

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
OF  
DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND**

BILL NO. 2026 -2

AN ACT OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND TO REPEAL AND REENACT CHAPTER 121 (PROPERTY MAINTENANCE) OF THE DORCHESTER COUNTY CODE FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTING THE CURRENT EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE, WITH AMENDMENTS, AS THE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE FOR DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS BILL SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY, AND GENERALLY RELATING TO PROPERTY MAINTENANCE IN DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND.

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Local Gov't § 10-317(a)(4), the County Council of Dorchester County, Maryland (the "County Council") is authorized and empowered to enact local laws to protect and promote public safety, health, morals, comfort, and welfare relating to the erection, construction, repair, and use of buildings and other structures in Dorchester County, Maryland (the "County"); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Public Safety § 12-203(b), each political subdivision shall adopt a local housing code that sets minimum property maintenance standards for housing in the subdivision; and

**WHEREAS**, the County Council is desirous of replacing the minimum property maintenance standards set forth in Chapter 121 of the Dorchester County Code with those set forth in the current edition of the International Property Maintenance Code as published by the International Code Council; and

**WHEREAS**, the County Council finds that the enactments set forth herein are necessary to promote and protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

**SECTION ONE:** Acting under Md. Code Ann., Local Gov't § 10-317(a)(4), Md. Code Ann., Public Safety § 12-203(b), and Chapter 121 of the Dorchester County Code, be it ENACTED and ORDAINED by the County Council of Dorchester County, Maryland that Chapter 121 (Property Maintenance) of the County Code be and it is hereby repealed in its entirety and replaced with the foregoing:

**§ 121-1 Statutory authority.**

This chapter is enacted pursuant to § 10-317 of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and § 12-203(b) of the Public Safety Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

**§ 121-2 Definitions.**

As used in this chapter, the following words have the meanings indicated:

**ICC**

The organization known as the International Code Council.

**INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE (IPMC)**

A. The 2024 Edition or current edition of the International Property Maintenance Code issued by the ICC.

B. Includes interim amendments or subsequent printings of the current edition of the International Building Code issued by the ICC.

**§ 65-3. Adoption.**

The International Property Maintenance Code (“IPMC”) is hereby adopted as the basic property maintenance code of Dorchester County, Maryland, and each and all of the regulations, provisions, conditions, penalties and terms thereof are hereby referred to, adopted, incorporated herein by reference and made a part of this chapter as if fully set out in this chapter, with the additions, insertions and deletions and changes more fully set forth in this chapter.

**§ 65-4 Amendments and changes to the International Property Maintenance Code.**

The International Property Maintenance Code is amended as follows:

A. Section 101.1 Title. Delete and replace with the following:

**Section 101.1 Title.** These regulations shall be known as the Dorchester County Property Maintenance Code, hereinafter referred to as “this code.”

B. Section 101.2 Scope. Add the following language to the end of the paragraph:

The regulations in this code shall not apply to:

- .01 Buildings and structures located on lands located within an incorporated municipality in Dorchester County unless expressly authorized by the governing body of said

municipality and the County Council of Dorchester County.

- .02 Building and structures located on lands owned by or leased to federal, State or local governments.
- .03 Farm buildings. The construction, alteration, addition, repair, removal, demolition, use, location or maintenance of farm buildings. This provision does not exempt the owner from obtaining required electrical or plumbing permits nor from complying with all other applicable local and state regulations and Chapter 2, Definitions, of the International Building Code.

The term “farm buildings” is defined as follows:

**FARM BUILDING.** A structure utilized to store farm implements, hay, feed, grain or other agricultural or horticultural products or to house poultry, livestock or other farm animals. Such structure shall not include habitable or occupiable spaces, spaces in which agricultural products are processed, treated or packaged; nor shall an agricultural building be a place of occupancy by the general public.

C. Section 103 Code Compliance Agency: Delete and replace with the following:

**Section 103.1 Code official.** The code official shall be designated by the County Council and shall be charged with the implementation, administration and enforcement of the provisions of this code. In accordance with the prescribed procedures of Dorchester County and with the concurrence of the County Council, the code official shall have the authority to appoint a deputy code official, other related technical officers, inspectors, and other employees. Such employees shall have powers as designated by the code official.

