

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-21

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA CRUZ AMENDING
TITLE 18 OF THE SANTA CRUZ MUNICIPAL CODE, ADOPTING CALIFORNIA CODE
OF REGULATIONS TITLE 24 BUILDING STANDARDS CODE

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Cruz (“City”) proposes to adopt and incorporate by reference the 2025 edition of the California Building Standards Code, California Code of Regulations Title 24, Parts 1, 2, 2.5, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12 including referenced appendices (“Building Standards Code”), amendments and modifications; and

WHEREAS, the City proposes to make certain changes in the requirements of the 2022 Building Standards Code, which will make certain parts the City’s Building Standards Code more restrictive than state law; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that in order to best protect the health, safety, sustainability and welfare of the residents of the City of Santa Cruz, the administrative regulations (Part 1) adopted herein and hereinafter referred to as the “administrative provisions” and the building standards for building construction, hereinafter referred to as the “technical codes,” and also known as the 2025 Edition of the California Building Standards Code and the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, including Parts 2, 2.5, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12, shall be adopted as provided herein; and

WHEREAS, based on the materials presented by and the recommendations of the city’s building official, the city council finds that it is necessary to make procedural and administrative modifications and changes to the California Building Standards Code and to adopt certain appendices to the California Building Standards Code as specifically adopted in this ordinance, to provide more efficient, economical and expeditious enforcement of the building standards of the City of Santa Cruz; and

WHEREAS, the City Council further finds and determines that pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 13143.5, 17958, 17958.5, 17958.7 and 18941.5 the substantive amendments to California Building Standards Code, which are adopted by this chapter, are reasonable and necessary because of local climatic, geographical, or topographical conditions and do not lessen, diminish, or change the standards set forth within the California Building Standards Code except as authorized by law; and

WHEREAS, this code is adopted pursuant to the authority granted by Section 7 of Article XI of the California Constitution to a county or city to make and enforce within its limits all such local, police, sanitary and other ordinances and regulations as are not in conflict with general laws. It is further adopted in conformity with the provisions of Sections 50022.1 through 50022.10, inclusive, of the Government Code relating to adoption of codes by reference; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 18909(c), certain “administrative provisions” adopted by this chapter are procedural and administrative in nature and are not subject to the requirements of findings pursuant to Sections 17958.5, 17958.7 and 18941.5; and

WHEREAS, the City Council hereby finds that the City's topography and terrain contain areas which are very susceptible to wildland fires, having a local climate characterized by hot, dry summers with periodic high winds which are a predominate factor in the spread of fire by burning embers that are carried by the wind to adjacent exposed areas. This is further compounded by agricultural and recreational use of lands contained within the City, as well as the open space, brush and hills that are part of and immediately adjacent to the City. These topographic and climatic conditions impact the City's built environment, operations, public services and emergency services in such a way that their effects should be mitigated through appropriate amendments to the construction codes where practical; and

WHEREAS, earthquake activity represents significant potential hazards which could result in road closures, loss of housing, fires, injuries, collapsed buildings, and isolation of persons requiring assistance. Additionally, soil conditions within the City are such that liquefaction may occur during seismic activity, creating the potential for structure collapse or mudslides. There are only a limited number of thoroughfares through the City, and during periods of traffic congestion resulting from roadway obstructions, emergency services response times are increased. The City is comprised of a relatively large number of historically significant buildings which contain archaic materials and designs which present unique safety, remodeling and upgrading problems due to their age and proximity to earthquake faults; and

WHEREAS, the proximity to major earthquake faults represents a geologic hazard that could significantly impact the public and City's occupants, City operations, public services, infrastructure, its housing, emergency services and its economic well-being in such a way that the potential hazards should be mitigated through appropriate amendments to the construction codes where practical; and

WHEREAS, due to the elevation of the City in relation to sea level and periodic storms resulting in significant rainfall, flooding during the rainy season often restricts traffic, has a detrimental effect on structures, housing and their occupants and can impair emergency services' ability to respond to life threatening emergencies. These geologic and climatic conditions impact the public and the City's operations and emergency services in such a way that their effects should be mitigated through appropriate amendments to the construction codes where practical; and

WHEREAS, other than the adoption of the State mandated codes, the changes to Title 18 adopted by this ordinance reflect the clean-up of language, grammar, and code revisions needed to maintain current provisions as these new codes are incorporated; and

