

July 1, 2012
THE MAINE UNIFORM BUILDING AND ENERGY CODE
(MUBEC)
IS NOW IN EFFECT IN THE TOWN OF BUCKSPORT

WHAT IS THE MUBEC?

The MUBEC is comprised of several widely-recognized model codes and standards that regulate how buildings are to be constructed, altered, insulated, sealed, and ventilated. The codes and standards are as follows:

Codes:

- 2009 International Residential Code (IRC)
- 2009 International Building Code (IBC)
- 2009 International Existing Building Code (IEBC)
- 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)

Standards:

- ASHRAE 62.1 - 2007 (Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality)
- ASHRAE 62.2 - 2007 (Ventilation and Acceptable Indoor Air Quality in Low-Rise Residential Buildings)
- ASHRAE 90.1 - 2007 (Energy Standard for Buildings except Low-Rise Residential Buildings)
- ASTM E-1465-2006, Standard Practice for Radon Control Options for the Design and Construction of New Low-Rise Residential Buildings.

The State of Maine adopted the above international codes with amendments. The amendments may be viewed on the State's website at <http://www.maine.gov/dps/bbcs/>.

HOW WILL THE MUBEC AFFECT MY BUILDING PROJECT?

In the Town of Bucksport, one of the most notable changes will be the requirements for inspections. For most new buildings, such as dwellings and commercial buildings, several inspections will need to be conducted by either the town's Building Inspector, or a State-certified Third-Party Inspector (TPI) if that is the preference of the builder or owner. The cost for TPI inspections will be the responsibility of the builder or owner. There is no cost for inspections conducted by the Building Inspector.

In regard to complying with the MUBEC, most experienced contractors are already familiar with the building code components of the MUBEC, which have been applicable in some of the larger municipalities in Maine for many years. Some adjustments in building habits may be needed in regard to the energy and ventilation components of the MUBEC. For example, higher insulation R-values are now in effect than what has been typical in the past, and greater attention to sealing air leaks must be given in order to comply with maximum air change requirements. Radon control is another design item that has been often overlooked. Because Maine has radon levels that may exceed acceptable limits in occupied buildings, the MUBEC contains a radon standard to follow if radon control is planned.

Builders must also pay attention to protecting outbuilding foundations from frost if they are over 600 square feet in area. Basements must be provided with an emergency escape, which could be a window or door. This requirement would have the greatest impact on foundations with no "daylight" walls, in which case an outside entry to the basement would need to be included in the design.

To help builders and homeowners learn about these and other requirements of the MUBEC, a pre-application meeting with the Code Enforcement Officer can be held for any building project. General information about code requirements can be provided, but keep in mind that design decisions are the responsibility of the builder or homeowner. A detailed set of plans prepared by a qualified professional knowledgeable in the MUBEC is invaluable, and is a wise investment.

DO I STILL NEED A BUILDING PERMIT FROM THE TOWN?

Yes. The permit requirements of the town have not changed.

WHY IS THE MUBEC NOT IN EFFECT IN NEIGHBORING TOWNS?

State Law requires municipalities with populations over 4,000 to enforce the MUBEC. In Hancock County, this includes the Town of Bucksport, Town of Bar Harbor, and City of Ellsworth. Municipalities of 4,000 or less may adopt the MUBEC if they so choose. Otherwise, the MUBEC would not be enforced in those municipalities.

DOES COMPLYING WITH THE MUBEC ADD TO THE COST OF CONSTRUCTION?

Standard building practices that meet minimum code requirements have been the status quo for years, so construction costs are not likely to be affected by the MUBEC. Meeting more stringent energy standards now in effect will add costs, but savings in heating and air conditioning expenses will off-set those increases.

WHERE CAN I VIEW THE MUBEC OR GET A COPY?

The various codes and standards that comprise the MUBEC may be viewed in the Code Enforcement Office during regular business hours. Unfortunately, copies cannot be made due to copyright restrictions.

The codes in the MUBEC may also be viewed for free on the State's website at <http://www.maine.gov/dps/bbcs/>. The standards in the MUBEC are not accessible for viewing. Cost information for purchasing the codes and standards of the MUBEC is also available on this website.