



Building Bulletin

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2024 Ontario Building Code Change Highlights

May 21, 2024
BB 2024-06

Dear Valued Customer,

As you are likely aware, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) announced a new 2024 Ontario Building Code (OBC) as it was filed on April 10, 2024. The 2024 OBC will be effective Jan. 1, 2025. Ironically, the 2024 OBC will celebrate the 50-year anniversary of Ontario having its own Code, and during this time amended some 120 times. The current 2012 OBC has been amended 26 times. Along with the efforts of harmonization among Provincial Codes and the National Building Code of Canada (NBC), one of the desired goals is to reduce red tape and construction barriers.

MMAH staff previously advised there are approx. 2400 code changes (from 2012 OBC) in the new 2024 OBC, in part because of the harmonization and code updates. The 2024 OBC changes included the following factors;

1. Housing supply and innovation,
2. Health and safety,
3. Cost,
4. Reduce red tape, and
5. Better buildings

To help our customers better understand some of the 2024 OBC changes, here are some highlights we noted and wanted to share to keep our customers informed. **This list is not the complete and final list of code changes!**

New OBC Requirements

1. Farm Buildings

- Harmonizing with NBC and will be located in Part 2 of the OBC (previously Reserved),
- Farm building requirements will be divided into small and large buildings,
- New occupancy classification - Group G, Division 1 to 4.

2. Septic Systems (Ontario-only changes)

- 6 to 7 changes only.

3. 2 Unit Houses / Secondary Suites

- Mostly harmonized w/ NBC, except overall suite size provisions not included,
- Some changes from current requirements include; “house” definition removed, lower ceiling heights, and no sharing of r/a on purpose built 2 unit buildings (conversions of existing buildings can still share furnace for up to 4 units under Part 11).

4. Large Buildings (Accessibility)

- Harmonize w/ NBC requirements to enhance current OBC requirements,
- All pedestrian entrances to be barrier free accessible.

5. Carbon Monoxide

- Harmonize w/ NBC requirements to enhance current OBC requirements by expanding to care occupancies and some commercial establishments.

6. Radon

- Harmonize w/ NBC, including rough-in for a sub floor depressurization in all new homes,
- SB-9 revised, and new Appendix note (with examples of rough-in pipe to be provided)

7. a) Large Buildings (Fire Safety)

- Harmonize fire protection with NBC (standpipe, fire alarm systems, sprinklers). Updates include;
 - Standpipe connections in exits,
 - **If sprinklered, a fire alarm system is required,**
 - Sprinklers required on all storeys below other storeys that are required to be sprinklered (superimposed major occupancies),
 - Mezzanine and interconnected floor space requirements - changes to exit, egress, fire compartments, smoke control, travel distance, and more,
 - New materials standard used in the construction of plastic signs (Ontario-only)

7. b) Large Buildings (Exterior Cladding)

- Harmonize w/ NBC – comb. cladding and wall components to be addressed separately,
- Remove 6 storey limitation on use of comb. cladding where tested to ULC-S134,
- Permit comb. wall components, other than cladding, when protected by concrete/masonry cladding.

8. Structural Design

- Harmonize w/NBC in the following areas, including Professional Engineer required to design under Part 4;
 - Earthquake design,
 - Importance categories – revises the descriptions,
 - Solar panels – introduces provisions to calculate wind and snow loads for roofs,
 - Canopies and parapets – introduces provisions to calculate wind loads for attached canopies, roof parapets, and balcony guards at top of buildings,
 - Serviceability – relocates the info from the “Structural Commentaries - User’s Guide” to the Code.

9. Structural Design (Storage Racks) i.e. large big box stores and other buildings with storage racks

- Harmonize and adopt NBC’s new requirements for structural design of storage racks in Part 4.

10. Plumbing (Harmonization Changes)

- Code terminology changes to align with construction terminology,
- Provide flexibility and more choices (e.g. alternative temp. limiting devices, new plumbing materials),
- Improve health and safety (i.e. max. temp. from 49°C to 43°C in health care and senior resident facilities).

11. Plumbing (Ontario-only Changes)

- Clarify technical requirements such as, shower heads, domestic water tanks, and grease interceptors,
- Require hot water temperature control devices in childcare centres.

12. Heating and Ventilation

- Harmonize w/ NBC HVAC requirements, and several requirements relocated to other Parts of the Code. Some changes include;
 - Subsection 6.2.4 is moved to Section 9.33.,
 - Section 9.32. harmonized with NBC, including removal of ventilation Types I to IV,
 - Commercial kitchen hood fire protection requirements in Part 6 moved to Part 3,
 - Ventilation of storage and repair garages harmonized, except carbon monoxide in repair garage.

13. Division A and C (Administrative Changes)

- Introduce multiple definitions supporting harmonization w/ NBC and Ontario-only requirements, update existing definitions and introduce 2 new functional statements (house definition removed),
- General Review by a Professional Engineer required for all underpinning,
- Applicable Law and occupancy requirements will clearly state; if/where a conditional permit is issued by the CBO where there is an outstanding RSC, occupancy is NOT permitted,
- Clarification, demolition permit is not required for the farm buildings on farmland. Still required for the farm-house building.

What did NOT make the 2024 OBC changes (more code development required)

1. Home-type care – Group B, Division 4 occupancies,
2. Guard changes, including climbability – MMAH plans to prepare a guide on guards for the industry,
3. Energy efficiency for houses and Large Buildings (did not adopt the NBC approach at this time),
i.e. SB-10 and SB-12 will remain at this time
4. Tornado resiliency of houses (Ottawa & Barrie submissions post tornado),
5. Septic systems, chamber systems and new leaching bed type.

Timing and Transition

The new 2024 OBC is effective on Jan. 1, 2025. In some cases, where the construction documents were substantially complete on or before Dec. 31, 2024, an additional 3 months is provided and applications may be filed on or before March 31, 2025. The 1997 and 2006 OBC's had very similar transition periods where additional time was provided where the construction documents were substantially completed before the effective date of the new Code. i.e. some new buildings and additions.

A consolidated 2024 OBC Compendium (Volume 1 and 2) version is not currently available. However, MMAH is working on the Compendium and is planning to release information in the next few weeks.

The Ontario Building Officials Association (OBOA) is working on a comparison document between the 2012 and 2024 OBC. OBOA is planning to revise training courses and make them available for industry and building officials by the Fall 2024.

Lastly, the Kitchener Building Division is planning to host targeted information sessions on the Code changes in the Fall of 2024. Likely a Part 3 workshop and a Part 9 workshop. Stay tuned for additional information and customers can be assured to receive future communications to share the wealth.