WHEREAS, the existing sections of Title 18.15.040 “Energy Code” remain in full force and effect, except for the amendments to the California Energy Code of the 2025 California Building Code Cycle adopted by Ordinance 2025-22, which update Chapter 18.15.040 of the Municipal Code to require Energy Conservation Measures for Certain Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioner Replacements and Installations in Existing Nonresidential Buildings; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that this ordinance is exempt from CEQA under the general rule, CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), because it can be seen with certainty that the provisions contained herein would not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. This ordinance is also exempt per CEQA Guidelines Section 15305, Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations, in that the building code regulations do not result in changes to land use or density. Further, this ordinance is exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15308, Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources, since the proposed ordinance would institute regulatory requirements intended to protect the environment and natural resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Santa Cruz as follows:

(NOTE: Those sections of Title 18 not included in this ordinance remain in force and unchanged by this ordinance.)

Section 1. Chapter 18.04 “Building Code” of Section 18 .04 .030 of the City of Santa Cruz Municipal Code of the City of Santa Cruz shall be amended at Section 18.04.030 “Adoption of Codes” to read as follows:

18.04.030 ADOPTION OF CODES.

Subject to the modifications and deletions set forth in Section 18.04.040 and by the State of California Building Standards Commission, the following documents are hereby adopted as part of the Building Code of the city of Santa Cruz:

California Code of Regulations Title 24 (hereafter CCR T 24), Part 1, The 2025 California Administrative Code;

CCR T 24, Part 2, Volumes 1 and 2, The 2025 California Building Code, including Appendices H, I, and Q except as modified herein (hereafter CBC);

CCR T 24, Part 2.5, The 2025 California Residential Code, including Appendices BF, BG, BB, and CI, except as modified herein (hereafter CRC);

CCR T 24, Part 6, The 2025 California Energy Code, except as modified herein (hereafter CEnC);

CCR T 24, Part 10, The 2025 California Existing Building Code, except as modified herein (hereafter CEBC);

CCR T 24, Part 11, The 2025 California Green Building Standards Code, except as modified herein (refer to Chapter 24.15, Green Building Regulations);

CCR T 24, Part 12, The 2025 California Referenced Standards Code;

The Uniform Administrative Code, 1997 Edition, for the purpose of maintaining and administering the existing fee structure, except as modified herein (hereafter UAC);

The Uniform Housing Code, 1997 Edition, except as modified herein (hereafter UHC);

The Uniform Code for the Abatement of Dangerous Buildings, 1997 Edition, except as modified herein (hereafter UCADB);

One copy of each of the above documents is and shall be maintained on file in the office of the building official, for use and examination by the public.

Section 2. Chapter 18.04 “Building Code” of the City of Santa Cruz Municipal Code shall be amended at Section 18.04.040 “Building Code – Deletions and Modifications” to read as follows:

18.04.040 BUILDING CODE – DELETIONS AND MODIFICATIONS.

The following sections of the codes as adopted in Section 18.04.030 are hereby modified as follows:

The UAC Chapter 1 and the CBC Chapter 1, Division II shall have the following inserted under their respective headings to read as follows:

The 1997 Uniform Administrative code (UAC) shall be used for the purpose of maintaining and administering the existing fee structure as established in the UAC or adopted by the City of Santa Cruz as authorized by the UAC. The California Building Code Chapter 1, Division II shall be used in its entirety, as applicable, for the administration of the building standards codes for all buildings, structures and equipment in the City of Santa Cruz, except as modified in SCMC Title 18.

Add sentence to CBC Sections 1.8.8.1 and 1.11.2.5, and CRC Sections 1.8.8.1 and R112.1:

Refer to Santa Cruz Municipal Code (hereafter SCMC) Chapter 18.41, board of building and fire appeals.

CBC Section 105.1, insert second paragraph to read as follows:

Except as specified in Section 105.2, no building, structure or building service equipment regulated by this code and the technical codes shall be erected, constructed, enlarged, altered, repaired, moved, improved, removed, converted or demolished unless a separate, appropriate permit for each building, structure or building service equipment has first been obtained from the building official.

CBC Section 105.2 is hereby amended to add the following modification to exemption No. 1 and to add exemption No. 14:

1. One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet (11m²). Exempted structures shall not be placed within six feet of each other or any other permanent structure and shall comply with local zoning requirements for setbacks and maximum number of structures allowed.

