



## About the International Code Council

### Vision

Protecting the health, safety, and welfare of people by creating better buildings and safer communities.

### Mission

Providing the highest quality codes, standards, products, and services for all concerned with the safety and performance of the built environment

### Origin of ICC

The International Code Council (ICC), established in 1994, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing a single set of comprehensive and coordinated national model construction codes. The founders of the ICC are Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc. (BOCA), International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO), and Southern Building Code Congress International, Inc. (SBCCI). Since the early 1900s, these nonprofit organizations developed three separate sets of model codes used throughout the United States. Although such regional code development was effective, at the time a global marketplace and technological advances in construction made a single set of codes a practical necessity. The nation's three model code groups responded to this need by creating the International Code Council and by developing codes without regional limitations — the *International Codes*.

### Purpose of the ICC

Code enforcement officials, architects, engineers, designers and contractors can now work with one consistent set of requirements throughout the United States. Manufacturers can put their efforts into research and development rather than designing to the specifications of three different sets of standards. They also can focus on being more competitive in worldwide markets. Coordinated education and certification programs can be used internationally. A single set of codes encourages states and localities that currently write their own codes to adopt the *International Codes* without local technical amendments. Such adoption will lead to consistent code enforcement and higher quality construction. With the publishing of the *International Codes*, the code organizations can now direct their collective energies toward wider code adoption, better code enforcement and enhanced membership services. All issues and concerns of a regulatory nature now have a single forum for discussion, consideration and resolution. Whether the concern is disaster mitigation, energy conservation, accessibility, innovative technology or fire protection, the ICC provides a single forum for national and international attention to address these concerns.



INTERNATIONAL  
CODE COUNCIL®

*Setting the Standard  
for Building Safety™*

# A Complete Building Safety System

INTERNATIONAL CODES

CODE RESOURCES

ICC MEMBERSHIP

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

CERTIFICATION

TECHNICAL SERVICES

ICC EVALUATION SERVICE

INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION SERVICE

[www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org)

888-ICC-SAFE (888-422-7233)

# Building Safety System

## A Complete Building Safety System — Not Just Codes

Building safety depends on more than codes and standards. Building safety results from providing trained professionals with resources and ongoing support necessary to stay current with the latest advancements in the building safety field. More cities, counties and states in the United States have used ICC's comprehensive package of building and fire safety services than any other.

ICC's building safety system is well equipped to meet the needs of any jurisdiction with code interpretations, education, personnel certification, plan review, building product evaluations, code commentaries, handbooks and more. ICC offers targeted and customized services for the professional development of code enforcement officials, fire officials, architects, engineers, builders, plumbers, contractors and building owners and managers. The ICC building safety system is founded on the participation of building and fire safety officials, the building design and construction industry, and its members for code development and revisions.

## International Codes™: Comprehensive, Coordinated and Contemporary

The International Codes (I-Codes™), ICC's family of building and fire safety codes, provide safeguards for people at home, at school and in the workplace. The I-Codes are a complete set of coordinated, comprehensive and contemporary building and fire safety codes adopted by jurisdictions across America and used as the basis for other countries' building codes.

The I-Code family includes the following:

- International Building Code®
- International Residential Code®
- International Plumbing Code®
- International Mechanical Code®
- International Fire Code®
- International Energy Conservation Code®
- International Property Maintenance Code®
- International Existing Building Code®
- International Fuel Gas Code®
- ICC Performance Code™ for Buildings and Facilities
- International Private Sewage Disposal Code®
- International Urban-Wildland Interface Code™
- International Zoning Code®

The I-Codes combine the strengths of the legacy codes without regional limitations. They are a single set of codes that are effective, efficient and meet government, industry and public needs.

The ICC governmental consensus development process allows input from all interested individuals and parties. The final determination of code provisions is left in the hands of public safety officials who, with no vested financial interest, can legitimately represent the public interest.

## Code Resources

ICC invests considerable resources to support the I-Codes. ICC provides the end users the appropriate support services in order to implement and enforce the codes successfully.

Commentaries on the I-Codes assist in understanding the background and application of the codes to building design, construction and approval activities. For example, the two-volume commentary on the International Building Code® provides application examples, explanatory material, code development history, a comparison with the previous edition, illustrations and a bibliography of additional reference material.

## Widespread Support

The following is a partial list of organizations that support the adoption of the ICC International Codes:

- American Gas Association (AGA)
- American Institute of Architects (AIA)
- American Institute of Building Design (AIBD)
- American Planning Association (APA)
- American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA)
- Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA)
- Insurance Building Code Coalition (IBCC)
- Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS)
- International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB)
- National Apartment Association (NAA)
- National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)
- National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP)
- National Multi Housing Council (NMHC)
- Northern California Drywall Contractors Association (NCDCA)
- Northwest Wall & Ceiling Bureau (NWCB)
- Responsible Energy Codes Alliance (RECA)
- U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)
- U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)
- U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Western Contractors Association
- Western Wall & Ceiling Contractors Association (WWCCA)
- Window and Door Manufacturers Association (WDMA)



## ICC Membership

Members are the greatest asset of ICC. Providing quality services to I-Code users is a high priority for ICC. The organization offers several membership categories and an extensive system of regional offices, chapters and key relationships with officials at the state and local levels of government. Code enforcement and fire officials, designers, architects, construction professionals, corporate representatives and others involved in the development and maintenance of our built environment are all valued members of ICC.

ICC members have a voice in code development and enforcement issues throughout the U.S. For instance, Governmental Member Units are given multiple votes (according to population) regarding code changes as well as election of council officials and other issues decided at ICC's Annual Business Meeting. All members, regardless of membership category, receive valuable benefits. These benefits include toll-free numbers for access to service in ICC locations throughout the U.S., complimentary monographs

# *Building Safety System*

and other publications regarding proposed revisions to ICC codes and unlimited use of all ICC administrative, computer, technical and educational support services. Members also receive valuable discounts on ICC publications, software, videos and related code support products and services. The ICC has 300 local chapters across North America and around the globe to help members stay up to date on both local and national building safety issues. ICC also offers free code training on an annual basis for chapter members.

## **Professional Development Services**

ICC's Professional Development Services (PDS) provides many services to assist cities, counties, states and the federal government in providing education and training programs for their employees and constituents.

The technical curriculum for the codes is comprehensive. More than 100 courses are available in various lengths and delivery modes; targeted to entry-level, intermediate-level and advanced-level code professionals.

PDS provides timely curriculum based on recent editions of each code. Transition programs are available which are designed to assist jurisdictions with the adoption of the I-Codes.

ICC Campus Online provides around-the-clock opportunity for the busy professional to obtain basic knowledge about codes and information to enhance knowledge and skills. ICC Campus Online currently offers more than 60 courses. Approximately 7,000 students have registered and more than 2,500 courses have been delivered in all 50 states and 22 foreign countries. ICC

Campus Online can customize its curriculum for any governmental unit or discipline.

The 4-day-long ICC Code Official Institute addresses building department personnel management, financial management, public information, ethics, and legal aspects of code administration.

A video series teaching Residential Inspection is available to provide a visual and straightforward demonstration of residential inspection. This series is widely used by states and local jurisdictions to train new inspectors.

