



## **Washington Association of Building Officials Accredited Code Official Program**

WABO recognizes and supports the jurisdictions, agencies, and individuals responsible for safeguarding life, health and property and promoting public welfare through the administration and enforcement of the codes promulgated by the Washington State Building Code Council (SBCC) and adopted by the state and local jurisdictions. WABO is committed to enhancing and increasing the professional administration of codes by promoting and supporting the qualifications, technical knowledge and credentials of code officials.

WABO believes that local jurisdictions' code enforcement responsibilities are best administered by qualified code officials. WABO believes local authorities should appoint qualified individuals and that recognized qualifications for all code enforcement personnel should be applied throughout the state.

In response to concerns of the state legislative bodies, WABO supports and encourages professional accreditation for code officials to demonstrate qualification to administer state and local codes. Towards that end, WABO proposes to establish a WABO Accredited Code Official Program as outlined herein.

### **WABO Accredited Code Official Program Summary**

The accreditation program demonstrates that the accredited code official has passed a WABO approved examination that covers Washington laws related to state building codes including, but not limited to, administrative procedures, architectural barriers, and Washington amendments to the administrative codes. It is intended that each jurisdiction employ a building official that meets certain minimum requirements, as specified herein. WABO is committed to supporting individual jurisdictions throughout the state in acquiring WABO accreditation. The program requirements are specified herein.

This accreditation program is voluntary and seeks to validate the individual requirements to work as a code official in the State of Washington. It does not intend to create separate classes of members within the organization, depending on whether one is accredited or not.

The accreditation of building officials is encouraged to provide recognized professional credentials for code officials, qualification standards for code enforcement agencies, and greater safety for citizens.

### **Issuance of Accreditation**

Approval to be identified as a WABO Accredited Code Official (ACO) shall be granted by the Board to any person:

- 1) Who is of good character. Good character, for the purposes of this section, means a lack of a history of dishonest or felonious acts.
- 2) Who attests by their signature a commitment to uphold the values contained within the WABO Code of Ethics.
- 3) Who has met the educational standards as determined by the Board.
- 4) Who has practical code administration work experience for a jurisdiction of no less than two years as a building official or service in a supervisory role, and maintains existing certifications, licenses, and professional credentials.
- 5) Who holds and maintains one of the following:
  - a) Certification as a Certified Building Official of the International Code Council, or
  - b) An architect's or engineer's professional license in the State of Washington and who has certifications, other than that of a CBO, in at least two other disciplines related to building department operations, or
  - c) Equivalent practical experience and education as determined by petition to the board.
- 6) Who has paid appropriate fees as established by rule by the board.
- 7) Who maintains a current active WABO membership.
- 8) That meets participation requirements as identified with this accreditation, which includes, but is not limited to participation on WABO committees, service on state or national committees, participation with local and statewide code development, training and mentoring of existing and apprentice code enforcement personnel and contractors, education of sellers of building materials, public education, and public outreach projects.
- 9) Who passes a written examination

## **WABO Accredited Code Official Program**

**Section 1**     **Short Title.**   This chapter is known as the “WABO Code Official Accreditation Program.”

**Section 2**     **Chapter Administration.**   The provisions of this chapter shall be administered by the WABO Board of Directors.

**Section 3**     **Definitions,** as used in this chapter:

- 1) “Board” means the WABO Board of Directors.
- 2) “Building Official” means the officer or other designated authority charged with the administration and enforcement of codes, or duly authorized representative.
- 3) “Codes” means the building code, mechanical code, plumbing code, energy code, fire code, and other codes as approved by the Washington State Building Code Council (SBCC).
- 4) “Code enforcement personnel” or “Code official” means a building official, fire official, plans examiner, or inspector.
- 5) “Code Enforcement Agency” means an agency of the state or any of its political subdivisions which is responsible for issuing permits for construction regulated under the codes, or any other agency of the state or its political subdivisions specifically empowered with enforcement of the codes.
- 6) “Licensed professional” means one who is currently licensed as an architect or engineer by the State of Washington.
- 7) “Unprofessional conduct” is defined in accordance with Section 8.