14. Decks and platforms that meet all the following criteria:

- a) Are not more than 200 square feet in area, and
- b) are not more than thirty inches above the adjacent grade at any point within the area of the deck and 36 inches beyond the edge of the deck, and
- c) are not attached to a building or structure, and
- d) do not serve as part of a required exit or means of egress, and
- e) are not located over a basement or story below.

(Decks serving common areas in multi-family residential construction and all commercial decks are not exempted by this section.)

CBC Section 107.2.3 shall strike reference to R-2 and occupancies with the second sentence to read as follows:

In other than occupancies in Group R-3, the construction documents shall designate the number of occupants to be accommodated on every floor, and in all rooms and spaces.

CBC Section 110.1, insert second paragraph to read as follows:

A survey of the lot may be required by the building official to verify that the structure is located in accordance with the approved plans.

CBC Section 112, add Section 112.4 to read as follows:

112.4 Connection after Order to Disconnect. Persons shall not make connections from an energy, fuel or power supply nor supply energy or fuel to building service equipment which has been disconnected or ordered to be disconnected by the building official or the use of which has been ordered to be discontinued by the building official until the building official authorizes the reconnection and use of such equipment.

Add sentence to CBC Section 113.1:

Refer to SCMC 18.41, Board of Building and Fire Appeals.

CBC Section 406.3.2.1 is hereby amended to insert a sentence after the second sentence of the paragraph to read as follows:

Gypsum board applied to the garage side shall be suitably fire taped and have the nail heads spotted with taping compound.

CBC Section 1405 is hereby amended to add to Section 1405.1 a second paragraph, as follows:

1405.1 Shingles or Shakes. A minimum Class “B” Listing by a manufacturer acceptable to the Fire Marshal or the Chief Building Official shall be required for all wood shingles or shakes, and other shingles or shakes that may be used for exterior wall covering referred to elsewhere in this code. No Class “C” wood and non-rated wood shakes or wood shingles shall be installed as an exterior wall covering on any new or existing building or structure. Wood shingles shall meet the minimum thickness requirements of Table 1404.2.

CBC Section 1405 is hereby amended to add an additional exception to Section 1405.1 as to read as follows:

Exception: Existing Wood Exterior Repairs or Installations of less than 25%. The Class “B” requirements of this section shall not apply when an existing building or structure with wood shake or wood shingle exterior wall covering is subject to installation, addition, repair, alteration or replacement of less than 25% of the existing building or structure's wood shake or wood shingle exterior wall covering area accumulated over the life of the building commencing on or after the effective date of this ordinance. For the purposes of this code, 25% of the area of wood exterior wall covering shall be calculated from the area of the wood exterior wall shake or wood shingle covering existing on the effective date of this ordinance.

CBC Section 1505 is hereby amended to add Section 1505.0 as follows:

1505.0 Class “C” wood, and non-rated wood roofs prohibited. No Class “C” wood, or non-rated wood roof covering shall be installed on any new or existing building or structure. Any reference, table, footnote, or exception allowing Class “C” wood, or “N”, or non-classified wood roofing in this code is hereby amended to read as Class “B”. Any qualified historical building or structure as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 18955 may utilize alternative roof classifications as provided by the State Historical Building Code. Where Title 19 of the SCMC and/or State standards identify conflicting Wildland/Urban Interface requirements in this jurisdiction, the most restrictive shall apply.

CBC Section 1512 is hereby amended to add Section 1512.0, as follows:

1512. Overlay on Existing Wood Roofs or Asphalt Shingle Roofs. Re-roofing over Class “C” wood or non-rated wood shakes and wood shingles is prohibited. When a roof has one or more layers of roof covering, any layer of which is wood shake or wood shingle, all built-up roof covering shall be completely removed before applying a new roof covering without exception (unless specifically provided for in SCMC Title 18).

CBC Section 1512.1 is hereby amended to add Exception 3, as follows:

3. Minor Work on Existing Wood Roofs. The requirements of Section 1512 shall not apply when an existing building or structure with a wood roof covering is subject to roof installation, addition, repair, alteration or replacement of less than 25% of the existing building or structure's wood roof-covering area, accumulated over the life of the building, commencing on or after the official date of this ordinance. In such circumstances, wood roof coverings with a CSFM listed rating may be used, provided the completed roof assembly complies with all other provisions of this code. For the purpose of this ordinance, 25% of the wood roof covering area shall be calculated from the area of wood roof covering existing on the effective date of this ordinance.

