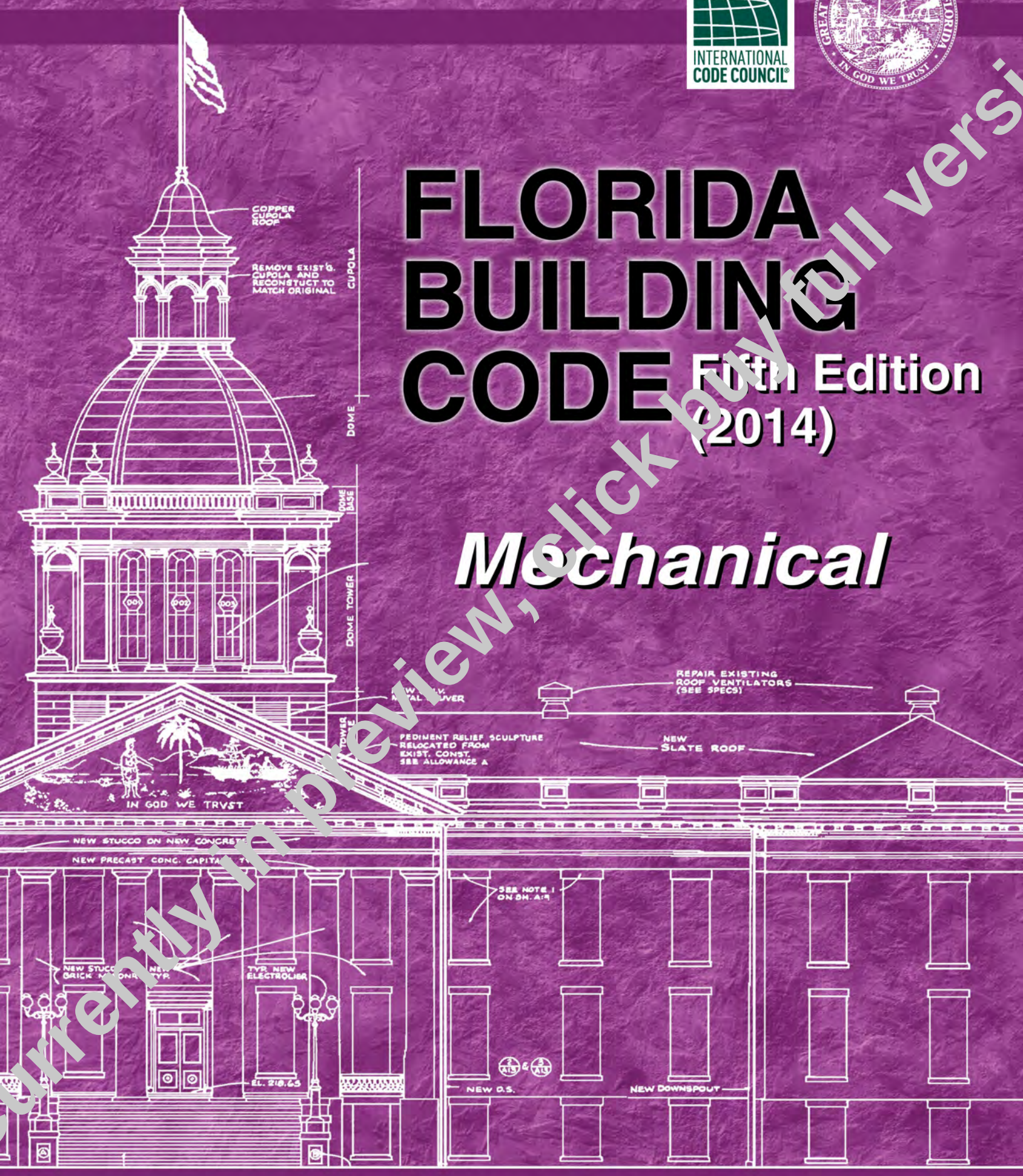
FLORIDA BUILDING CODE

Fifth Edition (2014)

