
What is a “Code”?

A **code** is a collection of requirements, which pertain to a specific subject, to regulate specific practices.

For example, a building code is a collection of requirements (such as smoke detectors), which pertain to specific subjects (such as fire protection systems), which regulate specific practices (such as construction or remodeling of buildings).

The Department of Planning and Community Development enforces codes related to building construction, property standards, construction of roads, storm drainage and sediment and erosion.

The Purpose of Codes

No matter what the specific subject may be--construction, property maintenance, fire prevention, electrical or plumbing-- all codes have the same purpose: To protect the public health, safety and welfare by requiring safe construction and maintenance.

How do Codes become law?

Codes are adopted as laws and ordinances by the Greenbelt City Council with input from the community and businesses. Once adopted the Code becomes the law and all structures in the City must conform to that law.

How are Building Codes and Construction Codes used in the City of Greenbelt?

Codes become part of the permitting, licensing and inspection process. Code Administrators and Inspectors from the City of Greenbelt need the code to help their enforcement of the law. Inspections verify that code compliance has been achieved. Inspections made during the licensing of rental properties and commercial properties verify electrical, sanitation, structural, fire, plumbing, mechanical and life safety codes. Other inspections verify that construction of streets, stormwater management devices and environmental laws are being complied with at all times.



How do codes help you?

- ✓ Codes protect the public’s health, safety and welfare.

We all need protection from tragedy due to fire, structural collapse and general deterioration of the structures that surround us-- our homes, schools and stores. Building codes provide protection by reducing potential hazards to building occupants.

- ✓ Codes keep construction costs down.

Codes provide uniformity in the construction industry. This uniformity permits builders and material manufacturers to do business on a larger scale (statewide, regionally or nationally) than if construction was unregulated. A larger scale allows for cost savings that are ultimately passed on to the consumer.

- ✓ Codes provide consistent standards in construction.

Codes establish predictable and consistent minimum standards, which are applied to the quality and durability of construction materials.

- ✓ Codes contribute to the well being of the community.

The preservation of life and safety as well as the maintenance of property values over time are a direct result of the application and enforcement of building codes.

HOW DID BUILDING CODES ORIGINATE?

Codes are not the product of modern civilization but, rather, have evolved from the distant past. One of the earliest requirements, regarding regulation of building codes is found in Babylonia in the Code of Hammurabi. One of the articles held the builder liable by stating, “If a builder built a house and the house collapsed and killed the householder, the builder shall be slain.”

By the later part of the 19th Century widespread loss of life laid the basis for testing methodology, specifications and the various formats used in today’s codes. Its specific purpose was to reduce fire hazards, but it had a more general and humanitarian purpose: To protect the public health, safety and welfare.



SEDIMENT *More than just a*



dirty word

Soil erosion, with its resulting sedimentation, is a serious threat to the quality of our waters. Erosion is the washing away of soil by rain. Sedimentation is the accumulation of soil and other matter washed into our waterways from the land.

When the land is disturbed- by construction or road building, for example- its erodability greatly increases. As soil and other particles are washed into streams, the aquatic life that depends on clean water is severely stressed.

Sedimentation causes the aquatic nursery to die, fish spawning grounds to fill in and shellfish beds to become covered over, thus causing a decline in the habitat. Sediment is polluting and filling in their habitat. Many local watershed areas are so badly degraded in terms of habitat, water quality and their ability to control storm water that they no longer function as a natural vibrant ecosystem.

This department is trying to stop erosion and sedimentation from development related activities. Projects that will involve disturbing the soil must have an approved plan for controlling erosion and sedimentation, which Inspectors verify weekly for code compliance.

Codes you may not be aware of...

Rentals- All dwelling units within the City that are rented or leased by any person or persons other than himself/herself and members of his/her immediate family shall secure an occupancy license. If you have an unlicensed rental or are aware of one please contact us.

Handbills-No person shall throw, deposit or distribute any commercial handbill in or upon private premises which are inhabited, except by handing or transmitting any such handbill directly to the owner or occupant present on private premises. If you find handbills please pass them along to us. It is a \$400.00 fine to distribute handbills illegally.

Burglar Alarm Permits- All commercial or non-residential premises in the City require every alarm user to obtain a permit for each alarm system he operates. Residential alarm systems do not require a permit from the City.

Noise Control- It is unlawful in a residential area between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. the next day to operate any sound making device which produces or reproduces any sound or noise which is audible more than fifty (50) feet from the source of the sound or a noise that causes a disturbance to others.

Building Permits- Every construction, alteration, enlargement, removal or demolition within the City, which requires a permit from Prince George's County, shall also require a permit from the City. If you have any questions, if a permit is required please call.

About the Department of Planning and Community Development...

The Department of Planning and Community Development is the newest department within the City. The Department exists primarily to ensure the quality and safety of Greenbelt's residential and commercial communities, protecting and ensuring the legacy of Greenbelt, through planning, inspections and enforcement. This Department is making sure the ideals first established for the community in the 1930's are preserved and the quality of life and its infrastructures are maintained at Greenbelt Standards for the future generations of Greenbelt.

These are some of the daily tasks performed by this department:

- ☺ Planning and overseeing all physical development in the City
- ☺ Coordinating and managing capital projects
- ☺ Sediment and Erosion inspections
- ☺ Construction inspections of road ways and storm drainage systems
- ☺ Property Maintenance inspections of all rental properties and commercial properties within the City
- ☺ Parking Enforcement
- ☺ Animal Control

GREENBELT CODES



HOW DO THEY HELP YOU?

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For more information please contact us at
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