Code Officials have the opportunity to complete an academic degree program in a non-traditional delivery format. ICC partners with community colleges across the country such as Red Rocks Community College in offering an Associates of Applied Science Degree available via the Internet. This degree has a strong code enforcement component and is transferable toward a Bachelor Degree with the University of Phoenix online.



Virtual Seminars are also offered and are “attended” right from the office. The audio is delivered over the telephone. Using a speakerphone allows several individuals to participate and provides the feel of a talk-radio program.

### **Certification**

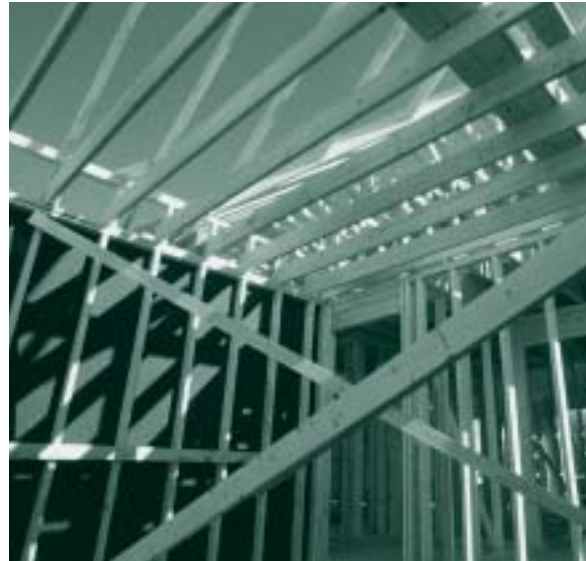
Certification ensures that competent building and fire safety individuals are involved in the critical building approval process. It also ensures that a level of professionalism is available to attract a continually increasing level of competence and professionalism into the building code community. Over the past three decades, ICC has developed the nation’s most robust and recognized certification credential for code administration professionals. Through ICC, professional certifications are available which are specific to state, regional and national codes and standards throughout the U.S. To date, 500,000 certifications have been issued to 54,000 individuals in one or more of 65 areas of expertise, including 500 Master Code Officials, the highest designation recognized in this profession. Currently, 20 states recognize the benefits of such certifications and require them as a condition for service.

### **Technical Services**

ICC staff provides code interpretations to facilitate the approval of building designs. More than 100,000 telephone interpretations are addressed each year. In addition, approximately 5,000 informal ICC staff opinions are issued each year with a one-week turnaround. Formal interpretations can be requested at any time and are processed through a committee primarily composed of code officials.

ICC provides comprehensive plan reviews for designers and code officials. ICC technical staff provides plan review worksheets and a comprehensive and professional report outlining

any code deficiencies in the proposed plans. Plan reviews are typically completed within three weeks of submittal. On a more limited basis, ICC provides technical consulting for portions of



projects where staff will meet face-to-face during the concept phase of the project and provide guidance on code compliance prior to formalization of the final plans and specifications.

### **ICC Evaluation Service**

ICC Evaluation Service (ICC ES) provides assurance that building products and technology meet building code provisions. The activities of ICC ES are undertaken in a way that supports the exercise of the code official’s approval authority. This eliminates the time and effort associated with each state or local agency designing an evaluation method and then performing the evaluation independently. The ICC ES evaluation report provides a benchmark for all parties throughout the U.S. to rely upon when considering new and alternative building technology.

The introduction of new construction technology does not usually coincide with the publication of new building safety codes and standards. Consequently, ICC ES provides “alternative

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materials, design and methods of construction” as the basis for acceptance of new building technology that is not specifically covered in the codes and standards.

An ICC ES evaluation report provides the supporting rationale for and a statement of compliance with the U.S. model building codes (2000 or 2003 International, 1999 BOCA National, 1999 Standard and 1997 Uniform) along with any special conditions of use or limitations. An ICC ES evaluation report provides documentation and assurance of the



degree to which a product or building technology meets the model building codes. The report helps the code official consider approval of the technology in an informed and timely manner. As a result, it reduces the burden on the technology proponent and fosters the timely deployment of the technology.

ICC ES has issued over 1500 evaluations of new building technologies and software with respect to code compliance. These evaluations have been performed for many companies and facilitate the acceptance of new products by the building design, construction and code communities throughout the U.S. To facilitate international cooperation, ICC ES also participates as a member of the World Federation of Technical Assessment Organizations.

## International Accreditation Service

The term “approved agency” is used throughout the model codes to refer to an agency “regularly engaged in conducting tests or furnishing inspection services” when “such agency has been approved by the Administrative Authority.” That administrative authority can be a Federal, state or local code official, fire marshal, mechanical inspector or a number of other entities.

Implementation of this provision of the code requires each such authority to adjudge the capabilities of third-party testing, inspection and fabrication agencies. The efforts of those agencies are fundamental to the process of code compliance that the administrative authority is entrusted to ensure.

The International Accreditation Service (IAS) assesses and monitors the acceptability of testing laboratories, calibration laboratories, inspection and quality control agencies and fabricator inspection programs for manufacturers using specific materials (e.g., steel, concrete or wood) to certain standards contained in the model codes and international standards associated with conformity assessment. IAS eases the need for each authority to conduct ongoing investigations of these agencies.

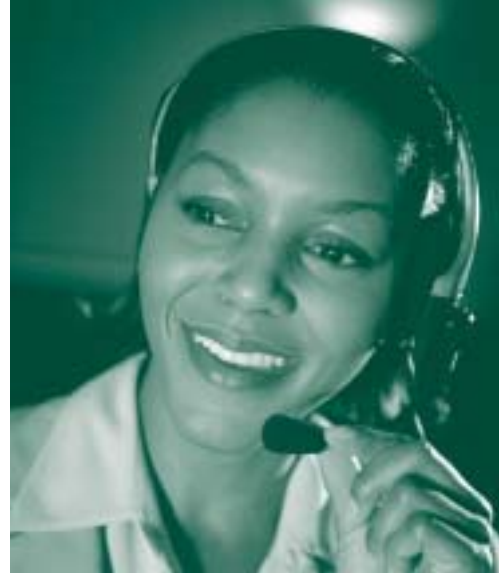
IAS is fully accredited to carry out this function and can certify testing laboratories, quality assurance agencies, fabricators and others who are integral to the conformity assessment equation worldwide. That expertise can be brought to bear in deployment and enforcement of any federal, state or local code, and can bolster the level of conformity to the adopted codes and continued building safety. IAS provides the basis for seamless and transparent interaction among

state and local government and with foreign countries on the subject of testing, quality assurance and fabrication. Follow-up inspections, evaluations and re-assessments by IAS ensure that administrative authorities using the codes do not have to perform these functions nor burden the building design and construction community.

To facilitate trade with other countries and help ensure importation of safe products into the U.S. market, IAS has mutual recognition agreements with foreign organizations. IAS is a member of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation, the Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation, the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation and the National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation in the U.S.

