

2025 -- S 0978

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

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A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- STATE BUILDING CODE

Introduced By: Senators Britto, McKenney, Ciccone, Felag, Murray, Patalano, and  
Thompson

Date Introduced: April 16, 2025

Referred To: Senate Housing & Municipal Government

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 23-27.3-108.2 of the General Laws in Chapter 23-27.3 entitled "State  
2 Building Code" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **23-27.3-108.2. Duties of the state building code commissioner. [Effective January 1,**  
4 **2025.]**

5 (a) The state building code commissioner shall have the authority to enforce and perform  
6 the duties required by the state building code, chapter 27.3 of this title, and all codes referenced  
7 therein and adopted thereunder, and all other provisions of the general laws and public laws insofar  
8 as such powers and duties relate to building codes and building inspection; provided, however, that  
9 for the purposes of this section structures constituting tents and/or membrane frame structures as  
10 defined in this state building code and any regulations promulgated hereunder shall be subject to  
11 an annual certification process to be established by the state building commissioner in conjunction  
12 with the state fire marshal and shall not be subject to recurring permit and fee requirements as  
13 otherwise required by this code.

14 (b) The state building code commissioner shall work to standardize building code  
15 interpretations across the state with input from the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns and  
16 ensure consistent enforcement of the code throughout the state.

17 (c) Permit fees for the projects shall be established by the committee. The fees shall be  
18 deposited as general revenues.

19 (d)(1) The local cities and towns shall charge each permit applicant an additional one-tenth

1 percent (0.1%) levy of the total construction cost for each commercial permit issued, and two-tenths  
2 percent (0.2%) levy of the total construction cost for each residential permit issued. The levy shall  
3 be limited to a maximum of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each of the permits issued for one- and  
4 two-family (2) dwellings. This additional levy shall be transmitted monthly to the state building  
5 office at the department of business regulation; and

6 (i) Fifty percent (50%) of this additional levy on residential permits and one hundred  
7 percent (100%) of this additional levy on commercial permits shall be used to staff and support the  
8 purchase or lease and operation of a web-accessible service and/or system to be utilized by the state  
9 and municipalities for uniform, statewide electronic plan [submission](#), review, permit management,  
10 and inspection system and other programs described in this chapter. This portion of the fee levy  
11 shall be deposited as general revenues.

12 (ii) Fifty percent (50%) of this additional levy on residential permits shall be transferred to  
13 the department of labor and training and shall be deposited into the contractor training restricted  
14 receipt account, which shall be exempt from the indirect cost recovery provisions of § 35-4-27.  
15 Subject to appropriation by the general assembly, these funds shall be used to provide contractor  
16 training grants for programs that shall include, but are not limited to, minority business enterprises  
17 and state local building officials.

18 (2) On or before July 1, 2013, the building commissioner shall develop a standard statewide  
19 process for electronic plan [submission](#), review, permit management, and inspection. The process  
20 shall include, but not be limited to: ~~applications~~ [a uniform application](#); submission of building plans  
21 and plans for developments and plots; plan review; permitting; inspections; inspection scheduling;  
22 project tracking; fee calculation and collections; and workflow and report management.

23 (3) On or before December 1, 2013, the building commissioner, with the assistance of the  
24 office of regulatory reform, shall implement the standard statewide process for electronic plan  
25 [submission](#), review, permit management, and inspection. In addition, the building commissioner  
26 shall develop a technology and implementation plan for a standard web-accessible service or  
27 system to be utilized by the state and municipalities for uniform, statewide electronic plan  
28 [submission](#), review, permit management, and inspection. The plan shall include, but not be limited  
29 to: ~~applications~~ [a uniform application](#); submission of building plans and plans for developments  
30 and plots; plan review; permitting; inspections; inspection scheduling; project tracking; fee  
31 calculation and collections; and workflow and report management.

32 (e) The building commissioner shall, upon request by any state contractor described in §  
33 37-2-38.1, review, and when all conditions for certification have been met, certify to the state  
34 controller that the payment conditions contained in § 37-2-38.1 have been met.

1 (f) The building commissioner shall coordinate the development and implementation of  
2 this section with the state fire marshal to assist with the implementation of § 23-28.2-6. On or before  
3 January 1, 2022, the building commissioner shall promulgate rules and regulations to implement  
4 the provisions of this section and § 23-27.3-115.6.

