

Subpart F -- Certification of State Laws or Local Building Codes

1.Sec.36.601 Definitions.

Assistant Attorney General means the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights or his or her designee.

Certification of equivalency means a final certification that a code meets or exceeds the minimum requirements of title III of the Act for accessibility and usability of facilities covered by that title.

Code means a State law or local building code or similar ordinance, or part thereof, that establishes accessibility requirements.

Model code means a nationally recognized document developed by a private entity for use by State or local jurisdictions in developing codes as defined in this section. A model code is intended for incorporation by reference or adoption in whole or in part, with or without amendment, by State or local jurisdictions.

Preliminary determination of equivalency means a preliminary determination that a code appears to meet or exceed the minimum requirements of title III of the Act for accessibility and usability of facilities covered by that title.

Submitting official means the State or local official who --

- (1) Has principal responsibility for administration of a code, or is authorized to submit a code on behalf of a jurisdiction; and
- (2) Files a request for certification under this subpart.

Sec.36.602 General rule.

On the application of a State or local government, the Assistant Attorney General may certify that a code meets or exceeds the minimum requirements of the Act for the accessibility and usability of places of public accommodation and commercial facilities under this part by issuing a certification of equivalency. At any enforcement proceeding under title III of the Act, such certification shall be rebuttable evidence that such State law or local ordinance does meet or exceed the minimum requirements of title III.

Sec.36.603 Filing request for certification.

- (a) A submitting official may file a request for certification of a code under this subpart.
- (b) Before filing a request for certification of a code, the submitting official shall ensure that --
 - (1) Adequate public notice of intention to file a request for certification, notice of a hearing, and notice of the location at which the request and materials can be inspected is published within the relevant jurisdiction;
 - (2) Copies of the proposed request and supporting materials are made available for public examination and copying at the office of the State or local agency charged with administration and enforcement of the code; and
 - (3) The local or State jurisdiction holds a public hearing on the record, in the State or locality, at which the public is invited to comment on the proposed request for certification.
- (c) The submitting official shall include the following materials and information in support of the request:

(1) The text of the jurisdiction's code; any standard, regulation, code, or other relevant document incorporated by reference or otherwise referenced in the code; the law creating and empowering the agency; any relevant manuals, guides, or any other interpretive information issued that pertain to the code; and any formal opinions of the State Attorney General or the chief legal officer of the jurisdiction that pertain to the code;

(2) Any model code or statute on which the pertinent code is based, and an explanation of any differences between the model and the pertinent code;

(3) A transcript of the public hearing required by paragraph (b)(3) of this section; and

(4) Any additional information that the submitting official may wish to be considered.

(d) The submitting official shall file the original and one copy of the request and of supporting materials with the Assistant Attorney General. The submitting official shall clearly label the request as a "request for certification" of a code. A copy of the request and supporting materials will be available for public examination and copying at the offices of the Assistant Attorney General in Washington, DC. The submitting official shall ensure that copies of the request and supporting materials are available for public examination and copying at the office of the State or local agency charged with administration and enforcement of the code. The submitting official shall ensure that adequate public notice of the request for certification and of the location at which the request and materials can be inspected is published within the relevant jurisdiction.

(e) Upon receipt of a request for certification, the Assistant Attorney General may request further information that he or she considers relevant to the determinations required to be made under this subpart.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1190 - 0005)

[56 FR 35592, July 26, 1991, as amended by Order No. 1679 - 93, 58 FR 17522, Apr. 5, 1993]

Sec.36.604 Preliminary determination.

After consultation with the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, the Assistant Attorney General shall make a preliminary determination of equivalency or a preliminary determination to deny certification.

Sec.36.605 Procedure following preliminary determination of equivalency.

(a) If the Assistant Attorney General makes a preliminary determination of equivalency under Sec.36.604, he or she shall inform the submitting official, in writing, of that preliminary determination. The Assistant Attorney General shall also --

(1) Publish a notice in the Federal Register that advises the public of the preliminary determination of equivalency with respect to the particular code, and invite interested persons and organizations, including individuals with disabilities, during a period of at least 60 days following publication of the notice, to file written comments relevant to whether a final certification of equivalency should be issued;

(2) After considering the information received in response to the notice described in paragraph (a) of this section, and after publishing a separate notice in the Federal Register, hold an informal hearing in Washington, DC at which interested persons, including individuals with disabilities, are provided an opportunity to express their views with respect to the preliminary determination of equivalency; and

(b) The Assistant Attorney General, after consultation with the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, and consideration of the materials and information submitted pursuant to this section and Sec.36.603, shall issue either a certification of equivalency or a final determination to deny the request for certification. He or she shall publish notice of the certification of equivalency or denial of certification in the Federal Register.

Sec.36.606 Procedure following preliminary denial of certification.

(a) If the Assistant Attorney General makes a Preliminary determination to deny certification of a code under Sec.36.604, he or she shall notify the submitting official of the determination. The notification may include specification of the manner in which the code could be amended in order to qualify for certification.

(b) The Assistant Attorney General shall allow the submitting official not less than 15 days to submit data, views, and arguments in opposition to the preliminary determination to deny certification. If the submitting official does not submit materials, the Assistant Attorney General shall not be required to take any further action. If the submitting official submits materials, the Assistant Attorney General shall evaluate those materials and any other relevant information. After evaluation of any newly submitted materials, the Assistant Attorney General shall make either a final denial of certification or a preliminary determination of equivalency.

Sec.36.607 Effect of certification.

(a)(1) A certification shall be considered a certification of equivalency only with respect to those features or elements that are both covered by the certified code and addressed by the standards against which equivalency is measured.

(2) For example, if certain equipment is not covered by the code, the determination of equivalency cannot be used as evidence with respect to the question of whether equipment in a building built according to the code satisfies the Act's requirements with respect to such equipment. By the same token, certification would not be relevant to construction of a facility for children, if the regulations against which equivalency is measured do not address children's facilities.

(b) A certification of equivalency is effective only with respect to the particular edition of the code for which certification is granted. Any amendments or other changes to the code after the date of the certified edition are not considered part of the certification.

(c) A submitting official may reapply for certification of amendments or other changes to a code that has already received certification.

Sec.36.608 Guidance concerning model codes.

Upon application by an authorized representative of a private entity responsible for developing a model code, the Assistant Attorney General may review the relevant model code and issue guidance concerning whether and in what respects the model code is consistent with the minimum requirements of the Act for the accessibility and usability of places of public accommodation and commercial facilities under this part.