### **International Involvement**

ICC is also involved in international laboratory certification and evaluation services. ICC has an international program that is intended to foster increased communication with other countries on building construction regulations. The international program assists other countries in the development, adoption and deployment of building regulations. It also educates them on how the “U.S. system” works. ICC occasionally hosts foreign delegations of building industry technologists or government officials. ICC facilitates foreign delegations’ review and understanding of the U.S. building regulatory system. ICC’s work addressing “inquiries to the U.S.” enables ICC to be the information resource for other countries on the U.S. building code system. This promotes good will and facilitates the acceptance and use of products, designs, personnel and other U.S. programs in those countries.



### **Here to Help**

Building safety in a community begins with adopting a proven set of building safety codes. But, it takes much more than a set of codes to protect the public. It requires qualified professionals to implement the day-to-day application of the codes. It also requires proven infrastructure to provide the resources and training necessary to keep the building safety professionals up to date with the latest building safety requirements and enforcement practices. ICC provides these services to the code enforcement community. Call us today at 888-422-7233 for more information on how ICC can partner with you to help make your community a safer place to live, work and play.

### **Web Site — [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org)**

The ICC web site is an invaluable tool for code users. It provides the latest code news, offers an active selection of code-specific bulletin boards, a section for posting or finding jobs in the building safety field, and extensive information on code publications, products, seminars, certifications, membership and more.

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**For More Information visit**

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## **The Impact of Building Codes on Property Insurance**

### Purpose

The International Building Code and other International Codes can have a positive impact on property insurance. This paper will educate decision makers on how adopting the I-Codes can improve the cost and availability of property insurance for their communities.

### Key Words

- Property loss reduction
- Reduced insurance costs
- Improved building safety
- Building code adoption, implementation and enforcement

### Background

Natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, tropical storms, hail, earthquakes and wild fires can have a devastating effect on the built environment and the economy. Studies of various catastrophes graphically demonstrate that effective building code enforcement greatly reduces associated loss. According to *Best's Review*, losses attributable to Hurricane Andrew would have been 30 to 40 percent lower if Florida communities had strictly enforced existing building codes. A study by Factory Mutual Insurance Group illustrates that effective enforcement of building codes in those affected Florida communities would have reduced damage to buildings by up to 55 percent.

Post-disaster assessments of many communities showed a direct relationship between building failures, the codes adopted, the resources directed toward implementation and enforcement, and the services available to support those codes. To reinforce this relationship between loss reduction and code adoption and enforcement, the Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO), working with the Insurance Institute for Property Loss Reduction (now the Institute for Business and Home Safety) and tapping the expertise of the three model code groups (now the ICC), developed the Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) in 1995.

### About the BCEGS

The purpose of the BCEGS is to review the available public building code enforcement agencies, and to develop a building code effectiveness classification for insurance information and rating purposes. ISO assesses building code adoption and enforcement activities in a particular community, with special emphasis on mitigation of losses from natural disasters. Communities

with well-enforced, up-to-date codes would be expected to experience a reduction in loss, and in return, receive better insurance rates. This “better building/less loss” relationship provides an incentive for communities to adopt contemporary codes and rigorously enforce them, especially as the codes relate to windstorm and earthquake damage. The end result is safer buildings, less damage and lower insured losses from catastrophes.

The BCEGS program assigns each municipality a grade or classification of 1 (exemplary commitment to building code enforcement) to 10 (essentially no adopted codes). ISO develops advisory rating credits that apply to ranges of BCEGS classifications (1-3, 4-7, 8-9, 10), and provides insurers BCEGS classifications, BCEGS advisory credits and related underwriting information. Insurers use these in assessing risk and applying rate credits. This program was phased in over a five-year period, from 1996 to 2001. At present, all communities have been graded. ISO has begun re-grading communities based on code adoption and implementation activities that have occurred since the initial grading period.

A summary of the ISO classification and grading process is as follows:

- Each community is evaluated based on how it administers codes, reviews plans and conducts field inspections. Administration includes, among other things, whether the code is up-to-date, resources devoted to training and certification of code officials, contractor licensing, and records of code official certifications and training.
- Relevant information is provided to ISO by the code official. ISO field representatives conduct an on-site evaluation and assign a classification of 1 to 10 to the community. If the community has different codes and programs for different building types, a separate classification can be issued for each building type.
- ISO files rate credits to be applied to loss costs for personal and commercial property coverage in each community. Once state regulators approve or acknowledge the filings and they become effective, insurers that have given ISO filing authorization can automatically apply the credits.
- A community is reevaluated in five years, or sooner if requested, due to an enhancement in their code program.

When ISO evaluates a community, the classification automatically applies to any building receiving a certificate of occupancy on or after the date of classification. That classification remains with the building regardless of what happens with any future re-classification.

### Issue Identification

Because the insurance industry, communities and their elected officials, the construction industry and the general public are all affected, the results of reclassification are critical. A community’s classification or grade can be downgraded due to lack of initiative in adopting more contemporary codes, the availability and use of comprehensive support services for those adopted codes, and how they implement and enforce those codes. For example, one California community has reported that lack of action regarding adoption of a new state building code was the key factor in their ISO classification being changed from 3 to 7 during a recent reclassification. Such a downgrade adversely affects construction, and in turn, the economy of

the community and its citizens. In a worst-case scenario, erosion in a community's grade could shut down all new construction. In communities located in states with preemptive legislative authority to adopt building codes, the lack of action, or incorrect action, by the state affects each community on an individual basis, as well as the state at large.

The negative impacts of a higher (less exemplary) ISO grade or classification are:

- Increased risk of injuries and loss of life, property losses, and economic and social disruption from natural disasters.
- The loss of any possibility of insurance rate reduction on buildings constructed after the new classification.
- Loss of pride and decreased morale in the code enforcement department.
- Less support of state or local decision makers from the construction community and the public at large.

If a community or state has been enforcing an older model building code and has not yet adopted the International Building Code, it is at risk of receiving a higher grade or less desirable grade when reclassified.

### Discussion

Clearly the insurance industry, construction community and state and local decision makers understand the link between loss of life and property, and the adoption, effective implementation and enforcement of construction codes. The BCEGS reinforces that link by rewarding communities that invest in a more robust building regulatory program, which is the focal point of this program and encompasses much more than the code that is adopted. It includes the entire program to support building safety – not on paper as evidenced by a code document but in practice as evidenced by safe, well-maintained buildings and the building department staff that enforce those codes on behalf of the elected officials and their constituents.

The importance of code provisions should not be minimized: codes must have sensible technical requirements, but also need to be usable, enforceable, cost effective, updated regularly, sensitive to acceptance of new technology, coordinated, reliable, trusted and based on a long history of success. The ISO process looks beyond the technical provisions of the adopted code to address all that takes place in the design, construction, inspection, approval and use of buildings. Given two scenarios – one with a code document that cannot be easily implemented and has no enforcement or support services, and another that can be easily implemented, has support services and is enforced; construction under the latter scenario is more likely to yield success. In short, the realization of safe buildings involves much more than simply looking at words in a code book and how they are developed.