Modify CBC 1705.3 Exception 1 to read as follows:

Isolated spread concrete footings of buildings three stories or less above grade plane that are fully supported on earth or rock, where the structural design of the footing is based on a specified compressive strength, f'_c , no greater than 2,500 pound per square inch (psi) (17.2 MPa), regardless of the compressive strength specified in the approved construction documents or used in the footing construction.

Add sentence to CBC Section 1804 after the section heading:

Refer to SCMC Chapter 18.45, excavation and grading regulations.

Add sentence to CBC Sections 2206.1.1.2, and 2305.1 to read as follows:

Gypsum board sheathing shall not be permitted to resist horizontal forces in shear walls.

Table 2308.10.1 (Wall Bracing Requirements) of CBC Chapter 23 (Wood) is amended as follows:

1) The title of Table 2308.6.1 is amended to read:

TABLE 2308.6.1^{a, f, g}

2) Footnotes “f” and “g” are added to TABLE 2308.10.1, to read:

f. Methods PBS, HPS and SFB are not permitted in Seismic Design Categories D or E.

g. Methods GB, DWB and PCP are not permitted in Seismic Design Category E.

CRC Section 105.2 Exemption 1 shall be modified as follows:

In Exemption 1, add a second paragraph stating: Exempted structures shall not be placed within six feet of each other or any other permanent structure and shall comply with local zoning requirements for setbacks and maximum number of structures allowed.

CRC Table R301.2 shall be populated with the following criteria as established by the city of Santa Cruz, using criteria published in the CRC where applicable:

GROUND SNOW LOAD (PSF)	WIND DESIGN				SEISMIC DESIGN CATEGORY	SUBJECT TO DAMAGE FROM		
	Ultimate Speed (mph)	Topo- graphic effects	Special wind region	Wind borne debris zone		Weathering	Frost line depth	Termite
0	90	No	No	No	D ₂	Negligible	12 inches below un- disturbed soil	Very Heavy

ICE BARRIER UNDER- LAYMENT REQ'D	FLOOD HAZARDS	AIR FREEZING INDEX	MEAN ANNUAL TEMP
No	5/16/2012 FIRM 06087C: Panels 214E, 218E, 219E, 238E, 327E, 331E, 332E, 351E; 9/29/17 FIRM 06087C: Panels 329F, 333F, 334F, 353F	0	55° F

Replace Manual J Design Criteria Table with the following:

MANUAL J DESIGN CRITERIA						
Elevation	Altitude Correction Factor	Coincident Wet Bulb	Indoor Winter Design Relative Humidity	Indoor Winter Design Dry-bulb Temperature	Outdoor Winter Design Dry-bulb Temperature	Heating Temperature Difference (Δ)
125 ft	1.00	61	50%	70	38	32
Latitude	Daily Ranger	Summer Design Gains	Indoor Summer Design Relative Humidity	Indoor Summer Design Dry-bulb Temperature	Outdoor Summer Design Dry-bulb Temperature	Cooling Temperature Difference (Δ)
37	H	-1 @ 50% RH	50%	75	71	4

CRC Section R302.5.1: delete exception.

Modify the third sentence of CRC Section R302.6 to read:

Attachment of gypsum board shall comply with Table R702.3.5; gypsum board applied to the garage side shall be suitably fire taped and have the nail heads spotted with taping compound.

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Add sentence to CRC Section R313:

Refer to SCMC Title 19, Fire Prevention Code.

Table R602.10.3(3) (Bracing Requirements Based on Seismic Design Category) of CRC Chapter 6 (Wall Construction) is amended as follows:

1) The title of Table R602.10.3(3) is amended to read:

CRC Table R602.10.3(3)^{i,j}

2) Footnotes “i” and “j” are added to Table R602.10.3(3), to read:

- i. Methods PBS, HPS, SFB and CS-SFB are not permitted in Seismic Design Categories D₀, D₁, and D₂.
- j. Methods GB, DWB and PCP are not permitted in Seismic Design Categories D₀, D₁, and D₂ where S₁ is greater than or equal to 0.75.

Add sentence to CRC Section R703.6:

Refer to city amended CBC Sections 1405 for requirements.