Mechanical



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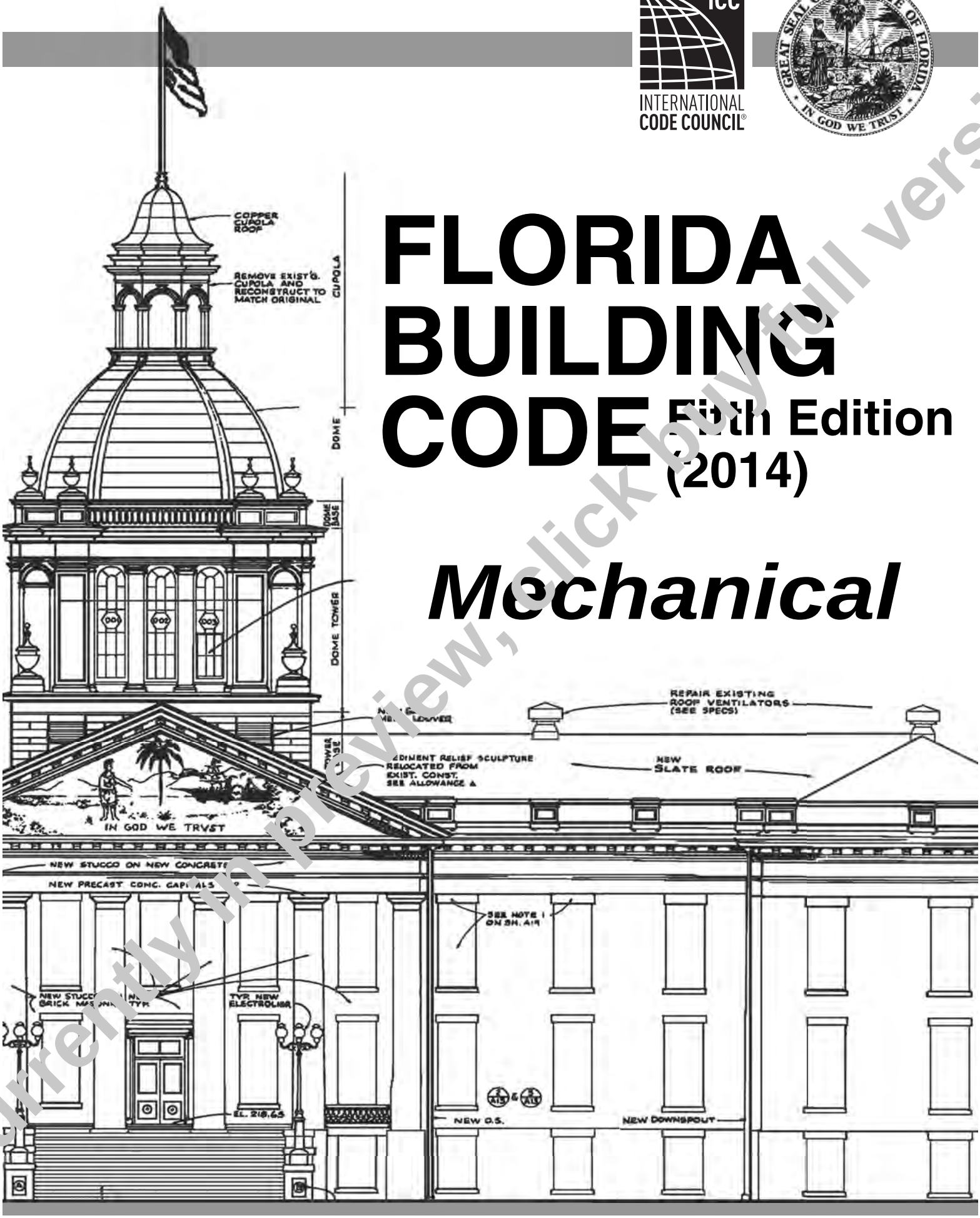

Florida Building Code, Mechanical, 5th Edition (2014)

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PREFACE

History

The State of Florida first mandated statewide building codes during the 1970s at the beginning of the modern construction boom. The first law required all municipalities and counties to adopt and enforce one of the four state-recognized model codes known as the "state minimum building codes." During the early 1990s a series of natural disasters, together with the increasing complexity of building construction regulation in vastly changed markets, led to a comprehensive review of the state building code system. The study revealed that building code adoption and enforcement was inconsistent throughout the state and those local codes thought to be the strongest proved inadequate when tested by major hurricane events. The consequences of the building codes system failure were devastation to lives and economies and a statewide property insurance crisis. The response was a reform of the state building construction regulatory system that placed emphasis on uniformity and accountability.

The 1998 Florida Legislature amended Chapter 553, *Florida Statutes* (F.S.), *Building Construction Standards*, to create a single state building code that is enforced by local governments. As of March 1, 2002, the *Florida Building Code*, which is developed and maintained by the Florida Building Commission, supersedes all local building codes. The *Florida Building Code* is updated every three years and may be amended annually to incorporate interpretations and clarifications.

Scope

The *Florida Building Code* is based on national model building codes and national consensus standards which are amended where necessary for Florida's specific needs. However, code requirements that address snow loads and earthquake protection are pervasive; they are left in place but should not be utilized or enforced because Florida has no snow load or earthquake threat. The code incorporates all building construction-related regulations for public and private buildings in the State of Florida other than those specifically exempted by Section 553.73, *Florida Statutes*. It has been harmonized with the *Florida Fire Prevention Code*, which is developed and maintained by the Department of Financial Services, Office of the State Fire Marshal, to establish unified and consistent standards.

The base codes for the Fifth edition (2014) of the *Florida Building Code* include: the *International Building Code®*, 2012 edition; the *International Plumbing Code®*, 2012 edition; the *International Mechanical Code®*, 2012 edition; the *International Fuel Gas Code®*, 2012 edition; the I*nternational Residential Code®*, 2012 edition; the *International Existing Building Code®*, 2012 edition; the *International Energy Conservation Code®*, 2012 edition; the *National Electrical Code*, 2011 edition; substantive criteria from the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-conditioning Engineers' (ASHRAE) Standard 90.1-2010. State and local codes adopted and incorporated into the code include the *Florida Building Code, Accessibility,* and special hurricane protection standards for the High-Velocity Hurricane Zone.