### **Section 4**     **Enforcement of Codes – Agency responsibility**

The responsibility for permitting and inspection of construction projects, administration and enforcement of provisions of the codes shall be with the enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the construction projects and the applicable codes.

WABO believes that:

- a) The code enforcement agency of each political subdivision of the state shall be under the administrative and operational control of a qualified code official. The code official shall be appointed by the local appointing authority and shall meet the requirements of this chapter for WABO accreditation.
- b) The requirement for qualification of code enforcement personnel should apply to all enforcement agencies of the state. Enforcement agencies not having properly qualified code enforcement personnel may contract with another county, city, or

private administrative provider for the enforcement of the state building codes within its jurisdictional boundaries.

## **Section 5      Board – Rules**

The board shall prescribe rules consistent with this chapter as necessary for implementation and may include the following rules specifying:

- 1) Procedures to govern the conduct of matters before the board.
- 2) Professional conduct for an accredited code official in order to establish and maintain high standards of competence and ethics including rules dealing with independence, objectivity, integrity, and freedom from conflicts of interest.
- 3) Actions and circumstances deemed to constitute holding oneself out as an accredited code official in connection with the practice of a code official.
- 4) The manner and circumstances of the use of the title of “WABO Accredited Code Official”
- 5) Educational requirements to take the Accredited Code Official examination.
- 6) Requirements to maintain or improve the professional competence as a condition to maintaining accreditation.
- 7) Experience requirements in order to qualify for accreditation.
- 8) Requirements for members to qualify for accreditation under this chapter which must include provisions for meeting educational and experience requirements prior to application for accreditation.
- 9) Accreditation requirements for WABO members in good standing.
- 10) Ethics requirements for accredited members that include the process for reporting enforcement with those requirements.
- 11) Parameters for revocation of accreditation.
- 12) Any other rule which the board finds necessary or appropriate to implement this chapter.

## **Fees**

The board shall set its fees at a level adequate to pay for the cost of administering this program.

## **Examinations**

The WABO Accredited Code Official shall pass an initial examination as set forth by the board.

- 1) The examination for an accredited code official's certificate of accreditation shall be held at least annually at such time and place as the board determines.
- 2) The board shall determine the content, scope, and grading process of the examination. The examination shall test the code officials' knowledge of the SBCC code provisions and the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) and other subjects as determined by the Board.

Applicants who fail to pass the examination with a minimum score of 75% shall be permitted to retake the exam as prescribed by the board.

### **Section 6      Qualifications of Code Enforcement Personnel**

All WABO Accredited Code Officials representing a local or state appointing authority to enforce provisions of the codes adopted pursuant to this chapter shall:

- 1) Meet minimum qualifications as established by this chapter and be certified by a nationally recognized organization which promulgates codes adopted under this chapter, or;
- 2) Be a currently licensed professional by the state as meeting those minimum qualifications, and;
- 3) Be subject to revocation or suspension of their accreditation or may be placed on probation if found guilty of unlawful or unprofessional conduct.

A local or state appointing authority or enforcement agency may contract for the services of an ACO not regularly employed by the appointing authority or agency.

### **Section 7      Renewal Cycle – Procedures**

Each accreditation shall be kept current in accordance with the parameters as described in this section. Application for renewal of accreditation shall be submitted to the board for approval, prior to expiration.

- 1) Each accreditation is valid for three years.
- 2) The board shall establish rules for continuing education credits and WABO involvement necessary for renewal.
- 3) The fee for renewal shall be determined by the board.

### **Section 8      Unprofessional Conduct**

Any person may file a complaint of unprofessional conduct as identified in this section for any of the following reasons. The Board may take disciplinary action as described in Section 9. Reasons may include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Knowingly failing to inspect or issue correction notices for any code violation, which when left uncorrected, would constitute a hazard to the public health and safety and knowingly failing to require that correction notices are complied with;
- 2) The use of alcohol or the illegal use of drugs while performing duties as a code official or at any time to the extent that the code official is physically or mentally impaired and unable to effectively perform their duties as a code official.
- 3) Gross negligence in the performance of official duties.
- 4) Failure to supervise an inspector-in-training for which an inspector assumes responsibility in accordance with these rules or in a manner to ensure the public health, safety, and welfare.
- 5) The personal use of information or knowingly revealing information to unauthorized persons when that information has been obtained by the code official as a result of their employment, work, or position, except when information must be revealed by applicable disclosure laws.
- 6) Unlawful acts or acts which are clearly unethical under generally recognized standards of conduct of a code official.
- 7) Engaging in fraud or knowingly misrepresenting a fact relating to the performance of duties and responsibilities as a code official.
- 8) Knowingly approving work which materially varies from approved documents.

