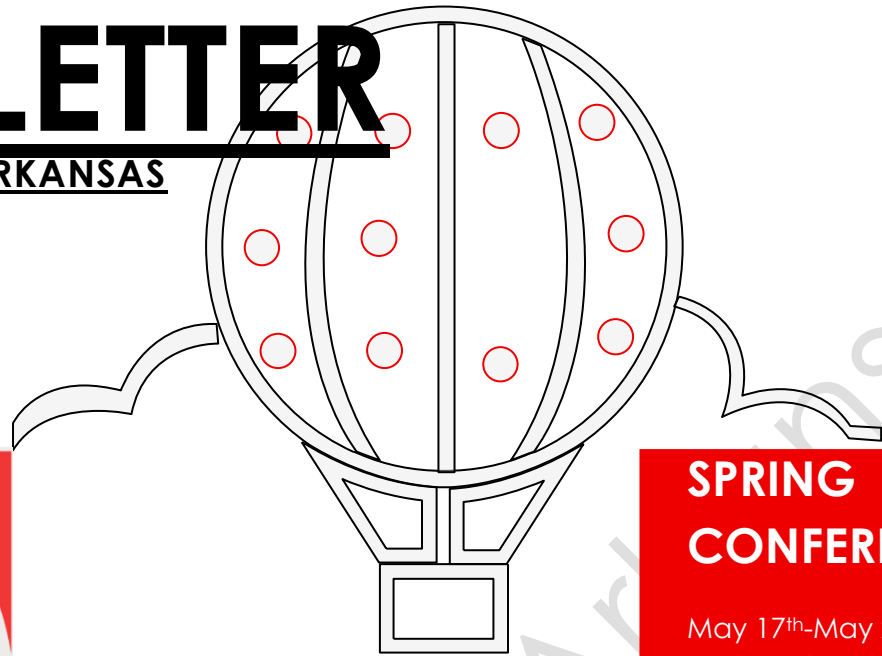


NEWSLETTER

CODE OFFICIALS OF ARKANSAS



SPRING CONFERENCE

May 17th-May 22nd,
2026, Spring
Conference at Mount
Magazine.

ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR POLICY CHANGE

B1-TRAINING ACADEMY

Focus on IRC
requirements for
residential
construction,
inspections, and life-
safety compliance.

OUR SERVICES

The Code Officials of Arkansas exists to strengthen the safety and sustainability of communities throughout the state by supporting the professionals responsible for enforcing building and safety codes. We serve as a centralized resource for education, collaboration, and leadership, helping code officials navigate an ever-evolving regulatory environment with confidence and consistency.

ICC Region X is a chapter for Code Officials of Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma. Visit this chapter at [Region X | ICC Chapter](#)

ICC Conference calendar posted on Region X website.

Looking for exposure to your job openings? Visit our new website to submit your request. All job posting is free for members. Place the position that is available and the description, once filled, inform us and we will remove it.

Policy changes for Electrical Inspector

License:

- Existing licensure by the board as a master or journeyman, or by the State of Arkansas as an electrical engineer.
- 2 years of experience installing electrical equipment; or
- A combination of training and experience as the board may approve as being equivalent to that as specified in (A) and (B) which may include the following:
 - The person has 2 years of code related inspection experience as a state/municipal inspector.
 - Possesses certification by the NFPA or other-like nationally recognized organization; and
 - Achieve IRC (B1) or IBC (B2) certification with the international code council (ICC) within 18 months of employment

A Better Pathway for Electrical Inspectors

This updated route offers an excellent alternative for inspectors seeking to obtain their Electrical Inspector License. The new policy clearly outlines three flexible pathways for achieving this goal, ensuring that all inspectors regardless of prior electrical experience or licensing level have an opportunity to advance.

For those without electrical field experience or journeyman/master licensing, the third pathway provides a strong foundation. It focuses on developing the ability to confidently read and apply the NEC, IRC, and IBC, the very codes that officials rely on when performing inspections.