For this reason the ISO process, and any other rational assessment of codes, is focused on the end result – safe buildings – and all code activities that can help achieve that end. This includes training and education for those in the related construction and code communities, certification of contractors and code officials, the level of plan review and construction inspection, the

availability of an evaluation program to facilitate the timely acceptance of new more effective building technology, a program to accredit testing laboratories and quality assurance agencies that play a vital role in code compliance, and all other activities conducted to ensure that code requirements are met at initial occupancy and throughout the life of the building.

All communities in the United States have been classified and rated by ISO and are now undergoing a re-classification process. As noted, a community's grade is based not only on the code adopted, but on the many factors that influence building safety at occupancy and during its life. When considering updating existing codes, communities need to look not only at the code requirements but also the usability and coordinated nature of all the adopted codes. Communities also must consider the resources needed to implement and enforce the codes and the support services available to augment those local efforts. State agencies with preemptive authority to adopt codes need to consider these issues, actively consult with the communities in the state and adopt a code that will improve the classification of communities within the state.

### Conclusions

- The Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule can influence adoption and implementation of building codes. It has a direct impact on new construction, as well as the potential loss of life, property and economic viability associated with natural disasters affecting the built environment of each community as well as each state and the nation.
- The grading or classification of a community is based on much more than the code adopted. To look only at technical requirements of existing codes and codes to be adopted excludes many other factors that will impact building safety and could adversely affect the grading of a community. Not upgrading to the latest codes has similar consequences.
- A community's grading is also based on the usability of the code, the support services for the code and the ability of the community to enhance and maintain the professionalism and capabilities of those implementing and enforcing the code. The International Codes have an existing support structure, eliminating the need for each community or state to fund development and maintenance of that support structure.
- Building safety entails more than technical provisions in the code. The realization of a safe building is the result of a usable and understandable code, informed designers and builders, and capable and trained plan reviewers and effective field inspection by competent individuals supported by robust support services.
- Most communities in the United States that adopt codes use those developed and supported by the ICC. Those communities are more likely to retain or upgrade their existing classification by adopting the 2003 International Codes, with comprehensive support services to facilitate implementation and enforcement.



## Questions and Answers about the International Code Council and the International Codes

When federal, state and local decision makers consider updating or adopting building safety codes questions arise about the provider's ability, background and infrastructure. The question and answer format below will address many questions officials have asked ICC during past code adoption efforts. Topics include:

- Background on the ICC
- Membership
- Code Development
- Code Availability
- Commentaries and Handbooks
- Professional Development
- Personnel Certification and Licensure
- Technical Services
- Evaluation of Building Products
- Accreditation of Labs and Quality Assurance Agencies

### Key Terms Defined

The following key terms are used in this document and are defined as follows:

- Accreditation – Verification that an entity has the necessary capabilities and resources to conduct a particular activity. This includes accreditation for standards development or programs associated with personnel qualifications and the ability of an entity to attest to the acceptance of a testing laboratory, quality assurance agency, or other third party with respect to their actions related to conformity assessment.
- Building Construction Regulation – The collective set of laws, rules and regulations that are adopted by federal, state or local agencies to regulate the design, construction, operation, maintenance and use of new and existing buildings to ensure public safety.
- Certification – Within the context of building construction regulations, certification refers to an act by an accredited third party entity that specific criteria in the regulations have been satisfied, and are satisfied on a continuing basis. As an example, a third party agency would certify that a particular piece of equipment had been constructed to satisfy the specific conditions of a standard referenced in the building construction regulations. The term certification is also used to validate the qualifications of personnel to perform particular functions.
- Conformity Assessment – A general term covering all activities associated with verifying compliance with building construction regulations. This includes testing, certification, evaluation, plan review and construction inspection.
- Model Codes – A complete set of documents that are written as a model for a building construction regulation and which can be readily adopted as law and implemented pursuant to such adoption.

- Standard – A set of criteria governing the testing, design, construction, installation or other matter associated with a particular issue, product, material or system.

## Background on the ICC

### *Why was the ICC created?*

Builders, designers, code officials, manufacturers and others involved in the design, construction and operation of buildings wanted one model code and one common code format in the U.S. instead of the three model codes and three different code formats that had been in use since the early part of the twentieth century. The construction community also wanted one organization to provide the support and services for the code.

### *When was the ICC created?*

The International Code Council (ICC) was established in 1994 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing a single set of comprehensive and coordinated national model construction codes. The founders of the ICC are Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc. ([BOCA](#)), International Conference of Building Officials ([ICBO](#)), and Southern Building Code Congress International, Inc. ([SBCCI](#)). Since the early part of the last century, these nonprofit organizations developed the three separate sets of model codes used throughout the United States. Although regional code development has been effective and responsive to our country's needs, the time came for a single set of codes. The nation's three model code groups responded by creating the International Code Council and by developing codes without regional limitations the International Codes. On February 1, 2003, The ICC became one consolidated organization, incorporating the staff and services of the three founding organizations.

### *What happened to the three model codes with the creation of the ICC Can I still purchase them?*

Though the MCOs no longer exist separately, and the three model codes produced by them are no longer being developed, the codes are still published and available for purchase through the ICC. The I-Codes serve as the latest edition of the BOCA National Building Code, ICBO Uniform Building Code, and SBCCI Standard Building Code. The model codes can be purchased online at [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org) or by calling 1 (888)699-0541.

### *Where is the ICC located?*

The ICC is headquartered in Washington, D.C.. ICC has three regional offices: Birmingham, Chicago, and Los Angeles. There are 11 resource centers around the country in: New York, Texas, Ohio, South Carolina, Indiana, Missouri, Florida, Pennsylvania, Utah, Washington, and Oklahoma. ICC also has offices in Puerto Rico and Mendoza, Argentina.

### *How many employees work for ICC?*

The ICC has 360 staff located in offices across the country (see locations above).

### *What are the public safety qualifications of ICC staff?*

ICC employs highly qualified individuals with unrivaled technical and professional experience in public safety. Many of the ICC staff were part of the three model code organizations and bring decades of expertise in model code development to the consolidated organization. ICC has experts in civil, mechanical, structural and fire protection engineering, architecture, building design, building and fire code development, code administration and enforcement, and education and training.

In addition to the collective experience of ICC staff, thousands of volunteers serve on ICC committees from federal, state and local government, industry, academia, research facilities and the construction industry.

### *How has the ICC been recognized?*

Aside from the record of adoption of its codes and use of its services, the ICC is recognized in various federal, state and local legislation and regulation. For example, the U.S. Congress recognized the consolidation of ICC and its mission: “Over the past few years, the International Code Council has unified the various regional American building codes into one comprehensive text that serves as the code of record for the United States.” (*Senator Christopher Dodd, June 12, 2001*). Senator Dodd introduced the Code and Safety for the Americas Act, a proposal submitted by ICC to provide cost effective humanitarian aid to Ecuador and El Salvador by providing a “train-the-trainer” program based on the model building codes. This Act passed into law at the end of 2002 and will be implemented by the U.S. Agency for International Development. Other examples include U.S. Department of Energy recognition of certain I-Codes to address energy conservation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development recognition of certain I-Codes to address safe harbor issues.

