

# BUILDING CODE COMPLIANCE METHODS

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## Option 1: Prescriptive Compliance Method ([Chapter 4 of 2015 IEBC](#))

Generally when using the Prescriptive method, the proposal must comply with the provisions of the International Building Code (IBC). This method has some specific requirements for structural upgrades depending on project scope, and offers some minor exceptions to full compliance with the IBC in certain scenarios.

## Option 2: Work Area Compliance Method ([Chapter 5 through 13 of 2015 IEBC](#))

This method categorizes alterations into three levels, based on the scope of work. Each level has specific code provisions and exceptions that may apply to the area of work, the affected building story, or the entire building depending on the scope of the alteration. Projects in levels 2 and 3 must comply with the previous levels' requirements. The work area method is the most flexible of the three compliance options and comprises Chapters 5 through 13 of the IEBC. It provides many benefits to building owners and design professionals, building on the premise that specific code provisions are only triggered if the scale and level of work warrant.

**Level 1** – Minor alterations that include the removal and replacement or the covering of existing materials, elements, equipment, or fixtures using new materials, elements, equipment, or fixtures that serve the same purpose.

**Level 2** – Alterations that include the reconfiguration of space, the addition or elimination of any door or window, the reconfiguration or extension of any system, or the installation of any additional equipment. **The majority of tenant improvements fall into this level.** Depending on the scope of work, upgrades to sprinkler systems, open floor penetrations, and/or means of egress may be required.

**Level 3** – Alterations, including those mentioned in other levels, **where the work area exceeds 50% of the building area.** In certain situations, this level may require improving safety of certain building features beyond the work area.

## Option 3: Performance Compliance Method ([Chapter 14 of 2015 IEBC](#))

The Performance method may be the most flexible, but also **requires the most thorough evaluation of the existing building.** Using a numerical scoring system involving 19 safety parameters and the degree of code compliance for each, this method allows the project design team to show that alterations, while not meeting new construction requirements, improve the current situation.

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Please identify the code under which review is requested. A new building must comply with either [2015 IRC](#) or [2015 IBC](#). For an existing building, you have an option to either comply with 2015 IRC/IBC or the [2015 IEBC](#). Please consult your architect/engineer if you are unsure, or study the code book/s to determine the correct answer. An incorrect selection may delay permit issuance and may require more stringent code compliance.