

Implementation of the I-Codes offers several advantages. They place all hazard-related construction requirements in one place, minimize code conflicts, strengthen enforcement, allow for multiple inspections at specific times, result in consistent permit conditions and requirements, and improves treatment of existing buildings (International Code Council, 2005, pp. 2-4 and 2-5). Finally, I-Codes can exceed the scope of NFIP requirements. Options a political subdivision may consider are: 1. freeboard, a factor of safety that results after elevating a building above the NFIP mandate; 2. prohibition of enclosures below elevated buildings; 3. limiting the size of enclosures below elevated buildings; 4. foundation and elevation requirements in “Coastal A Zones” (International Code Council, 2005, pp. 3-9 through 3-12). **As a result of these higher standards, a community will earn points through the Community Rating System, thereby reducing the flood insurance premiums.**



*Hurricane straps more firmly affix the house's roof to load-bearing walls, resulting in the roof being less likely to blow off in high winds.*

# The International Building Codes in Louisiana



International Code Council. 2005. Reducing Flood Losses Through the International Codes. Meeting the Requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program. In cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.



In 1987, the Louisiana Legislature declared that any political subdivision of the state can adopt a building code that promotes the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community (La.



*Flood vents allow rising water to pass in and out freely, reducing pressure that could cause a home's foundation to fail.*

R.S.33:4772). **Additionally, La. R.S.33:1236(38) (a) gives police juries and other parish governing authorities the power to implement building codes that have “standards and effective enforcement provisions” for flood-prone and mud-slide areas.** Parish and local governments may enforce only the state Uniform Construction Code. These building codes supplement state law relating to buildings, structures and improvements to immovable property.

In 2005, and amended in 2006, the **Louisiana Legislature mandated the use of nationally-recognized codes and standards as the state's Uniform Construction Code.** The code includes identified parts of the:

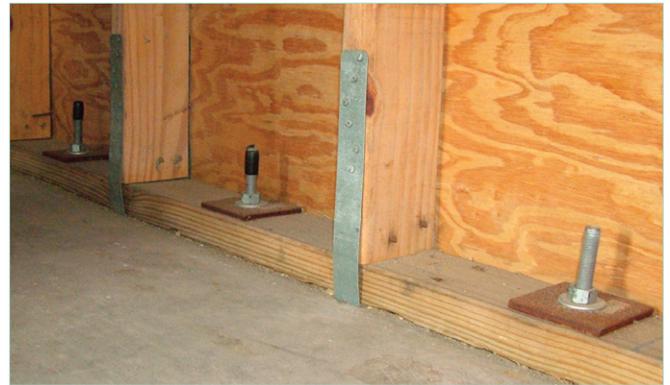
- International Building Code;
- International Existing Building Code;
- International Residential Code;
- International Mechanical Code;
- Louisiana State Plumbing Code;
- International Fuel Gas Code; and
- National Electric Code

Legislation also created the Louisiana State Uniform Construction Code Council (La. R.S.40:1730.22) to:

- Review and adopt the state Uniform Construction Code;
- Provide for training and education of code officials;
- Provide for amendments to the code; and
- Establish the requirements and process for certification and continuing education of code enforcement officers, inspectors and building officials

The initial code adopted by the Louisiana State Uniform Construction Code Council became effective on Jan. 1, 2007 (La. R.S.40:1730.28).

The International Code Council (2005) has published *Reducing Flood Losses Through the International Codes (2nd Edition)*. It can be purchased from [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org). **The International Codes (I-Codes) are consistent with National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements and can be integrated into a single administrative process (International Code Council, 2005).**



*A series of straps and bolts anchor the house frame to its foundation, making the structure more wind resistant.*



Although federal and state laws indirectly influence how people live on the land, **local governments actually do the land use planning.**

The public is involved by voicing opinions on land capabilities and limitations, and where public and private infrastructure and development should be placed.

Historically, Americans think of planning as the precursor of growth – a subdivision, shopping center or industrial site. But today, communities are rethinking development strategies in the most hazardous environment – the Coastal Zone.

When parishes and communities simply comply with federal and state laws, local officials miss an opportunity to better determine their own destiny. **Louisiana law gives parishes and municipalities the power to plan for the future.** In fact, a **comprehensive plan** is required if a community has a planning commission.

Historically, local governments have avoided appointing a planning commission and not many comprehensive plans are in place. As populations grow and the state works to reduce damages and loss of life from hurricanes, floods and other natural disasters, local governments must initiate land use planning.

**Planning commissions** are charged with preparing a comprehensive plan, either by using staff or by contracting for professional services (So and Getzels, 1988, p. 89). The plan is implemented through zoning



*Local elected officials, business and community leaders, and university representatives discuss land use planning. Local governments, not the state or federal government, have the responsibility of developing and implementing land use plans.*

ordinances, subdivision regulations, building codes, miscellaneous regulations, guidelines and policies. Planning commissions tend to follow a generic process (Daniels, Keller, and Lapping, 1988, p. 6):

1. Decision to plan: Willingness to commit time, energy and money
2. Information gathering
3. Problem identification
4. Analysis of problem
5. Development of goals and objectives
6. Identification of alternative solutions
7. Selection of a solution plan of action
8. Implementation
9. Monitoring and feedback
10. Adjustment of solution