



Division of Fire Safety
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H.718 Overview: House Energy & Digital Infrastructure

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Division of Fire Safety
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- **The Division of Fire Safety is responsible for plan review and permitting for all construction and renovations of public buildings. In short- everything except your home and farms and some AG exemptions.**
- **Code management /rental housing health and safety code.**
- **Fire Service Training (Career and Volunteer) Pro-Board Accredited**
- **Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)**
- **Hazardous Material Response Team**
- **Fire Investigation**
- **Electrical, Plumbing, Handicap Access and Elevator Safety Boards**



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- **The Division of Fire Safety has inspection and permitting authority for buildings defined in statute as “Public Buildings”.**
- **Public buildings include all structures except single family owner-occupied free-standing dwellings, farms and some ag exemptions. Farm housing provided to farm workers is defined as a public building.**
- **We have no interest to expand our regulatory authority into single-family owner-occupied homes.**



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Code Adoption: There two major code development entities is the United States (1) NFPA – National Fire Protection Association (2) ICC- International Code Council

Vermont is a NFPA and ICC State we adopt standards from both major code developers like most states across the country. Through rule making we adopt standards that best serve and protect our citizens while being mindful of the economic impact. We amend these standards through rules to address specific issues like carbon monoxide, gas certification, smoke alarms and much more.



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Section 1: Findings

(2) Vermont has not adopted a residential building construction code which means there is

no administrative infrastructure or enforcement mechanism for implementing energy codes consistently and effectively.



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Section 1 Response:

- The Division of Fire Safety does adopt the International Building Code (IBC) for residential construction. The broad statement that Vermont has not adopted a residential construction code can be clarified. The Division adopts through rules the IBC -International Building Code which applies to all new residential construction of **3 units or more**.
- Buildings under the authority of fire safety we do not adopt the International Residential Building Code (IRC) which applies only to **1&2 Family Dwellings**.
- We do require construction permit applications, electrical/plumbing work notices, structural on floor and roof assemblies and certified technicians for fuel for all 1&2 Family and they are inspected.



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Section 2: ADOPTION OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDING CODE; APPROPRIATION; POSITION

Response:

- **The Division opposes creating an exempt building code administrator. First, I have not heard of this, no idea what this position is or how we would fund it and what it even means.**
- **The division strongly opposes the adoption of the International Residential Building Code by January 1, 2028. We need more time to assess and evaluate- there are major business flow issues and many amendments that would have to be made before considering this.**



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Section 3 - Grant Funding- The Commissioner of Public Safety shall seek grant funding federal and private to support the adoption of the IRC.

Response: The Division does not need funding to pursue or assess whether to recommend the adoption of the IRC and we do not need funding to adopt it should we. We did receive a BRIC Grant but the current Federal Administration denied allocating the funding. Recent court ruled the funding had to be released. We do have money for training budgeted in the grant.



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Section 4 - Residential Contractor Regulation Task Force Reports:

Response:

The Division of Fire Safety works with a magnitude of stakeholder groups and we are not in support of taking over contractor registry from OPR.

For awareness, the structure of the task force does not reflect a member from the Associated Contractors.



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Section 5 - Requirements for Registrants

Response: Disclosure of criminal background

A person registered under this chapter shall, prior to executing a contract pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, provide a client with a written disclosure of any prior criminal convictions, adverse civil judgments, and violations pursuant to section 5510 of this title. Although not in my wheelhouse, I would think this might discourage contractors from registering.



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Section 6: REQUIRED EDUCATION FOR SPECIFIED LICENSEES; STATE ENERGY GOALS

Response:

The current energy goal module is housed in the Division of Fire Safety.

In the 2020 Legislative session, (S.220) was signed into law requiring many trade professionals to complete a Vermont Energy Goals Education Module. The law required the Department of Public Service, in consultation with the Agency of Natural Resources, to develop an educational module describing Vermont's Energy Goals.



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Response Section 6:

The new law applies to the following trades listed below:

- Licensed Electricians
- Licensed Plumbers
- Oil and Gas Appliance Technicians
- Commissioned Boiler Inspectors

* Commissioned Boiler Inspectors inspect boilers and pressure vessels, and they do not inspect hot air furnaces. Boiler inspectors inspect boilers for pressure related safety standards and is not an efficiency related profession. Example: pressure relief valve-this group should be removed from this list.



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Response Section 6:

All the trades impacted by S.220 from 2020 have continuing education requirements. When this law was passed, we had very little time to push the module out to thousands of trade professionals. The only way we could accomplish this without creating a wholesale failure of our licensing program was to incorporate the module into all our continuing education classes for renewals and provide a standalone module for all our trade professionals including those who have reciprocity or universal licensing with us including the military. This initiative required all the continuing education providers to amend their curriculum and we had to run this through the boards to make this work.



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Response Section 6:

Oil and Gas Technicians: Renews every 3 years and requires 8 hours of continued education. 2 of those hours must be carbon monoxide prevention and the energy efficiency module.

Electricians: 15 hours every 3 years (must take energy efficiency module)

Plumbers: 8 hours every 2 years including the energy efficiency module

The continuing education classes often include required code updates as we normally adopt the amended codes every three years when the codes are published.



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Response Section 6:

We support the updating of the energy efficiency module as this has not been updated in 5 – 6 years, the material is outdated.

I oppose removing the 2-hour maximum time frame and others including the VT Fuel Dealers should weigh in on this. Changing the time frame/duration of our existing module will require all the continuing ed providers to redo curriculum.

This education module should not be connected to licensing/certification but rather create a meaningful education program that can be offered and taken by the trade groups (seminars, conferences, trade shows). We would help push the education program out through our network.