

# 2024 Building Code Adoption Tracking: FEMA Region 3

This fact sheet provides a high-level overview of the status of hazard-resistant building code adoption in each state and territory within a FEMA region. The regional fact sheets show an annual metric of the percent of communities adopting hazard-resistant<sup>1</sup> building codes. Notes in *italics* indicate non-weakening notes relating to administrative, enforcement, or other non-design provisions.

## Why Building Codes?

Disaster resilience starts with building codes because they enhance public safety and property protection.

## Why Track Codes?

- Represent the best evidence for disaster resistance
- Create best overall return on investment
- Comply with [Technology Transfer Act](#)
- Cornerstone of effective mitigation to reduce losses in future disasters
- Codes = better built buildings, better performance during natural hazards
- Hazard codes for seismic, high winds, water and fire enable uniformity, efficiencies, and predictable performance
- Recognize the disaster preparedness of communities when determining level of federal funding

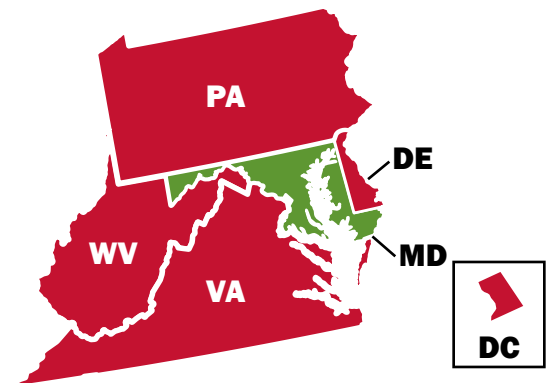


Figure 1. FEMA Region 3

## Purpose of Building Code Adoption Tracking

- Track the adoption rate of the latest consensus-based codes across the nation
- Track the results of adoption in improving disaster-resistant buildings in natural hazard areas
- Use the emerging data to inform FEMA policies and laws in pre-disaster and post-disaster goals
- Federal funding assistance requirements may be correlated to adoption of the latest published building code editions as required by legislation and/or FEMA policies such as the [Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018](#) and the associated Federal Cost Share Reform Incentive

<sup>1</sup> Hazard-resistant codes mean the 2018 or later International Building Code and International Residential Code, without weakening of any resilience provisions related to any of the five tracked hazards for which the jurisdiction is at high risk.



## FEMA’s Role Will Be Continuous

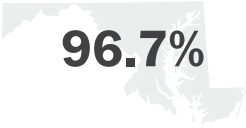
- Proposing building code changes to maintain consistency with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and to incorporate best practices identified in post-disaster investigations.
- Defending against changes that weaken flood, wind, and seismic provisions.
- Contributing to requests for interpretations by International Code Council.
- Supporting the training of state, local, tribal and territorial officials.



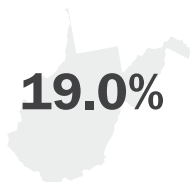
**Figure 2. Building Code Adoption Tracking Process**

The following percentages indicate the tracked jurisdictions which have adopted hazard-resistant<sup>2</sup> building codes within each state. The percentages are based upon jurisdictions within each state which are at high risk<sup>3</sup> to one or more hazard types (Region 3’s hazards are flood, damaging wind, hurricane wind, and tornado):

### MARYLAND

 <p style="font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold;">96.7%</p>	<b>HIGHER RESISTANCE</b>	
	<b>IBC</b>	State adopts the 2021 International Building Code (IBC) but allows jurisdictions to modify it with wide discretion.
	<b>IRC</b>	State adopts the 2021 International Residential Code (IRC) but allows jurisdictions to modify it with wide discretion.
Note: State is not fully resistant because Howard County has weakened flood resilience in the IRC by local amendment.		

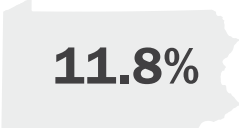
### WEST VIRGINIA

 <p style="font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold;">19.0%</p>	<b>LOWER RESISTANCE</b>	
	<b>IBC</b>	State adopts the 2018 IBC but does not require jurisdictions to adopt it, in which case it does not apply in those jurisdictions.
	<b>IRC</b>	State adopts the 2018 IRC but does not require jurisdictions to adopt it, in which case it does not apply in those jurisdictions.


<sup>2</sup> Hazard-resistant codes mean the 2018 or later IBC and IRC, without weakening of any resilience provisions related to any of the five tracked hazards for which the jurisdiction is at high risk.

<sup>3</sup> High-risk is defined according to national consensus-based standards, the National Flood Insurance Program, and the Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule. For a detailed description of the high-risk methodology, visit the FEMA Building Code Adoption Tracking landing page at [www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management/building-science/bcat/](http://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management/building-science/bcat/).

## PENNSYLVANIA

 <p><b>11.8%</b></p>	<b>LOWER RESISTANCE</b>	
	<b>IBC</b>	Commonwealth adopts the 2018 IBC. <i>Note that Pennsylvania removes NFIP-related flood administrative provisions for criteria for granting a variance in a flood hazard area (Sec. 104.10.1).</i>
	<b>IRC</b>	Commonwealth adopts the 2018 IRC. Commonwealth weakens flood resistance in R322.2.1 for A zones by removing the +1 foot freeboard requirement and for AO zones by specifying elevation requirements that are one foot lower than the model values. Commonwealth also weakens flood resistance in R322.3.2 by making the +1 foot minimum freeboard requirement depend on the orientation to wave approach.

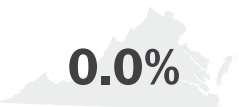
## DELAWARE

 <p><b>6.2%</b></p>	<b>LOWER RESISTANCE</b>	
	<b>IBC</b>	No statewide building code.
	<b>IRC</b>	No statewide residential code.

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

 <p><b>0.0%</b></p>	<b>LOWER RESISTANCE</b>	
	<b>IBC</b>	District adopts the (outdated) 2015 edition of the IBC, with Appendix G (Flood-Resistant Construction).
	<b>IRC</b>	District adopts the (outdated) 2015 edition of the IRC.

## VIRGINIA

 <p><b>0.0%</b></p>	<b>LOWER RESISTANCE</b>	
	<b>IBC</b>	Commonwealth adopts the 2021 IBC. Commonwealth has begun the 2021 IBC review and adoption process with an anticipated effective date in December 2023 or January 2024.
	<b>IRC</b>	Commonwealth adopts the 2021 IRC. Commonwealth weakens wind resilience in R602.12 by extending the size of the building for which the simplified wall bracing method can be used from 60ft to 80ft and the allowed eave-to-ridge height from 15ft to 20ft.