This change reflects a positive step forward for our electrical inspector program, expanding access while maintaining the high standards and technical knowledge our profession demands.

Looking forward to NFPA NEC 70 2026 adoption with amendments.

Mechanical License Renewal Returns!

Great news, the Mechanical License is back! Starting May 18, 2026, COAR will offer its first class for mechanical license renewal.

Code Officials who entered the field after this licensure was previously discontinued will now have the opportunity to take the course on Monday and complete the exam on Friday.

Licensing is essential for Code Officials because it validates the knowledge and expertise we bring to the industry. A Class B Mechanical License forms the foundation for understanding proper installation practices — knowledge that is critical for accurate inspections. After all, how can we ensure a precise inspection without knowing the correct installation methods?

This program is a key step toward strengthening our professional standards and ensuring that our inspections reflect both skill and confidence in the field.



First time B1 Training hosted in Arkansas May 19th-20th, 2026

- The **B1 (International Residential Code) certification** is a **foundational requirement for Arkansas code officials** involved in residential inspections and enforcement. This training ensures officials are qualified to interpret and apply IRC provisions for one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses, supporting consistent enforcement and public safety statewide.
- Officials are encouraged to take advantage of these courses to meet certification requirements, earn ICC CEUs, and stay current with code, legislative, and inspection standards.

Why is code adoption consistency important?

Cities adopt the same building codes and run similar inspection programs to create consistent, predictable minimum safety standards for everyone in the community.

1. Safety and health

- Common codes ensure all buildings meet baseline life-safety standards for structure, fire protection, egress, electrical, mechanical, and sanitation, reducing injuries, fires, and building failures.
- Standardized inspections verify that those safety rules are followed in construction and maintenance, protecting occupants and neighbors from dangerous conditions like unsafe wiring, collapse hazards, or unsanitary housing.

2. Fairness and clarity

- When multiple cities in a region use the same adopted codes, designers and contractors see one clear rulebook instead of a patchwork of local rules, which reduces confusion and disputes.
- Uniform enforcement helps prevent selective or arbitrary treatment, because inspectors apply the same written standards and processes to all similar projects and properties.

3. Property values and neighborhood stability

- Consistent code adoption and enforcement help prevent blight, abandonment, and nuisance properties, which can drag down surrounding property values and attract crime.
- Keeping buildings up to common maintenance and habitability standards supports long-term neighborhood stability and makes it easier for owners and lenders to assess risk.

4. Economic efficiency and regional development

- Shared codes let contractors, architects, and developers work across multiple municipalities without constantly relearning requirements, lowering costs and speeding projects.
- Predictable inspections and code expectations support investment, insurance underwriting, and financing, because everyone understands the minimum standard a building must meet.

Act 591 of 2025 (SB322)

Establishes a "third-party inspector" framework by allowing applicants to hire a private professional provider to perform plan reviews and required inspections, at the applicant's expense, under strict qualification limits. Under Arkansas Code § 14-1-503(6), a "private professional provider" must be one of the following, not employed by or affiliated with the project being reviewed or inspected:

- A professional engineer as defined in § 17-30-101.
- A registered architect as defined in § 17-15-102.
- A person licensed, certified, or registered by the appropriate state agency to perform the specific plan review or inspection in question.

Home inspectors cannot complete:

- HVAC diagnostics
- Adjustments
- Professional HVAC evaluations
 - This includes the use of gauges
 - Testing equipment
 - Issuing HVAC opinions

Critically, home inspectors are not granted any new authority under Act 591 and remain limited to the scope of their existing home-inspection licensure.

Purpose and mechanics of Act 591

Act 591's purpose is to ensure that local jurisdictions complete plan reviews and inspections in a timely, efficient manner by creating a controlled avenue for qualified third-party professionals, not by shifting regulatory authority to home inspectors or other unqualified parties. The statute defines "regulatory requirements" in § 14-1-503(8) to include all rules necessary for local approval, such as:

- The Arkansas Fire Prevention Code (as adopted by the State Fire Marshal).
- State Plumbing and Fuel Gas Codes and the Plumbing Law (§ 17-38-301 et seq.).
- Locally adopted ordinances and amendments.
- Development, utility, zoning, and subdivision regulations, design standards, and any other applicable local and state laws.