### *What codes make up the I-Code family?*

International Building Code	International Plumbing Code
International Energy Conservation Code	International Private Sewage Disposal Code
International Existing Building Code	International Property Maintenance Code
International Fire Code	International Residential Code
International Fuel Gas Code	International Urban Wildland Interface Code
International Mechanical Code	International Zoning Code
ICC Performance Code	

### *Are the I-Codes being adopted?*

Yes. As of September 2007, 50 states have adopted one or more of the International Codes at the state or jurisdictional level. The District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Federal agencies, including the Architect of the Capitol, Department of Defense, General Services Administration, National Park Service, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Forest Service, Veterans Administration and National Bureau of Prisons also are enforcing one or more of the International Codes.

*Have any studies been done comparing the I-Codes with other codes?*

Yes. Studies comparing the codes and their infrastructure have been done by the American Institute of Architects, Building Owners and Managers Association, International City Managers Association, National Association of Home Builders, National Multi-Housing Council, Portland Cement Association and the States of New York and Oregon. The ICC has published a summary of these studies.

*What is the impact of the transition to the I-Codes on developers, the public, and other stakeholders?*

The impact on adopting the I-Codes in place of one of the model codes previously published by the MCOs is nominal because the code development process, training, certification, and other activities related to the support system are basically the same. All the previous model codes and the I-Codes have a common code format. Code users and enforcers are already familiar with the ICC code development process as it is based on the processes used by ICC's founders.

*What are the views on the ICC by some of the parties impacted by the I-Codes?*

The National Multi Housing Council (NMHC) and the National Apartment Association support the International Codes because "The new family of ICC codes brings consistency in code enforcement and economies in code enforcement and real estate development . . . These codes are the only set of model codes specifically written to work together, and as a separate package they are very responsive to the needs and concerns of the multifamily and seniors housing industries . . . These codes resolve the confusion associated with the federal accessibility provisions by being the only model codes designed to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines". *News release dated December 29, 1999.*

The Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) "supports the adoption and implementation of the International Codes, the only set of coordinated and integrated set of model building codes for the built environment, as a means of achieving more consistent and more reasonable regulation of the commercial real estate industry." *News release dated June 24, 2002.*

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) "supports the concept of a coordinated set of national model building codes developed for the consideration of state and local jurisdictions that provides for: Responsible code development procedures as reflected by the ICC . . ." *News release dated July 13, 1999.*

The International City Managers Association (ICMA) stated: ". . . Primarily the building officials and code enforcement officers employed by cities and counties developed ICC's model building code . . . As public servants under the general direction of city/county managers, local building officials have as their primary concern the broad general interest of local governments and the citizens they serve." *ICMA website, posted May 2002.*

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) “reaffirmed its support for a single set of comprehensive codes to be used throughout the United States . . . AIA continues to encourage the adoption of performance-based, prescriptive codes to serve the needs of the public. They recommend the uniform adoption of the following codes at all levels of state and local government: The International Building Code, the International Energy Conservation Code, the International Mechanical Code, the International Plumbing Code, the International Property Maintenance Code, the International Residential Code, The International Zoning Code, and the NEC.” *Reaffirmation made August 2002.*

A study conducted by a joint building code and fire service committee in the state of Oregon said that “...it is essential that the selected building and fire codes be from the same set of published codes. The Committee found that the ICC codes are more consistent with existing Oregon codes... The Committee found that transition to, and the long-term use of, the ICC codes would have less impact on state and local jurisdictions and on the private sectors of the building industry. Transition of the ICC codes would be comparatively smoother and would not require consideration of other existing codes adopted in Oregon. Finally, the Committee found that the national process for amending and maintaining the ICC codes is more accessible and more appropriate for the adoption of regulatory codes.” *December, 2002 Committee Report.*

## Membership

### *Who are the members of ICC?*

Members of ICC include Federal, state and local officials, officials from the building and fire service, engineers, architects, designers, construction professionals, manufacturers, contractors, builders, insurance interests, utilities and those who own and operate buildings.

### *Can anyone become a member?*

Yes.

### *What do members receive?*

ICC members have available toll-free numbers to services at all ICC locations and receive copies of the ICC magazine and ICC bulletins. Upon request they receive complimentary monographs of proposed changes to the codes and other publications related to revisions to the codes. They also receive unlimited use of ICC administrative, computer, technical and educational support services. The ICC provides appropriate state personnel access to an electronic version of all of the I-Codes, except for the ICC Electrical Code provisions contained in the National Electrical Code. The ICC will also provide technical assistance to states in preparing any amendments to the codes that the state has adopted. In short ICC members have available to them the resources they need to participate in the code development process and to adopt, implement, understand, enforce and comply with the codes.

## Code Development

### *How are the I-Codes developed?*

The I-Codes are developed through an open, inclusive and balanced consensus process with built-in safeguards to prevent domination by any single interest.

### *Does the development process of the I-Codes represent sound public policy?*

Yes. The policy for developing the International Codes is based on a proven system of providing for public safety in the built environment by allowing all interested and affected parties to participate in the formulation of those codes and their support infrastructure as well as the policies that govern the operation of the ICC. The success of the I-Code process, known as a governmental consensus process, is based on a commitment to an open, balanced, and inclusive code development process. The ICC governmental consensus process meets the principles defined by the National Standards Strategy of 2000; the OMB Circular A-119, federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities (1998). It also complies with Public Law 104-113, the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995. The process follows the principles of openness, transparency, balance of interest, due process, an appeals process, and consensus and is consistent with the manner in which federal, state and local laws are developed and finalized.

### *What process is in place for all stakeholders to participate in the creation and maintenance of the code, while preventing abuse?*

The code development procedures of the ICC provide for creation and maintenance of the I-Codes and prevent abuse of the process. Anyone can submit a code change proposal, make a public comment and participate in the debate on any change. A Committee for each code, with a balance of members representing general interests, users of the code and producers, considers all views expressed at an initial public hearing and then votes to recommend the disposition of each code change at the hearing. Anyone at the hearing can challenge the Committee recommendation on any code change and secure a vote of the ICC members present from state and local government. Evidence of the committee vote on each change, with reason, is documented and published along with any challenges to each change. The results of this first hearing are then considered at a second hearing at which time anyone can testify and at which the voting members of ICC representing state and local government vote on the final disposition of each code change. The results of this second hearing decide what is included in the new edition of each I-Code (every three years) or the Supplement to an I-Code (in the middle of the three-year cycle).

### *Can the results of the code change process be appealed?*

Yes. Anyone can appeal an action or inaction of a code committee. The ICC Board of Directors will hear the appeal and render its decision based on whether due process was served.

*Is there a way for interested parties to influence the processes by which the I-Codes are developed?*

Yes. The processes that govern code development are influenced by all interested and affected parties represented by an ICC Industry Advisory Committee (IAC). The IAC membership is comprised of over 80 industry organizations. Since its inception almost 10 years ago the IAC has made many recommendations that have enhanced the code development process.

*What about activities beyond the code development process?*

Beyond the development of the I-Codes, the ICC also provides opportunities for participation in the development and implementation of the I-Code support infrastructure (code commentaries, education and training, evaluation services, etc.) by all in the building community.

