

Subject: 2014 ABC and AFC code availability and application

Questions have been raised concerning the availability and application of the 2014 editions of the Alberta Fire Code (AFC) and the Alberta Building Code (ABC). Please feel free to distribute the following information. The attached updated bulletin on code purchase from NRC is now posted on the Municipal Affairs website at http://municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/cp_building_codes_standards

Current Code Status and Application between the AFC and ABC during Transition:

1. As of today, May 1, the 2014 editions of the AFC and the ABC are now available in binder and electronic formats. The delivery of the online PDF will take longer (possibly two to three weeks) as a result of ongoing issues in the reconstruction of NRC's functions from the July 2014 cyber-attack and order backfill. NRC has been taking orders for both the AFC and ABC for the past few weeks.
2. The Building Code Regulation provides for a 6 month transition period from the date of the new ABC coming into force (May 1, 2015). The 6 month transition period allows for the application of the previous ABC (2006 edition) provided a permit has been received prior to the end of the transition period (November 1, 2015); or the safety codes officer is satisfied that the preparation of the plans and specifications for the project commenced prior to the coming into force date (May 1, 2015).
3. The objective of the transition period, which is a provision of the Building Code Regulation and applicable throughout the Province of Alberta, is to apply common sense application of the codes. By allowing permitted construction or substantially developed plans/specifications to proceed under the previous code edition for a temporary period of 6 months, a reasonable transition from the old rules to the new rules is allowed to occur. In addition, the transition period allows for continued use of the 2006 AFC and ABC code editions during any delay in the distribution/delivery of the 2014 AFC and ABC code editions.
4. Application of a new AFC and the ABC 6 month transition period:
 - The AFC does not have a formal transition period in regulation because where the AFC references or supports the ABC, the 6 month transition period for the ABC automatically applies. A new ABC applies to work or construction following the coming into force date, while the new AFC maintains the new ABC standards post closure of the permit (may apply post construction or post occupancy). Where the AFC references the ABC provisions, the AFC also has a 6 month transition period – the authority having jurisdiction cannot enforce the new AFC requirements that reference the new ABC unless the new ABC requirements are in force and in use.
 - There are other sections of the AFC that are unique to the AFC, such as requirements for flammable and combustible liquids and fireworks, which are not in the ABC and may be applied as of May 1, 2015. Application of the sections unique to the AFC for May 1, 2015 will depend upon the authority having jurisdiction having in its possession the new code publications and providing reasonable notice to the public until the codes are broadly available.
 - The references between the ABC and the AFC work in two ways: the first way is an exact reference between the ABC and AFC that maintains the ABC requirements post construction; the second way is an indirect or general reference for subject areas such as protection of the public during construction and site security, which are set out differently between the ABC and AFC but the subject matter is intended to be coordinated between the building and fire safety codes for construction. In these circumstances, the ABC and AFC shall work as companion documents and the code framework does not support "cherry picking" provisions from the new AFC code edition to be applied to construction permitted or allowed under the previous ABC and AFC code requirements.

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