After a private professional provider completes the plan review or inspection, that provider must submit an affidavit or inspection report certifying compliance with all applicable regulatory requirements to the local government official. The local official must accept that report "without further inspection or approval" unless, within one business day, the official notifies the provider that the report is incomplete or inadequate and identifies the deficiencies. Local governments may still:

- Restrict concealment of work (for example, covering framing or systems) until an acceptable report is received.
- Maintain lists and minimum qualification standards for private professional providers.

Complaints or discipline against a private professional provider are handled primarily through that provider's professional licensing board, but a local official may ultimately refuse to accept work from providers who repeatedly submit deficient reports. The law does not remove local government enforcement authority; it creates an alternate, time-focused mechanism for performing reviews and inspections while preserving municipal power to administer and enforce codes.

Key takeaway for code officials on Act 591

For Arkansas code officials, the central message is that Act 591 reinforces the existing professional framework:

- Only properly licensed, certified, or registered professionals (engineers, architects, or state-licensed specialty inspectors) may act as private professional providers.
- Home inspectors do not gain authority to perform code-required inspections, HVAC diagnostics, or any other regulated trade work outside their licensure.
- Local jurisdiction inspectors remain the only officials empowered to perform state-recognized building inspections unless another professional is separately licensed and authorized under Arkansas law.

Act 314: Loss of municipal ETJ and shift to counties

Act 314 of 2025 (HB1510) significantly narrows city zoning and planning authority by eliminating municipal control over most unincorporated areas that once fell within a city's extra-territorial "planning area." Before Act 314, Arkansas cities could apply their planning, subdivision, and zoning regulations one to three miles beyond city limits (depending on population) under the extra-territorial jurisdiction framework in prior law. Act 314 repeals that framework, meaning municipalities generally:

- Can no longer enforce zoning classifications, subdivision regulations, or long-range land-use plans in unincorporated county areas adjacent to city limits.
- Must rely on annexation or county cooperation if they want control over development in those fringe areas.

With ETJ authority removed, county planning boards and quorum courts now hold primary control over land use and development in those former city-regulated fringe zones. Projects that previously required city zoning or subdivision approvals in the planning area now proceed under county regulations only, unless the property is annexed into the city.

Practical implications for municipal code officials

For municipal planners, building officials, and inspectors, act 314 has several high-impact consequences:

- Cities lose a key tool for shaping land use just outside their borders, weakening the ability to protect planned growth corridors, infrastructure investments, and edge-neighborhood compatibility.
- Existing ETJ-based zoning maps, subdivision standards, and long-range plans in unincorporated areas are largely nullified, raising concerns about uncoordinated or "wild west" development on the urban fringe that may still rely on city infrastructure but follow only county rules.
- Coordination between city and county governments becomes more critical for managing utilities, road networks, and public safety coverage in formerly city-influenced areas.

Unified message for Arkansas code officials

Taken together, Act 591 and Act 314 demand clear communication inside and outside city hall. Act 591 should be explained as a targeted tool to keep plans and inspections moving through qualified professional providers without expanding home inspector authority or weakening municipal enforcement. Act 314 should be understood as a fundamental shift of planning power at the fringe from cities to counties, with significant implications for growth management, infrastructure planning, and long-term comprehensive plans.

Code officials can use this combined message to:

- Correct misconceptions that home inspectors have gained new powers under Act 591.
- Reassure stakeholders that municipal inspectors remain central to code enforcement.
- Highlight the need for stronger city and county coordination and updated internal procedures in response to Act 314's rollback of extra-territorial zoning authority.