*How many code development hearings occur annually?*

There are two code hearings every 18 months, consistent with the 18-month cycle for the review and revision of the I-Codes.

*How many code development hearings are held concurrent with one another?*

None. Code hearings are held in one location and occur sequentially. There are two hearings during an 18-month code change cycle. The first hearing lasts about seven days and the second hearing lasts about four days. To fully participate, a participant in the ICC process need only travel to the location of each hearing.

*What is the cost for code officials to participate on a code change committee?*

None. The ICC fully funds the associated costs for the public safety officials who participate on code change committees. The employing jurisdiction contributes only the labor cost associated with participation.

*What are the costs associated with participation in the code development process?*

There is no charge to participate in the code development process. There are manpower and travel costs involved in participating in these hearings, but the support information, schedule, location, and other activities related to the process are executed to minimize expenditures of such resources. As noted above there are only two hearings every 18 months. Considering the costs for a federal, state or local agency to develop their own code, the investment to participate in this process is far more cost effective. Additionally, most code committee members utilize the benefit of free travel afforded by committee service to attend additional days of code hearings thereby representing their jurisdictions relatively inexpensively.

*What process is in place for coordinating sections and resolving conflicts between the different I-Codes?*

The ICC has a Code Correlation Committee to ensure certain sections that appear in more than one I-Code are coordinated. Each code change is assigned to a committee and staff member responsible for each particular code document. In most cases there is one committee per code, although some codes, such as the International Building Code and International Residential Code, have more than one committee and more than one staff support person; each responsible for certain technical areas in the code.

*How are technical issues that cross multiple I-Codes addressed?*

An ad hoc committee may be established by the ICC Board of Directors to address specific technical subject areas and to submit code changes to address them (e.g. enhanced treatment of hydrogen in the ICC codes). This process ensures that there is coordination on input to and action on the I-Codes where a particular issue needs to be addressed.

*Are cost and affordability addressed in a review of changes to the I-Codes?*

Yes. Proponents are required to identify the cost impact of any change they submit to the I-Codes and those participating in the code change process will address this issue as warranted during the debate and consideration of the disposition on each change. In addition the *International Residential Code* has affordability in its scope to address the importance of that issue with respect to home ownership and safety.

*To what degree is performance based design addressed in the I-Codes?*

The ICC publishes the *ICC Performance Code for Building and Facilities*. This document forms the basis for approval on the basis of performance. In addition all I-Codes have a section in Chapter 1 of the code that provides for the acceptance of any design, material, product, etc. as long as it can be shown on a performance basis to meet the intent of the code.

*Can you demonstrate that the ICC codes meet minimum life safety needs consistent with accepted standards of engineering, fire, and life safety?*

The term “minimum life safety needs” is difficult to define or quantify. Infrastructure and support of the Code are key to the administration of an effective building safety system.

Each jurisdiction must define those needs in terms of loss of life, property and economic impact that they are willing to accept due to a natural or man-made disaster. Any code developer, builder, architect, engineer, or other entity would have a difficult time quantifying how to approach and then address this question. In addition, the question focuses only on the code text itself. The degree to which any code is supported and capable of being implemented and enforced will also affect life-safety. The ICC prefers to focus not just on the code but also on an entire code program.

Consider a code with an extremely high “bar” for life safety that has no support infrastructure and cannot be readily understood, implemented and enforced compared with a code that has a robust support infrastructure and, while maybe having a slightly lower “bar,” can be readily understood, implemented and enforced. Given the same building project in two localities, each of which falls into the above scenarios, there is a greater probability that the latter building in actual practice provides a greater degree of life safety. For this reason the ICC considers the above question relevant but of greater depth than just the code itself – it must include consideration of an entire code program.

Given that preface, the ICC can use U.S. history and the current situation regarding code adoption to address this question. The United States has the highest standard of building safety in the world. ICC’s founders have a rich history of collective experience in developing model building codes and assisting with their deployment, implementation and enforcement. The ICC’s success in helping federal, state and local agencies protect the public is based on a proven system of code development that incorporates expertise and opinions from every arena, ensuring the very best in building safety regulations. The I-Codes are comprehensive, coordinated and contemporary. The I-Codes are also supported by an infrastructure that ensures they can be readily understood, applied and enforced.

The International Codes are proven codes. Based on the legacy codes developed by BOCA, ICBO and SBCCI, now ICC, these codes have a history of being the clear choice for the protection of property and lives. Virtually every state or local agency in the U.S. that has adopted building construction regulations has relied on the ICC and the codes of the above organizations. Since the publication of the 2000 I-Codes, many of those state and local agencies have adopted the I-Codes, and others are in the process of adopting them or are initiating the process of adoption. Virtually all those who have not adopted the ICC codes use one of the legacy codes of the above three organizations. If the bulk of the communities in the U.S. have adopted these codes, and the number of deaths per thousand population has decreased over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, then it clearly supports the fact that the I-Codes meet minimum life safety needs consistent with accepted standards of engineering, fire, and life safety. The voluntary nature of code development and adoption in the U.S. suggests that the I-Codes, their predecessor codes and their support infrastructure have the unparalleled degree of adoption and use that they are the accepted standards of engineering, fire and life safety and meet minimum standards established by those adopting and using them.

*What changes were made between the 2003 and 2006 editions of the I-Codes and why?*

There were many changes made between the 2003 and 2006 edition of the I-Codes. The specific changes are covered in separate documents available from the ICC. The reasons for those changes are provided with each proposed code change but would generally include the following: acceptance of new building technology, enhancement of public safety, improvements in administration and enforcement of the code, elimination of requirements found to lead to problems in buildings or their systems, and furtherance of the goals and objectives stated in the codes.

## Code Availability

### *When were the I-Codes available?*

The 2006 I-Codes are available now. New editions of the codes are published every three years about five months after the second of the two hearings in which the provisions of the new code are finalized. In the middle of this three-year cycle a supplement to the then current edition of the I-Codes is published containing all the approved changes to that code during the first 18-month code change cycle.

### *What other codes and standards are referenced in the I-Codes?*

A list of all codes and standards referenced in all ICC codes is provided within the code itself. These are referenced based on the need to provide a complete building regulatory program through the I-Codes. The I-Codes identify the scope of the reference and, where needed, integrate the extent to which the other document is referenced within the I-Code family.

### *Of the standards referenced in the I-Codes, how many must be used to establish compliance with the code?*

All standards referenced in the I-Codes would be required. The scope of use and intended application of the standard is stated at the point in the code text where each standard is referenced.

### *Do those adopting and using the I-Codes need to secure copies of all the reference standards?*

Technically yes because via their reference in the code they are a part of the code. In order to fully address public safety and implement and enforce the code the reference standards should be on hand.

### *How much will it cost to secure copies of these standards and how does that compare to the cost of the I-Codes?*

The cost to secure copies of all the referenced standards is considerable and on the order of 25 times the cost of the codes. While some building departments may not feel it necessary to secure copies of all reference standards the ICC is working with standards developers to facilitate their availability. To reduce costs associated with securing reference standards the ICC has separate agreements with two of the standards organizations, UL and ASTM, that permit ICC to compile and publish each of these organization's referenced standards as stand alone documents. These two documents cost on the order of \$300 and compare with a cost of over \$10,000 to purchase the standards separately.