**Section 9.     Disciplinary Action – Prohibited conduct, acts, and conditions.**

In addition, for any unprofessional conduct herein described, the Board may take disciplinary action for the following conduct, acts, or conditions:

- 1) Offering to pay, paying or accepting, either directly or indirectly, any substantial gift, bribe, or other consideration to influence the award of professional work.
- 2) Being willfully untruthful or deceptive in any professional report, statement, or testimony.
- 3) Attempting to injure falsely or maliciously, directly or indirectly, the professional reputation, prospects, or business of anyone.
- 4) Violations of any provisions of this chapter.
- 5) Conflict of Interest – Having a financial interest in bidding for or performance of a contract to supply services or materials for or to construct a project for which there is an affiliation as a code official, except with the consent of the client or employer after disclosure of such facts; or allowing an interest in any business to affect a decision regarding code official work for which retained, employed, or called upon to perform.

- 6) Nondisclosure – Failure to promptly disclose to a client or employer any interest in a business which may compete with or affect the business of the client or employer.
- 7) Committing any other act, or failing to act, which act or failure are customarily regarded as being contrary to the professional conduct or standard generally accepted of those practicing as code officials.

**Discipline of Registrant - Board's power - Reissuance of accreditation.**

The Board shall have the exclusive power to discipline the code official and sanction the accreditation of any registrant.

All complaints shall be in writing and shall be sworn to in writing by the person making the allegation. A registrant against whom a complaint was made must be immediately informed of such complaint by the Board.

The Board, for reasons it deems sufficient, may reinstitute accreditation to any person who has been suspended, providing a majority of the Board vote in favor of reinstatement.

**Section 10. Appeal Process**

A registrant who has been disciplined by the Board may file an appeal per the following process:

- 1) Appeals must be filed within 30 days of the disciplinary action.
- 2) A properly filed appeal must provide documentation to dispute the findings of the Board.
- 3) The appeal must be in writing and submitted to WABO, P. O. Box 7310, Olympia, WA 98507.
- 4) Alternatively, the registrant may request to present an appeal in person, meeting all of the above requirements.

The Board may appoint a special committee to review the appeal. The appeals committee shall make a recommendation to the Board based on the appeal hearing. The Board will have 60 days to review the findings and reaffirm or reverse its original decision. The decision of the Board will be final.

**Section 11. Violations and Penalties- Good character, severability.**

Any person who shall practice, or offer to practice, as a WABO Accredited Code Official in this state without being accredited in accordance with provisions of the chapter, or any person presenting or attempting to use as his own the certificate of accreditation of another, or any person who shall give any false or forged evidence of any kind to the board or to any member thereof in obtaining a certificate of accreditation, or any person who shall falsely impersonate any other registrant, or any person who shall attempt to use an expired or revoked certificate of accreditation, or any person who shall violate any of the provisions of this chapter shall be subject to forfeiture of his/her accreditation.

**Good Character**

The board may refuse to grant accreditation on the ground of failure to satisfy this requirement only if there is a substantial connection between a lack of good character of the applicant and the professional and ethical responsibilities of a member and if the finding by the board of lack of good character is supported by a preponderance of evidence. When an applicant is found to be unqualified for accreditation because of a lack of good character, the board shall furnish the applicant a statement containing the findings of the board and a notice of the applicant's right of appeal.

It shall be the duty of all board members to enforce the provisions of this chapter.

**Severability**

If any section of this chapter shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, such adjudication shall not invalidate any other provision or provisions thereof.





