

F R O M	NAME & TITLE	Matthew W. Garbark, Acting Director	CITY of BALTIMORE <i>M E M O</i>
	AGEN CY NAME & ADDR ESS	Department of Public Works 600 Abel Wolman Municipal Building	
	SUBJE CT	City Council Bill 20-0505	

TO:

April 15, 2020

Judiciary Committee

INTRODUCTION

I am herein reporting on City Council Bill 20-0505 introduced by Council President Scott on behalf of the Administration (Department of Housing and Community Development).

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Bill is to adopt a revised Building, Fire, and Related Codes Article, comprising the Maryland Building Performance Standards (effective March 25, 2019), the International Building Code (2018 Edition), the National Electrical Code (2017 Edition), the International Fuel Gas Code (2018 Edition), the International Mechanical Code (2018 Edition), the International Plumbing Code (2018 Edition), the International Property Maintenance Code (2018 Edition), the International Fire Code (2018 Edition), the International Energy Conservation Code (2018 Edition), the International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings (2018 Edition), the International Green Conservation Code (2012 Edition), and the International Swimming Pool and Spa Code (2018 Edition), all as supplemented, amended, or otherwise modified by this Ordinance; providing for the effect, construction, and effective date of these new standards and codes; conforming, correcting, and clarifying certain language; providing for a special effective date; and generally relating to the adoption of new building, fire, property maintenance, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and related codes for Baltimore City.

BRIEF HISTORY

Periodically, the City reviews its building, property maintenance, mechanical, plumbing, and related codes and adopts revisions through an ordinance process. Revisions are necessary to keep these codes current and viable, by incorporating new standards, new materials, or new methods for compliance for the health and safety of our residents and businesses. Such changes may be the result of Baltimore's own experiences in administering the codes, or the result of changes proposed by national and international building officials and code administrators. The last comprehensive revisions to these codes were adopted through Ordinance 17-008.

Initially, the model for these codes had been the National Building Code issued by the Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc., or BOCA. Prior to 1993, there was no standard building code for the State of Maryland. Enactment of the Maryland Building Performance Standards Act of 1993 required the State to adopt the BOCA codes and to adopt the most recent editions of the codes within 24 months of their issue date. Jurisdictions were also required to use the BOCA as a model for its codes beginning in 1985. In 2000, the Maryland Building Performance Standards Act was amended by the General Assembly to recognize the replacement of the BOCA National Building Code with the International Building Code, and it is this code that the State of Maryland now requires jurisdictions to adopt. The Building, Fire and Related Codes include cross references to, and support for, other City codes. This inter-correlation is important for keeping clear standards expected of property owners, tenants and landlords, developers and builders, businesses and trades.

City Council Bill 20-0505, if approved, will adopt the latest revisions to the International Codes for Baltimore's Building, Fire, and Related Codes. Some examples of the changes to the Codes that are of interest to this Department are the following:

- Use permits will be required when transferring ownership or operation of certain uses such as banquet halls, which would keep the City informed of new owners or operators.
- The Building Official would be able to
 - suspend or revoke any permit if a federal, State or City agency has taken action to suspend or revoke a license or other action that curtails or diminishes the property use;
 - designate a portion of a structure or an independent structure as vacant even when another portion of a structure or separate structure is occupied;
 - revoke or withhold issuing permits for any unpaid citations or fees; and
 - fence nuisance private lots and private vacant buildings.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Department of Public Works does not anticipate incurring any significant fiscal impacts resulting from the changes proposed to the Building, Fire and Related Codes embodied in City Council Bill 20-0505. Allowing for such changes as the fencing of nuisance properties and other expanding authorities of the Building Official may result in some cost avoidance.

The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
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AGENCY/DEPARTMENT POSITION

The Department of Public Works supports passage of City Council Bill 20-0505.

Should the Committee have any questions prior to the hearing, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Marcia Collins via email at Marcia.Collins@baltimorecity.gov .

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew W. Garbark". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Matthew W. Garbark
Acting Director

MWG:MMC