## Commentaries and Other Handbooks

*What publications, handbooks, and manuals are readily available from the ICC and what are their costs?*

The ICC has a wide range of publications, commentaries, handbooks, and other documents available in a wide range of media. A list of those is available on the ICC web site as well as being included in a Publications Catalogue.

*Does the ICC publish comparisons of new and previous codes?*

Yes. Soon after the publication of a new edition of the I-Codes manuals, presentations and other resources are made available that outline the differences between the earlier edition and the new edition of the I-Codes. These documents assist those who are familiar with the earlier edition to understand and implement the new edition using their current knowledge base as a foundation.

*Does the ICC publish comparisons of the I-Codes and the model codes of the MCOs?*

Yes. These assist with the transition from the previous legacy codes of the MCOs to the new I-Codes.

*Does the ICC have commentaries to explain the code requirements?*

Yes. The ICC provides commentaries that explain the requirements in the I-Codes, how to apply the code requirements and background information on the derivation of the code requirements needed to facilitate plan review and construction inspection and approval. As an example, the commentary on the International Building Code provides application examples, code development history, and explanatory material in two volumes of over 1700 pages.

*Are staff available to augment the use of these documents?*

Yes. As noted above staff are available to assist with the application and use of the I-Codes.

## Professional Development

*What “hands on” training courses are available and how often are they provided?*

The ICC has more than 150 courses available covering a wide range of technical topics associated with the codes as well as topics associated with the legal and administrative nature of codes, information technology, code enforcement, etc. They are provided on a regular basis as requested by state and local government or ICC chapters and targeted to entry-level, intermediate-level and advanced levels. They are also offered in conjunction with the ICC Annual Business Meeting and an Educational Conference held each year by the ICC.

*Where is there a list of the training courses available?*

A list of available “off the shelf” training courses is available on the ICC web site. If there is a topic of interest that is not shown on that list the ICC should be contacted to discuss development of the needed training program.

*What are the delivery mechanisms for ICC educational programs?*

The ICC educational programs are offered in-person, on-line and via telephone.

*Are there ways to secure training at no cost?*

The ICC is committed to providing all of its members the high quality of services they have come to expect from the MCOs and will continue to provide free code update/transition training for state agencies and local officials through the ICC chapter program.

*What is the ICC chapter program?*

The ICC chapter program provides for free training in conjunction with ICC chapter program for building code officials as well as fire officials and professional organizations that are members of an ICC chapter

*Are training courses available through local Junior Colleges and/or third parties?*

Yes. For instance, Red Rocks Community College in Colorado is a partner of ICC. This college provides a certificate program and/or associates degree online with an emphasis in code enforcement. An earned degree articulates to the University of Phoenix (Arizona) Online for a Bachelor of Science in Management. Many other community colleges throughout the country offer code specific academic and professional development courses. A list of those with which ICC is familiar is available at the ICC web site.

*What training services are available on line and what do they cost?*

The ICC features over 90 interactive and self-instructional online courses. These courses address code specific and non-technical subjects.

Many jurisdictions utilize the campus for in-house training purposes. ICC staff can tailor these materials to meet state and local needs, saving the agency time and money. The availability of on-line training services and their cost can be found at [www.icccampus.org](http://www.icccampus.org).

### *How are ICC training programs linked to ICC personnel certification programs?*

Training and other professional development services are not directly linked to personnel certification (covered below). One should use the ICC training resources and then in seeking certification, as a building official would have to successfully complete a separate, objective examination.

ICC does not “teach to the test”. All the courses and seminars offered by the ICC are collectively excellent knowledge. ICC does, however, offer certification exam practice courses. These practice courses are primarily on the ICC on-line campus and include a timed simulated exam.

### *Are ICC trainers and staff qualified and how does the ICC ensure their continued qualification?*

The ICC instructors have education and experience backgrounds that are appropriate for the training they provide and must team-teach before teaching alone. Instructors have professional certifications in the areas in which they teach (e.g. structural engineering, mechanical engineer, etc.) and all have experience in code enforcement. Many are P.E.s, architects and Certified Building Officials. ICC staff includes five curriculum developers who focus on development of educational materials. Similarly staffs that provide interpretations are those who work on code development and application and have professional expertise in those areas. If desired ICC can provide a copy of the resumes and professional affiliations and licenses for all ICC staff involved in training and technical support services. ICC can also provide a list of state and local agency references that have used these services and can attest to their qualifications.

## Personnel Certification and Licensure

### *What types of certifications do you offer (e.g. building, mechanical, electrical, etc.)?*

ICC offers national certification in 54 categories, which include all of the principal code administration professions. This includes certifications for: Residential Inspection, Commercial Inspection, General Plans Examiner, Energy Inspection/Plans Examiner, Fire Inspection, Code Enforcement, Special Inspector, General Inspection, Code Official and Building Official and Master Code Professional.

ICC also offers a comprehensive national contractor testing service which is recognized by state licensure agencies throughout the country for regulation of building contractors and various construction trades. This includes a nationally-recognized series of examinations which are used for regulating the installation, maintenance and decommissioning of underground petroleum storage tanks.

### *What is the length of validity of a certification?*

The ICC certificates are valid for three years and must be renewed through providing evidence of participation in relevant Professional Development activities. After three years they become inactive and then after six years from issuance they would be dropped if not renewed. For

renewal of ICC certificates, ICC recognizes the professional development training provided by any accredited college, or by any nationally-recognized codes or standards agency.

*What is the cost to keep an ICC certification current?*

Certification fees may change periodically. Please visit [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org) for a current certification fee schedule.

*How does the length of certificate validity coincide with the code development cycle?*

As the code development cycle results in a new code being published every three years, anyone participating in the certification renewal program may show their proficiency with the new edition of a code as an element of renewal.

*How would states use this program to address any personnel certification rules or regulations they have?*

State and local agencies that are required to develop and implement certification or licensure programs must establish local criteria for certification, re-certification, and licensure. The ICC certification and licensure programs are intended to serve these needs where appropriate. The ICC provides additional state-specific examination services for many state agencies that are used to augment state recognition of ICC's nationally-standardized examinations.

*How many certifications have been issued?*

Since 1973, the ICC and its statutory members (BOCA, ICBO and SBCCI) have administered over 500,000 licensure examinations and professional certifications. Approximately 60,000 individuals maintain one or more ICC professional certificates.

*How will the ICC provide reciprocity with respect to certifications previously issued by the statutory members of the ICC?*

The certifications of code officials issued by BOCA, ICBO, and SBCCI were transitioned into ICC in February 2003. Individuals who were not current with their previous certifications have up to six years to become current under ICC's certificate renewal requirements. Currently-certified individuals receive new ICC certificates on their next (triennial) renewal date, and are included in ICC's National Registry.

*When certified how does the ICC disseminate the results of successful candidates?*

The ICC has the only comprehensive National Certification Program and National Registry for code officials. Individuals who maintain their ICC professional certifications may be verified on ICC's website. This program helps to assure ongoing knowledge, proficiency and professionalism of construction personnel.

