

Health and Safety Benefits of Adopting the Latest Model Energy Codes

Often, we hear objections to the energy code because “it is not a life-safety code.” This stems from a basic misunderstanding of the energy code, and what it is designed to achieve. The energy code fundamentally improves the durability of buildings as well as the health and safety of the occupants inside. It’s not just a “nice-to-have”. It works in tandem with the other model building codes to ensure safe buildings. The energy code will:

- Improve the resiliency of residential and commercial buildings by **increasing the durability** of the building envelope and the comfort of occupants inside. Among these resiliency benefits are improved habitability, more grid stability, moisture management, and improved durability of buildings, and others. Long lasting, lower maintenance buildings are good news to the property owner and can increase the use of the structure by many decades.
- Affect the **moisture management** (rot, mold, and mildew) and **indoor air quality**, including radon exposure.
- Work with other codes to improve **fire safety** with better construction techniques slowing down the spread of the fire.
- Provide **extreme weather protection** by helping to maintain livable temperatures for longer in cases of extreme weather, allowing occupants to “shelter in place.” *(A study after Superstorm Sandy – which left 8 million people without power – showed that new energy codes can allow residents to stay in their homes for more days during blackouts triggered by heat waves or cold freezes).*
- Will help **reduce peak electric demand**, which will not only contribute to lower electric costs for all consumers, but will improve electric grid reliability, reduce the need for more power plants and also help Idaho achieve emissions reductions.
- **Lower high energy bills** that have dramatic effects on quality of life. The U.S. Energy Information Administration recently reported that nearly one in three households struggle to pay energy bills and one in five households reported reducing or foregoing basic necessities like food or medicine to pay energy bills.
- Are associated with **lower foreclosure rates** as less money goes toward energy cost
- Provide enhanced **occupant comfort**.
- It is also worth remembering that the energy code is the only code that **literally pays for itself**, saving homeowners and building owners money year after year. The energy code as a whole, and the provisions in it, are tested for their cost-effectiveness. Extra money in your pocket - that is indeed “nice to have.”

It is important to note that ALL of the points above also have a positive overall economic impact for the property owner, the local community and the state in which the structure is located.

To learn more about energy codes in Idaho visit <https://www.idahoenergycode.com/>