of the state's 87 counties.

Support for Statewide Adoption

The Governor's council on Fire Prevention and Control sees an urgent need for a uniform, minimum standard of protection for all Minnesota citizens. It has become evident that many of the accidents, deaths and property damage incidents arise from structures that are not required to meet any standards.

The Council cites the following examples:

- While 46% of the state's population lives in greater Minnesota – historically 66% of the states fire deaths occur there.
- The incidents of building collapses due to wind or snow loads have gone from 8 to 12 per year to several hundred per year. Much of this can be directly attributable to structures which do not comply with any reasonable minimum standards.
- "Fire in Minnesota", the annual report from the Office of the State Fire Marshal, states that fire deaths in greater Minnesota have out paced those in the seven county metro areas by a rate of two to one. All of the 7 county metro areas enforce the Minnesota State Building Code.
- The Fire Code and Building Code are companion documents meant to work together.

Summary

1. The Building Code provides minimum requirements to safeguard the public safety, health and general welfare through standards for the built environment.
2. Most Minnesotans believe they are protected by codes when they hire a contractor to construct a building and when they are in a building for entertainment, to shop, worship or work.
3. Consumers today expect quality buildings, built to reasonable standards, no matter where they are located in the state. That expectation is not always met.
4. Statewide code application would create greater consistency in construction, quality, safety and enhance consumer protection.
5. The state as a whole would benefit from statewide building code adoption.
6. Currently the following codes are applied statewide:
 - Accessibility Code
 - Boiler and High Pressure Piping Code
 - Electrical Code
 - Elevator Code
 - Fire Code
 - Manufactured Home Code
 - Plumbing Code

Since all of these documents have protection of the states' residents as a main goal, it is only reasonable that the Building Code be included as a Minnesota standard.

The Governor's Council on Fire Prevention and Control makes the following recommendations:

1. The Minnesota State Building Code (MSBC) should be the construction standard for all new or remodeled construction projects throughout the state.
2. Farm residences and any attached garages would be included. Agricultural buildings should be exempted unless they exceeded 5,000 square feet, at which point they should be required to conform to the structural requirements of the code only.
3. The purpose of this initiative is to provide a standard of quality and safety to which all builders, contractors and owners can be held.
4. This is not intended to be a mandate for any government entity to hire personnel to enforce the code.

Governors Council on Fire Prevention and Control Members

FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL OCCUPATIONS

Fire Marshals Assn. of Minnesota
Int'l. Assn. of Arson Investigators
Minnesota Fire Protection Council
Minnesota Professional Firefighters
Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Assn.
Minnesota State Fire Department Assn.

ORGANIZATIONS TEACHING FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL

Fire Instructors Assn. of Minnesota
Henn. Cty. Medical Center - Burn Center
Minnesota Safety Council

STATE AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

League of Minnesota Cities
Minnesota Assn. of Townships

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL

Insurance Federation of Minnesota
Mpls. Bldg. Owners and Mgrs. Assn.
MN Fair Plan
MN Society American Institute of Architects
RAM Mutual Insurance

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Department of Public Safety
 State Fire Marshal Division
 Homeland Security & Emergency Management
Fire/EMS/Safety Center
State Building Codes & Standards Div.
DNR/US Forest Service