5 (g) The building commissioner shall submit, in coordination with the state fire marshal, a  
6 report to the governor and general assembly on or before April 1, 2013, and each April 1 thereafter,  
7 providing the status of the web-accessible service and/or system implementation and any  
8 recommendations for process or system improvement. In every report submitted on or after April,  
9 2024, the building commissioner shall provide the following information:

10 (1) The identity of every municipality in full compliance with the provisions § 23-27.3-  
11 115.6 and the rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to the provisions of this section;

12 (2) The identity of every municipality failing to fully implement and comply with the  
13 provisions of § 23-27.3-115.6 and/or the rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to the  
14 provisions of this section, and the nature, extent, and basis or reason for the failure or  
15 noncompliance; and

16 (3) Recommendations to achieve compliance by all municipalities with the provisions of §  
17 23-27.3-115.6 and the rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to this section.

18 (h) The building commissioner shall assist with facilitating the goals and objectives set  
19 forth in § 28-42-84(a)(9).

20 (i) The state building code commissioner shall serve as the executive secretary to the state  
21 building code standards committee.

22 (j) In addition to the state building code commissioner's other duties as set forth in this  
23 chapter, and notwithstanding the same, the state building code commissioner and the  
24 commissioner's staff shall assume the authority for the purposes of enforcing the provisions of the  
25 state building code in a municipality where there is no local building official or alternate as detailed  
26 in § 23-27.3-107.2, or where there are no local building inspectors.

27 SECTION 2. Chapter 42-14 of the General Laws entitled "Department of Business  
28 Regulation" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

29 **42-14-20. Uniform electronic permitting.**

30 (a) In conjunction with implementing electronic permitting for construction permits and  
31 development applications pursuant to §§ 23-27.3-115.6, 45-23-36.1, and 45-24-58.1, the state  
32 building commissioner shall, with the assistance of the office of regulatory reform, adopt and  
33 implement electronic permitting for any other category of state or local permit authorized under  
34 state law and that the commissioner deems to significantly impact the expediency of construction

1 and development. The commissioner shall develop a schedule identifying state and local permits  
2 to migrate to electronic permitting under this section.

3 (b) For purposes of this section, “electronic permitting” means use of computer-based tools  
4 and services that automate and streamline the application process to include, but not be limited to,  
5 task-specific tools for: applications; submission of plans; completed checklists and checklist  
6 documents; reports; plan review; permitting; scheduling; project tracking; staff and technical  
7 review committee comments; fee calculation and collection.

8 (c) The state building commissioner pursuant to the provisions of § 23-27.3-108.2 may  
9 promulgate rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this section.

10 (d) For any category of permit designated to migrate to electronic permitting, the state  
11 agency or local municipality issuing the permit shall charge each applicant an additional one-tenth  
12 of one percent (.01%) of the total application fee for each application submitted. This additional  
13 amount shall be transmitted monthly to the state building office at the department of business  
14 regulation and shall be used to staff and support the purchase or lease and operation of one web-  
15 accessible service and/or system to be utilized by the state and municipalities for the uniform,  
16 statewide electronic submission, review and processing of permit applications as set forth in this  
17 section.

18 (e) All acts, requirements, filings, and documents necessary to comply with the permit  
19 process for a category of permits designated by the state builder commissioner to migrate to  
20 electronic permitting shall be conducted by means of electronic permitting according to the  
21 timetable set forth by the commissioner unless granted a further extension at the commissioner’s  
22 discretion.

23 (f) The department of business regulation shall reimburse annual fees and costs associated  
24 with compliance with this program in accordance with procedures established by the department.

25 (g) All departments, offices, boards and agencies of the state shall cooperate with the state  
26 building commissioner and furnish such administrative and staff support, advice, information,  
27 documents and otherwise, data and data analysis and other support as may be necessary or desirable  
28 to implement this section.

29 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- STATE BUILDING CODE

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- 1           This act would require the state building commissioner to implement electronic permitting
- 2   for any category of state or local permit authorized under state law to significantly impact the
- 3   expediency of construction and development.
- 4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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