

BLANKET VARIANCE / INTERPRETATION

FILE NO.: 25-01

MUNICIPALITY: Statewide

REQUESTED BY: Executive Secretary Burlingame – RI Joint Committee on the Rehabilitation Building and Fire Code for Existing Buildings and Structures

SUBJECT: Rehabilitation Code Amendments / RI Life Safety Code

APPROVED ON: 2025-10-28

General Background: The current *Rehabilitation Building and Fire Code for Existing Buildings and Structures* [hereinafter Code] has been in effect since its inception on January 22, 2002 without any significant updates or amendments. In early 2023, the Joint Committee directed that rulemaking commence to significantly revise and amend the Code to substitute the *International Existing Building Code* as a replacement for all “B” building elements and *Life Safety Code* Chapter 43, “Building Rehabilitation” as a replacement for all “F” fire elements. These proposed amendments were ratified by the respective boards as follows:

- On or about February 21, 2023: Fire Safety Code Board of Appeal and Review [FSCB] approves the adoption of ***Life Safety Code***, 2021 edition, Chapter 43, “Building Rehabilitation” in its entirety as a component of 450-RICR-00-00-8.
- On or about May 11, 2023: Building Code Standards Committee [BCSC] approves the adoption of the ***International Existing Building Code*** in its entirety as 510-RICR-00-00-7.
- On or about May 21, 2024: The Joint Committee ratifies the actions of both the FSCB and the BCSC to adopt this amended Rehabilitation Code in its entirety as 510-RICR-00-00-20.

Over the course of the last two years, extensive efforts have been made to implement these changes through the rulemaking process as mandated by the *Administrative Procedures Act*. As a result, an effective date of December 1, 2025 has been established for 510-RICR-00-00-7 and 510-RICR-00-00-20. However, it has been determined that the concurrent adoption of 450-RICR-00-00-8, while in progress, will not be able to establish the same effective date, leaving a lapse in applicability of Chapter 43 for use as part of the Rehabilitation Code.

Determination of the Board: The Board finds that in order to address the need for repurposing and rehabilitation of existing buildings throughout the state, that certain relief may be warranted due to unanticipated and unreasonable hardship upon the general public and that it does not conflict with the general objectives of the *Rhode Island State Fire Safety Code*.

Conclusions and Blanket Variance: Accordingly, for the purposes of administering the Rehabilitation Code, effective as of December 1, 2025 the provisions of the approved but not yet officially adopted *RI Life Safety Code*, 2021 edition, Chapter 43, “Building Rehabilitation” and all RILSC references cited therefrom may be utilized until such time that the proposed amendments to 450-RICR-00-00-8, *RI Life Safety Code* are adopted in full. [see 510-RICR-00-00-20.4(B)].