D. Section 104 Fees: Delete and replace with the following:

**Section 104.1 Fees.** The County Council shall establish a schedule of fees, charges and expenses and a collection procedure for building permits issued pursuant to this chapter. Such schedule shall be posted in the Office of Planning and Zoning and may be altered or amended, from time to time, without a public hearing, only by the County Council. Until all applicable fees, charges and expenses have been paid in full, no permit shall be issued.

E. Section 106. Means of Appeals: For purposes of interpretation, the “Board of Appeals” shall mean the “Board of Building Appeals.”

F. Section 106.3 Qualifications: Delete and replace with the following:

**Section 106.3 Qualifications.** The Board of Building Appeals shall consist of five individuals, one of whom shall have experience as an electrical contractor, one of whom shall have experience as a plumbing contractor and three of whom shall have experience as a building contractor.”

G. A new Section 106.5 Fees is added to read as follows:

**Section 106.5 Fees.** The code official shall cause the levy of an appeal fee set at a level necessary to recover the direct and incidental costs to the local jurisdiction of hearing said appeal.

H. Sections 107.3 through 107.5: Delete and replace with the following:

**Section 107.3 Prosecution of violations.** Any person who shall violate a provision of this code or shall fail to comply with any of the requirements thereof or who shall erect, construct, alter or repair a building or structure in violation of an approved plan or directive of the code official, or of a permit or certificate issued under the provisions of this code, shall be guilty of a County infraction under the authority of Chapter 147 of the Dorchester County Code and subject to a fine not to exceed \$5,000. Each day that a violation continues after due notice has been served shall be deemed a separate offense and shall be subject to a separate fine without the need for additional citations, notice, or hearings.

I. Section 110.5 Costs of emergency repairs: Delete and replace with the following:

**Section 110.5 Costs of emergency repairs.** The costs incurred in the performance of emergency work shall be paid from the treasury of the jurisdiction on approval of the code official. Such costs shall be first liens on any land of the owner, the same as County real estate taxes, and may be collected in the same manner as County real estate taxes are collected or collected by an action at law against the owner. Such cost shall be added to the County real estate tax bill for the specific property of the owner in which the costs were incurred.

J. Section 108.4 Failure to comply: Delete and replace with the following:

**Section 108.4 Failure to comply.** Any person who shall continue any work in or about the structure after having been served with a stop-work order, except such work as that person is directed to perform to remove a violation or unsafe condition, shall be deemed to be in violation of this chapter.

SECTION TWO: With respect to the substantive provisions of this Bill set forth in Section 1, substantive language added after the date of introduction is in bold, italicized font and substantive language deleted after the date of introduction is crossed out with a double strikethrough.

SECTION THREE: And be it further enacted and ordained that if any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this Bill is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Bill, it being the intent of the County Council that this Bill shall stand, notwithstanding the invalidity of any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion hereof.

SECTION FOUR: And be it further enacted and ordained that all bills, ordinances, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Bill are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

SECTION FIVE: And be it further enacted and ordained that General Code Publishers is directed to codify the above amendments to the Dorchester County Code accordingly.

SECTION SIX: And be it further enacted and ordained pursuant to § 308 of the Charter of Dorchester County, Maryland that promptly after enactment of this Act, the County Manager shall cause a fair summary of this Act to be published at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in Dorchester County, Maryland.

SECTION SEVEN: And be it further enacted and ordained that this Bill shall be known as Bill No. 2026-2 of Dorchester County, Maryland and shall take effect sixty (60) days after its final passage.

PASSED this 17th day of March, 2026.

ATTEST:

COUNTY COUNCIL OF DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY: [Signature]  
Jerry Jones  
County Manager

BY: [Signature]  
George L. Pfeffer, Jr.  
President

Pfeffer - Aye

Detmer - Aye

Kramer - Aye

Nichols - Absent

Travers - Aye