The code is composed of nine main volumes: the *Florida Building Code, Building*, which also includes state regulations for licensed facilities; the *Florida Building Code, Plumbing*; the *Florida Building Code, Mechanical;* the *Florida Building Code, Fuel Gas*; the *Florida Building Code, Existing Building*; the *Florida Building Code, Residential;* the *Florida Building Code, Energy Conservation*; the *Florida Building Code, Accessibility* and the *Florida Building Code, Test Protocols for High-Velocity Hurricane Zones*. Chapter 27 of the *Florida Building Code, Building*, adopts the *National Electrical Code*, NFPA 70, by reference.

Under certain strictly defined conditions, local governments may amend requirements to be more stringent than the code. All local amendments to the *Florida Building Code* must be adopted by local ordinance and reported to the Florida Building Commission then posted on www.floridabuilding.org in Legislative format for a month before being enforced. Local amendments to the *Florida Building Code* and the *Florida Fire Prevention Code* may be obtained from the Florida Building Commission web site, or from the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation or the Florida Department of Financial Services, Office of the State Fire Marshal, respectively.

Adoption and Maintenance

The *Florida Building Code* is adopted and updated with new editions triennially by the Florida Building Commission. It is amended annually to incorporate interpretations, clarifications and to update standards. Minimum requirements for permitting, plans review and inspections are established by the code, and local jurisdictions may adopt additional administrative requirements that are more stringent. Local technical amendments are subject to strict criteria established by Section 553.73, F.S. They are subject to Commission review and adoption into the code or repeal when the code is updated triennially and are subject to appeal to the Commission according to the procedures established by Section 553.73, F.S.

Eleven Technical Advisory Committees (TACs), which are constituted consistent with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Guidelines, review proposed code changes and clarifications of the code and make recommendations to the Commission. These TACs, whose membership is constituted consistent with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Guidelines, include: Accessibility; Joint Building Fire (a joint committee of the Commission and the State Fire Marshal); Building Structural; Code Administration/Enforcement; Electrical; Energy; Mechanical; Plumbing and Fuel Gas; Roofing; Swimming Pool; and Special Occupancy (state agency construction and facility licensing regulations).

The Commission may only issue official code clarifications using procedures of Chapter 120, *Florida Statutes*. To obtain such a clarification, a request for a Declaratory Statement (DEC) must be made to the Florida Building Commission in a manner that establishes a clear set of facts and circumstances and identifies the section of the code in question. Requests are analyzed by staff, reviewed by the appropriate Technical Advisory Committee, and sent to the Florida Building Commission for action. These interpretations establish precedents for situations having similar facts and circumstances and are typically incorporated into the code in the next code amendment cycle. Nonbinding opinions are available from the Building Officials Association of Florida's web site (www.BOAF.net) and a Binding Opinion process is available online at www.floridabuilding.org.

Code Development Committee Responsibilities (Letter Designations in Front of Section Numbers)

In each code development cycle, proposed changes to this code are considered at the Code Development Hearing by the International Mechanical Code Development Committee. Proposed changes to a code section whose number begins with a letter in brackets are considered by a different code development committee. For instance, proposed changes to code sections which have the letter [B] in front (for example, [B] 309.1), are considered by one of the International Building Code development committees (IBC—General) at the Code Development Hearing.

The content of sections in this code which begin with a letter designation is maintained by another code development committee in accordance with the following:

[A] = Administrative Code Development Committee;

[B] = International Building Code Development Committee (IBC—Fire Safety, General, Means of Egress or Structural);

[EC] = International Energy Conservation Code Development Committee;

[F] = International Fire Code Development Committee; and

[FG] = International Fuel Gas Code Development Committee.

Marginal Markings

Solid vertical lines in the margins within the body of the code indicate a technical change from the requirements of the 2009 edition. Deletion indicators (➡) are provided in the margin where an entire section, paragraph, exception or table has been deleted or an item in a list of items or in a table has been deleted.

Dotted vertical lines in the margins within the body of the code indicate a change from the requirements of the base codes to the *Florida Building Code, Mechanical,* 5th Edition (2014) effective June 30, 2015.

Sections deleted from the base code are designated "Reserved" in order to maintain the structure of the base code.

Italicized Terms

Selected terms set forth in Chapter 2, Definitions, are italicized where they appear in code text. Such terms are not italicized where the definition set forth in Chapter 2 does not impart the intended meaning in the use of the term. The terms selected have definitions which the user should read carefully to facilitate better understanding of the code.

Acknowledgments

The *Florida Building Code* is produced through the efforts and contributions of building designers, contractors, product manufacturers, regulators and other interested parties who participate in the Florida Building Commission's consensus processes, Commission staff and the participants in the national model code development processes.

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