# ASHRAE's Public Policy Priorities: SY 2026-2027

- Advance Design and Construction of Resilient Buildings and Communities

  Resiliency is an important societal, economic, and technical issue that will have a major impact on how buildings are designed, renovated, operated, and kept secure. For example, the increasing threat of wildfires has led ASHRAE to produce Guideline 44-2024, *Protecting Building Occupants from Smoke During Wildfire and Prescribed Burn Events.*

  A building's ability to recover and be available to occupants following natural and human-induced disasters can have widespread economic and health implications. With respect to cybersecurity risks, potential consequences of compromised systems include personal trauma, lengthy power outages, and decreased ability to return facilities to their intended uses following an event. Up-to-date standards, including for ventilation, pathogen mitigation, secure building automation systems, and energy conservation, are essential elements of resilient buildings. Unfortunately, most states have not adopted current standards and codes that are based on the latest research and technological innovation, which could make building occupants more vulnerable to disasters and disease transmission. This is also true internationally. ASHRAE's priority is that policies affecting building design and building codes are developed and implemented by qualified engineers and HVAC&R professionals as unbiased technical experts, along with responsible applications of artificial intelligence, to advance a built environment that is as safe, efficient, and resilient as possible in any part of the world.

- Promote Healthy Buildings and Reduce Disease Risk

  Supporting the health and well-being of building occupants is the most important feature of the indoor environment. Providing healthy, safe, and comfortable indoor environments are essential building services that must be achieved alongside energy efficiency, sustainability, and resiliency. ASHRAE recommends that policymakers incorporate by reference ASHRAE standards and guidance in legislation and policies to provide healthy levels of indoor air quality (IAQ), comprehensive thermal comfort, and environmental health; reduce the risk of airborne pathogen transmission; and decrease hazards in building water systems. At a national or subnational level, model building codes should be developed referencing the most up to date ASHRAE standards such as 62.1 (commercial ventilation and IAQ), 62.2 (residential ventilation and IAQ), 170 (ventilation of health care facilities), 241 (control of infectious aerosols), 188 and 514 (water system safety), and 55 (thermal comfort) to support healthy, safe, and comfortable indoor environments.

- Strengthen and Expand the HVAC&R Workforce

  Strong education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to develop the pipeline of engineers, scientists, and technicians is critical to our future well-being and standard of living. ASHRAE supports policies that strengthen STEM at all educational levels, including through use of ASHRAE's extensive educational offerings. Requiring the use of ASHRAE certification programs helps ensure professionals have the skills and knowledge to improve building performance. ASHRAE supports expanding the HVAC&R workforce pipeline by broadening the population from which engineers, scientists, and technicians are recruited, including from disadvantaged and under-resourced communities. For the existing workforce, ASHRAE supports policies to equip them with technical skills to address the challenges and opportunities for sustainable and healthy built environments that serve humanity. To ensure buildings and their systems are designed properly, ASHRAE supports professional engineering licensure with realistic requirements.

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- Support Sustainable Building Practices including Building Decarbonization to Mitigate Climate Change
  Buildings and their heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVAC&R) systems directly and indirectly contribute to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Buildings are responsible for more than 35% of global primary energy use, 60% of global electrical energy use, and nearly 40% of energy-related GHG emissions worldwide. Eliminating GHG emissions from the built environment is essential to address climate change. Doing so will require recognizing buildings in the broader context of energy resources and additional demands on the electric grid. ASHRAE is advancing additional tools, including artificial intelligence (AI) and digital tools, to support decarbonization across a building's entire life cycle, including building design, construction, operation (including grid-interactive and smart building tools), occupancy, and end of life. ASHRAE addresses emissions from building operation as well as those embodied in building materials and the construction process.

  To advance building decarbonization, ASHRAE supports government adoption of robust building standards for new construction such as ASHRAE Standard 90.1 (commercial), 90.2 (residential), 90.4 (data centers), 189.1/IgCC (high-performance green buildings), and 189.3 (high-performance health care facilities). ASHRAE supports the deployment of decarbonization technology such as next generation heat pumps, adoption of stretch codes, building performance standards (Standard 100), electric-ready building requirements, building benchmarking and labeling requirements, as well as AI-enabled / digital optimization. ASHRAE also supports the use of decarbonized combustion fuels and on-site carbon capture use and storage, as they become commercially available. ASHRAE recommends governments use and refer to ASHRAE Standard 228 to evaluate whether a building or group of buildings meet a definition of "zero net energy" or "zero net carbon."

- Ensure the Orderly and Safe Phasedown of High-GWP HFC Refrigerants
  ASHRAE supports the global phasedown of the production and consumption of Hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) refrigerants that have high-Global Warming Potential (GWP), including through legislation, regulations, and policy. Governments are mandating the near-term use of lower GWP refrigerants, which can have some flammability. ASHRAE Standard 15-2024, *Safety Standard for Refrigeration Systems,* and Standard 34-2024, *Designation and Classification of Refrigerants* should be adopted quickly to help ensure the safe use of these refrigerants. Where ultra-low GWP refrigerants are being applied, ASHRAE's priority is to ensure the transition to these refrigerants is managed so that they are used safely, efficiently, and cost-effectively. ASHRAE supports research needed to achieve these objectives.

- Support Adoption of the Latest Edition of ASHRAE's Standards
  Energy efficiency and resulting cost savings can be improved significantly through the adoption and effective implementation of the most recent version of ASHRAE Standard 90.1, *Energy Standard for Sites and Buildings Except Low-Rise Residential Buildings*, which has provided the minimum requirements for energy-efficient design in the United States for more than 50 years. Residential buildings and data centers can also achieve improved performance, save energy costs, and reduce climate impacts when jurisdictions adopt ASHRAE Standard 90.2 (residential) and Standard 90.4 (data centers). As AI-driven computing and digital infrastructure continue to accelerate data center development, adoption of these standards becomes increasingly important for grid resilience, efficiency, and sustainable growth. The incorporation by reference of ASHRAE's most current standards in building codes, rules, regulations, and laws enhances health, efficiency, and safety in the built environment, and should be pursued. Authorities having jurisdiction should be adequately resourced and empowered to adopt and enforce the newest edition of ASHRAE standards.