Act 1002 of 2025 (from SB 571 – Petty) is a short but important change for Arkansas code officials because it limits when cities may apply their building and zoning regulations to county-owned property.

1. Scope and purpose

- Act 1002 amends Arkansas law on municipal building and zoning regulations to address how those regulations apply to county property.
- The clear policy effect is to protect county-owned property from municipal control over building codes and land-use rules.

2. Core substantive rule

- Municipal building codes, zoning ordinances, and similar land-use regulations may not be enforced by a city on property that is owned by the county.
 - This non-enforcement rule applies even when the county-owned parcel lies inside the corporate limits of the municipality or in its extraterritorial/planning jurisdiction.

3. Practical effects for city code officials

- City building officials and inspectors should not require municipal building permits, plan reviews, or inspections for construction, alteration, or occupancy on county-owned sites (for example, county courthouses, jails, road departments, or solid-waste facilities) located within city limits.
- City planning and zoning staff should not apply municipal zoning districts, site-plan approvals, or related land-use conditions to county-owned tracts. Questions on standards for those projects must be referred to by county authorities.

4. Practical effects for county officials

- County officials remain responsible for determining and enforcing whatever building, fire, and development standards the county has adopted for its own property, because municipal standards generally no longer apply.
- Counties may still choose to voluntarily follow municipal codes or enter cooperative arrangements, but such arrangements must be drafted so they do not contradict the statutory bar on municipal "enforcement" over county property.

5. Implementation steps for departments

- Add a standard ownership check (deed, tax records, or project sponsor confirmation) early in permit intake to identify county-owned parcels and route them correctly.

Review and, if necessary, amend interlocal agreements, inspection policies, and permit application forms to clearly exempt county-owned property from municipal code enforcement consistent with Act 1002.

Note: These are a general summary for informational purposes only and is not legal advice. For application to a specific project, local counsel should be consulted.

Online training is available for code officials, most of the training is free.

[THE WOOD INSTITUTE: American Wood Council | THE WOOD INSTITUTE Learning Edge, LLC - Education, coaching and training](#)

Building Safety Month!

Recognizing May 2026 as Safety Month affirms our community's commitment to protecting lives, property, and public welfare through proactive safety practices, strong building codes, and public education. This resolution underscores the essential role that prevention plays in reducing injuries, limiting property loss, and strengthening resilience against everyday hazards and natural disasters. By formally designating Safety Month, we elevate public awareness, encourage collaboration among public agencies and private stakeholders, and reinforce the shared responsibility we all have to create safer homes, workplaces, and communities.

Importance of the Resolution

This resolution is important because it moves safety from an abstract value to a visible public priority. Safety Month provides an opportunity to:

- Educate residents about fire prevention, building safety, disaster preparedness, and risk reduction
- Highlight the life-saving impact of modern building codes and consistent code enforcement
- Promote a culture of prevention rather than reaction, reducing long-term costs and harm
- Recognize the professional code officials, inspectors, fire service members, and safety advocates—who work daily to protect the public

By formally acknowledging Safety Month, the council sends a clear message that safety is foundational to economic stability, community well-being, and public trust in local government.

Why Code Officials Should Bring The Resolution to Council Members?

Code officials are uniquely positioned to advocate for this resolution because they witness firsthand how codes, inspections, and education prevent tragedies before they occur. Bringing this resolution to council members helps:

- Connect policy decisions to real-world safety outcomes
- Demonstrate the value of investing in code enforcement and safety programs
- Foster stronger partnerships between elected officials, staff, and the community
- Provide a platform for outreach, education, and positive public engagement

When council members adopt and implement this resolution, they publicly affirm their support for safer construction, informed citizens, and resilient communities. This action not only recognizes the critical work already being done, but also strengthens the framework needed to keep residents safe now and in the future.



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- ✓ NEC requirements, history, and code recognition
- ✓ Installation and inspection clarity for field evaluations
- ✓ Performance and safety testing across conductor types
- ✓ The science behind CCA and its metallurgical bond



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