Washington Association of Building Officials  
Accredited Code Official Program

**APPLICATION FORM**

Fee: \$50

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Current Certifications** (check all that apply)

	<u>Expiration date</u>
___ Certified Building Official	_____
___ Certified Fire Marshal	_____
___ Building Inspector	_____
___ Mechanical Inspector	_____
___ Combination Inspector	_____
___ Plans Examiner	_____
___ Plumbing Inspector	_____
___ Other _____	_____

**2. Current Professional Licenses** (check all that apply)

___ Professional Engineer (PE)	Expiration date _____
___ Professional Architect (RA)	Expiration date _____
___ Other _____	

**3. Education**

High School _____	Year graduated _____
College _____	Year graduated _____
Trade School _____	Year graduated _____
Post Graduate _____	Year graduated _____

**4. Participation**

Do you meet the requirement of maintaining a current active<sup>1</sup> membership in the Washington Association of Building Officials? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Are you an active member of any other associations? If so, please list and indicate your level of involvement.

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Regarding your participation in WABO or in local chapter activities, please answer the following questions based on the last **2 years**.

Have you attended WABO quarterly meetings or local Chapter meetings? \_\_\_ How many? \_\_\_

Have you participated in WABO or Chapter committees? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No  
If so, which committees? \_\_\_\_\_

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Have you served as an officer in the local Chapter? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No  
Which positions? \_\_\_\_\_

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Have you participated in other public outreach activities in addition to the above? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No  
Please describe the activities \_\_\_\_\_

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As a code official, explain in detail how you participate in activities to either enhance, promote, or advance the profession?

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<sup>1</sup> "Active" means a WABO member who is involved in the current activities of WABO by faithfully attending the quarterly meetings and taking part in the activities there; or being involved in WABO Committee(s) by attending or by electronic or telephonic means, and such involvement can be attested to by the Committee Chair(s).

**5. Experience**

How many years of experience do you have as a code official? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list (most relevant first):

Employer/Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people you supervise: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of duties: \_\_\_\_\_

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Employer/Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people you supervised: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of duties: \_\_\_\_\_

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Employer/Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people you supervised: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of duties: \_\_\_\_\_

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Employer/Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people you supervised: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of duties: \_\_\_\_\_

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Other practical experience and education to be considered by the Board (use additional paper if necessary):

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I acknowledge that I have read and understand the standard for the WABO Accredited Code Official (ACO) Program and agree to abide by the rules outlined therein. By signing this application, I swear that I meet all of the qualifications for the ACO Program. I also agree to uphold the WABO Code of Ethics by maintaining the highest professional standards of competence and ethics including rules dealing with independence, objectivity, integrity, and freedom from conflicts of interest.

I understand the WABO Board of Directors must review and approve my qualifications for ACO and I will be required to pass a written examination on Washington Administrative Code and State Building Code Council code provisions prior to receiving my accreditation certificate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Return application and fees to WABO Office, P. O. Box 7310, Olympia, WA 98507*

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*Action by ACO Review Committee:*

*Approve:*    *yes* \_\_\_\_\_                      *no* \_\_\_\_\_                      *pending* \_\_\_\_\_

*Pending Reason:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Code of Ethics

The Washington Association of Building Officials' Code of Ethics is established to provide guidance whether or not there is a rule in place. The protection of life, health and property is a solemn responsibility. Recognizing the public's trust bestowed upon individuals engaged in the administration and enforcement of building codes, WABO advocates commitment to a standard of professional behavior that strives for the highest levels of ethical conduct.

### **THE BUILDING OFFICIAL SHALL:**

Place the public's welfare above all other interests and recognize that the chief function of government is to serve the best interests of all the people in a transparent and compassionate manner.

Demonstrate integrity, honesty, humility and fairness in all transactions and constantly strive for excellence in all matters of ethical conduct. To ensure inclusion and diversity across race, ethnicity, language, gender identity or expression, age, spiritual practice, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class and mental or physical status.

Accept responsibility for actions taken and remain accountable to those we serve.

Act within the limits of our authority.

Accept no personal favors for public services rendered and conscientiously avoid all circumstances that could compromise or appear to compromise professional integrity.

Maintain competence in all areas of professional and personal growth through education and encourage the same in associates.

Recognize the continuing need for developing improved safety standards for the protection of life, health, and property, and acknowledge a professional obligation to contribute time and expertise in the development of such improvements.

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*I agree to uphold the WABO Code of Ethics to the best of my ability:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date