Add CRC Section R902.0:

Refer to city amended CBC Section 1505 for local requirements.

UHC Section 103 and UCADB Section 102.2 shall have the following paragraph added, to read as follows:

Where reference is made to any code or standard, the most relevant code(s) and/or standards(s) as currently adopted in SCMC Title 18 shall be used. Where conflict may occur between other provisions of the Santa Cruz Municipal Code and this Title 18, Title 18 shall govern.

UHC Section 401, Nuisance, is hereby amended by adding item 9 to read:

- 9. Any residential property upon which a person or persons conducts activities, accumulates materials, or fails to maintain structures and grounds to a degree, which by common standards, is disruptive and/or damaging to general welfare, peace and sanctity of the surrounding neighborhood.

Section 3. Chapter 18.08 “Electrical Code” of the City of Santa Cruz Municipal Code shall be amended at Section 18.08.030 to read as follows:

18.08.030 ADOPTION OF THE ELECTRICAL CODE.

The following documents are hereby adopted as part of the Electrical Code of the city of Santa Cruz:

CCR T 24, Part 3, The 2025 California Electrical Code, except as modified herein (hereafter CEC).

One copy of the above documents is and shall be maintained on file in the office of the building official, for use and examination by the public.

Section 4. Chapter 18.12 “Plumbing Code” of the City of Santa Cruz Municipal Code is hereby amended at Section 18.12.030 to read as follows:

18.12.030 ADOPTION OF THE PLUMBING CODE.

The plumbing code of the city of Santa Cruz (CCR 24, Part 5, the 2025 California Plumbing Code) is hereby amended to adopt Appendix M, The Peak Water Demand Calculator, which provides an optional, alternate approach for use by builders in determining the sizing of plumbing systems and facilities.

One copy of the above documents is and shall be maintained on file in the office of the building official for use and examination by the public.

Section 5. Chapter 18.14 “Mechanical Code” of the City of Santa Cruz Municipal Code is hereby amended at Section 18.14.030 to read as follows:

18.14.030 ADOPTION OF THE MECHANICAL CODE.

The following documents are hereby adopted as part of the Mechanical Code of the city of Santa Cruz:

CCR T 24, Part 4, The 2025 California Mechanical Code, including Appendices B and C, except as modified herein (hereafter CMC).

One copy of the above documents is and shall be maintained on file in the office of the building official, for use and examination by the public.

Section 6. Chapter 18.15 “Energy Code” of the City of Santa Cruz Municipal Code is hereby amended at Section 18.14.030 to read as follows:

18.15.030 ADOPTION OF THE ENERGY CODE.

The following documents are hereby adopted as part of the Energy Code of the city of Santa

Cruz:

CCR T 24, Part 6, The 2025 California Energy Code, except as modified herein (hereafter CEnC).

One copy of the above documents is and shall be maintained on file in the office of the building official, for use and examination by the public.

Section 7. Chapter 18.40 “Historical Building Code” of the City of Santa Cruz Municipal Code is hereby amended at Section 18.40.030 to read as follows:

18.40.030 ADOPTION OF HISTORICAL BUILDING CODE.

The following documents are hereby adopted as part of the Mechanical Code of the city of Santa Cruz:

CCR T 24, Part 8, The 2025 California Historical Building Code (hereafter CHBC) is hereby adopted as part of the Historical Building Code of the city of Santa Cruz. One copy of the CHBC referred to above shall be maintained on file in the office of the building official, for use and examination by the public.

This ordinance shall be in force and take effect thirty (30) days after its final adoption but not prior to January 1, 2026.

PASSED FOR PUBLICATION this 28th day of October, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmembers Trigueiro, Brunner, Newsome, Golder, O’Hara; Vice Mayor Kalantari-Johnson; Mayor Keeley.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: None.

DISQUALIFIED: None.

APPROVED: _____
Fred Keeley, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Bonnie Bush, City Clerk Administrator

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PASSED FOR FINAL ADOPTION this 18th day of November, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

DISQUALIFIED:

APPROVED: _____
Fred Keeley, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Bonnie Bush, City Clerk Administrator

This is to certify that the above and foregoing document is the original of Ordinance No. 2025-21 and that it has been published or posted in accordance with the Charter of the City of Santa Cruz.

Bonnie Bush, City Clerk Administrator