



ONTARIO BUILDING CODE CHANGES

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ONTARIO BUILDING CODE CHANGES

January 1, 2025

The new year brings significant changes to Ontario's building landscape! On January 1, 2025, the updated Ontario Building Code (OBC) came into effect, aligning approximately 70% of its content with the National Building Code (NBC) 2020. This harmonization includes nearly 2,000 code changes, many of which directly impact the masonry industry. These updates represent both opportunities and challenges, and the Masonry Council of Ontario is here to guide you through what's new and how it benefits masonry construction.

HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY OBC UPDATES FOR MASONRY

Part 5 - Reference to CSA S478 Durability Standard

The updated OBC introduces CSA S478, a durability standard for materials and buildings. However, its application is voluntary rather than mandatory. For masonry construction, this change provides enhanced design flexibility, allowing builders and designers to adopt the standard to improve the durability of structures in Ontario's harsh climates. By addressing critical factors such as freeze-thaw resistance and moisture control, adherence to CSA S478 can significantly boost the long-term performance of masonry. Voluntarily adopting this standard can also enhance masonry's reputation for reliability, making it a top choice for high-quality projects.

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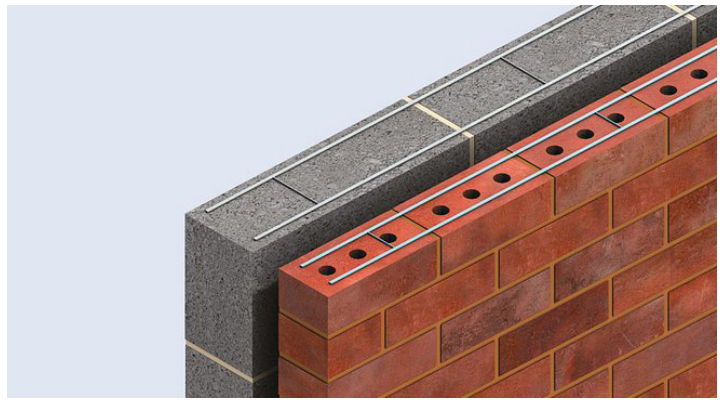


Part 3 - Combustible Cladding Restrictions

Stricter fire safety requirements in the updated code limit the use of combustible cladding materials on buildings up to six storeys. This change is particularly beneficial for masonry construction, as materials such as brick, concrete block, and stone are naturally fire-resistant. These attributes position masonry as a preferred choice for mid-rise buildings, simplifying compliance with fire safety regulations. Builders can rely on masonry for a safe, non-combustible solution without needing additional adjustments, further strengthening its market appeal.

Part 2 - Updated Climatic Load Data and Seismic Standards

The revisions to climatic load data include updated snow, wind, and seismic standards, along with enhanced requirements for post-disaster buildings. These changes emphasize the importance of stronger designs in masonry projects, ensuring structures can withstand higher loads and remain resilient in extreme conditions. Masonry plays a vital role in post-disaster applications, as its durability and strength make it an excellent choice for critical buildings such as hospitals. Reinforced masonry designs will be essential to meet these updated requirements, ensuring operational continuity even in the most challenging scenarios.



Part 4 - Larger Building Serviceability Standards

Serviceability criteria for larger buildings have been updated to address deflection and vibration limits. These changes present an opportunity for innovation within the masonry industry, encouraging the development of advanced products such as higher-strength blocks and enhanced mortars. With stricter standards in place, masonry components must deliver superior stability, reducing the risks of cracking and ensuring long-term structural integrity. These advancements not only meet regulatory demands but also provide builders with high-performing, reliable solutions for large-scale projects.



18-Storey Mass Timber Allowance

The updated OBC now allows mass timber construction up to 18 storeys, introducing a new competitive material to the market. This development underscores the importance of masonry's adaptability and sustainability. While mass timber presents competition, masonry can complement these structures as fire-resistant cladding or non-structural walls, ensuring both safety and aesthetic appeal. Additionally, masonry manufacturers can highlight eco-friendly production methods, such as low-carbon cement, to compete with timber's sustainable image and remain a top choice for builders.



Energy Codes: Stability Benefits Masonry

One notable aspect of the updated OBC is the unchanged energy efficiency requirements outlined in SB10 and SB12. This stability is excellent news for the masonry industry, as it ensures that current designs remain compliant without necessitating costly adjustments. Masonry continues to deliver efficient, reliable, and sustainable solutions, further reinforcing its position as a key player in energy-efficient construction.



A Strong Future for Masonry

These changes to the Ontario Building Code present numerous opportunities for growth within the masonry industry. With its inherent durability, fire resistance, and non-combustibility, masonry remains a natural choice for meeting stricter safety and durability standards. The evolving requirements for climatic loads, seismic resilience, and serviceability encourage innovation and adaptation, ensuring masonry continues to deliver high-quality, reliable solutions. Meanwhile, the stability of energy codes allows for a seamless transition under the updated OBC, solidifying masonry's role in efficient and sustainable construction.

The Masonry Council of Ontario is committed to supporting professionals in navigating these updates. From technical guidance to advocacy, we are here to help the industry thrive and remain a cornerstone of Ontario's construction landscape.

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For more information on these updates and how they affect your projects, visit our website or contact us directly. Together, let's build a stronger future with masonry!