

RAC UPDATE

December 2016

Jim Brown, Chairman

Doug McMonigle, Vice-Chair

Construction Codes

Swimming Pool Code Becomes Mandatory; Codes Will Remain the Same for 2017

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) states that there will be no new code editions for 2017. The 2012 International Swimming Pool and Spa Code (ISPSC) with GA Amendments that provides construction standards for residential and commercial pools will become mandatory. Training classes on the Swimming Pool Code are being conducted around the state. Check HBAG website for dates and locations

See attached list of current construction codes in effect in Georgia for 2017

Review Process for New Edition of Energy Code Begins

DCA began the review of the 2015 IECC (Energy) Code in December with a proposed effective date of January 1, 2018. Neal Davis, Greater Atlanta HBA and HBAG past president, is the HBAG representative to the Energy Code Task. The Task Force has 17 members made of representatives from residential and commercial building interests, code officials, suppliers, manufacturers, utilities and energy advocates. The Task Force is charged with reviewing this code edition to identify any specific areas that may need changing or amending specific to Georgia. However, the changes should not weaken the code per Georgia law. While that may be subjective, the adoption of the Energy Code is subject to approval of the state Energy office, GEFA (Georgia Environmental Finance Authority) in addition to the State Codes Advisory Committee (SCAC) and the DCA Board.

The 2015 IECC contains mandatory requirements for higher levels of insulation, increased building air-tightness, and mechanical ventilation requirements as well as increases in lighting efficiency. These requirements were introduced into the 2012 IECC which HBAG was successful in getting the state (DCA) to skip. Georgia already has the mandatory envelope (blower door) and duct tightness testing. Stringent prescriptive envelope requirements (lower air exchange rates) make the 2015 IECC prescriptive and tradeoff paths more difficult than the current code.

There is a new Energy Rating Index (ERI) or HERS path in the 2015 IECC that gives the most design flexibility (credit for mechanical equipment efficiency) and credits for items not covered by the code, such as appliance efficiencies. There have been increased efficiencies in HVAC and appliances due to requirements in manufacturing standards as well as new products and technologies in the last couple of years that assist with this compliance path. The HERS Index is growing trend around the country. Builders and utilities are finding it to be a useful marketing tool. HBAG has a subcommittee reviewing this option and the 2015 IECC requirements.

HBAG representative, Neal Davis and Consultant, Bettie Sleeth, are looking at all these new requirements to see if there are any avenues for modifications. We are also looking

at what the exact cost impacts could be, as well reviewing some new energy efficiency sheathing and insulation for effectiveness and unintended consequences.

HBAG and our representatives reviewing the Energy Code will need your help in this research. Please help in providing information about your experience and also help run calculations, if requested.

Review Process for New Edition of Electric Code Also Begins

HBAG's representative to the National Electric Code Task Code is Electrical Contractor, Rob Zapata, highly recommended from the BA of Metro Augusta. The Task Force is reviewing the 2017 National Electric Code (NEC) for a scheduled adoption in January 2018.

There are 9 members of the Electrical Code Review Committee, mostly electrical contractors, inspectors, engineers and fire officials. A comparison between the current 2014 NEC and 2017 NEC was given at the December 8 meeting at DCA. There is no expansion of GFCI's or AFCI's in the new edition; mainly because they are already required in most locations in the home.

HBAG Regulatory Affairs Committee is deciding whether to again introduce an amendment to remove some the AFCI requirements, especially the requirement for the outlet behind the refrigerator to AFCI (Arc Fault) protected.

HBAG must have data from Georgia builders and electrical contractors that this is an issue to have any chance of success or for the review committee to give it serious consideration.

Contact Bettie Sleeth with any data or questions and issues concerning the Energy and Electric Codes. You may also contact her with questions about other codes, environmental, licensing or other regulatory concerns at bsleeth@hbag.org