*How does the ICC provide testing for certification and recertification with respect to local testing centers, mail or on-line testing, and other options if available?*

Paper-pencil testing is available on request on six national testing dates per year that are set up throughout the U.S. Computer-Based testing is available daily (6 days/week) at professionally-staffed testing facilities located in over 300 cities throughout the U.S. The ICC will also assist with the special needs of any state or locality to address any further needs they may have that are not currently addressed.

*Can localities and others purchase ICC certification exams for their own administration?*

No. ICC exams are only administered by professional testing staff who are directly employed and supervised by ICC or its agents. To ensure the ongoing integrity and security of its programs, ICC's certification and contractor examinations are not available for purchase for separate administration by other agencies.

*Should there be any concern that ICC publishes the I-Codes and also implements a contractor certification program?*

No. ICC's contractor exams are designed on unbiased, objective job analyses research focused on the knowledge, skills and abilities required for competent professional practice. The ICC contractor certification exams test on professional competence, and as such include content on a wide variety of codes and standards – including those that are not published by ICC. ICC's examinations are developed and validated to nationally-recognized professional and legal standards using representative Subject Matter Experts of practitioners.

*Who develops the ICC contractor certification exams?*

Every question on every ICC contractor/trade exam is objectively validated by representative Subject Matter Experts of practicing contractors. Building officials and code inspectors also participate in this test validation process, but hold a minority voting interest in determining the technical content of these examinations.

## Technical Services

*How does the ICC provide same-day technical service?*

Anyone can call in and talk with technical staff between 8:00 a.m. (EST) to 4:30 p.m. (PST) or send an e-mail to request assistance.

*What are the procedures for interpretations to the I-Codes?*

The ICC offers three types of interpretations: telephone, written staff and formal published interpretations. Over 100,000 telephone interpretations are provided each year. Approximately 5,000 informal written staff interpretations that go through an internal peer review before being sent to the requesting party are developed each year. Approximately 100 written interpretations

are issued each year that are a formal, published position of the ICC that would be developed with staff support through an ICC interpretation committee.

### *How long does it take to get a code interpretation?*

Turnaround for a phone-in opinion or interpretation from ICC staff is typically within an hour of receipt but can take longer or even occur the next day depending upon the time it was received and staff availability. A request for a written interpretation from ICC staff receives a response in five days where a single response is appropriate. More complicated responses will undoubtedly take more time and the customer is notified of such. A request for a formal published position must go through balloting process involving appropriate ICC committees and takes about a month.

### *Does ICC provide programs to assist users of the codes with review of building plans and specifications?*

Yes. The ICC provides a comprehensive fee-based program for review of plans and specifications for building departments, architects, engineers and designers. Such services are also available in the conceptual stages of project development to help identify code-compliance issues early on.

## Evaluation of Building Products

### *Why is evaluation relevant?*

If all building construction regulations could anticipate new building products, designs, technologies, etc., then they would contain specific and explicit provisions for their acceptance. Because codes and standards tend to lag technology development (e.g. they are developed after the technology matures), the acceptance of new technology must be based on equivalent performance with the intent of the adopted codes. Evaluation is relevant because it provides a way to accept new technology that is not specifically provided for in the codes.

### *What is the basis for evaluation of building products?*

The provisions of the I-Codes form the basis for an evaluation along with referenced standards and other criteria available upon which to address the relative safety and performance of the subject product. Chapter 1 of each I-Code provides that any method of construction or material can be approved by the code official when it can be shown that what is proposed is no more hazardous nor less safe than that specifically provided for in the code.

### *Who is involved in an evaluation?*

The entity wanting to use the alternative material or design, such as a designer, builder or manufacturer, must show that what they propose meets the code as outlined above (e.g. is equivalent to that which is specifically allowed by the code). The code official, through their approval authority, would have to develop the method by which they would adjudge equivalency

and then would have to review and assess the documentation provided by the proponent of the alternative. If found acceptable then the alternative could be approved.

*Does the ICC have a service to facilitate this process?*

Yes. The ICC Evaluation Service (ICC-ES), on behalf of proponents of building products, materials and designs and in support of those enforcing building construction regulations, issues evaluation reports covering the conditions by which those products, materials or designs can be approved.

*How does the ICC-ES function?*

The proponent of a building technology (product, material or design) provides ICC-ES with all the documentation that they feel documents code compliance for what is proposed. The ICC-ES staff, with assistance from a committee of code officials, reviews the documentation and issues a report that outlines the basis upon which the subject technology can be considered as meeting the code.

*What are the benefits of this ICC-ES program?*

In using the ICC-ES evaluation reports, the building department does not have to determine how it will evaluate the subject technology. In addition they can rely on the evaluation report rather than conduct the detailed analysis of all the test data, calculations and substantiating information that otherwise would be necessary as a function of the approval process. This allows the building department to do more with fewer resources, greatly enhance the public safety while concurrently facilitating the acceptance of new building technology and the resultant benefits associated with the technology.

*How many evaluation reports are available and where are they available and for how much?*

The ICC-ES currently supports over 1,500 evaluation reports. Published reports are available free and can be downloaded from the ICC-ES web site.

Accreditation of Labs and Quality Assurance Agencies

*What is testing laboratory and inspection agency accreditation and who provides it?*

Accreditation is a determination of the competence of laboratories and inspection agencies to perform specific tests and inspections. The International Accreditation Service (IAS), a subsidiary corporation of the ICC, provides accreditation of testing and calibration laboratories and inspection agencies. The accreditation criteria that are used by IAS are based on international standards that enable the test and inspection reports of its accredited entities to be accepted worldwide.

*Why is accreditation of laboratories and inspection agencies important for code compliance?*

Compliance with building construction regulations is based on approval by those administering and enforcing building codes. Such regulations frequently refer to test standards and require independent verification that products manufactured off-site meet certain requirements. Manufacturers cannot self-certify compliance and must therefore hire third-party testing laboratories and inspection agencies to perform these functions. Since approval of these test and inspection functions ultimately rests with those enforcing the code, having access to accreditation information on laboratories and inspection agencies on which regulatory authorities rely through IAS provides another tool to the building official on which to base enforcement decisions.

*What does IAS do?*

The IAS assesses and monitors testing laboratories to determine if they are competent to produce reliable and reproducible test data. The IAS also assesses inspection agencies to determine the effectiveness of each agency's internal quality system and if the agency is competent to examine products, installations, plants, processes and services for conformance with requirements.

*What are the qualifications of the IAS?*

The IAS maintains a documented quality system conforming to ISO/IEC Guide 58, "Calibration and Testing Laboratory Accreditation Systems – General Requirements for Operation and Recognition." The IAS is also addressing the transfer to IAS from its predecessor organization (ICBO ES) recognition by the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC), and the National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation (NACLA). These respective accreditation cooperations will fully endorse IAS programs.

*Does IAS provide advantages to federal, state or local government agencies?*

Yes. Governmental agencies do not have to develop, implement or maintain similar programs to identify competent laboratories and inspection agencies. Nor do these agencies have to subject themselves to the considerable cost and effort involved in establishing credentials for their own accreditation programs. The efforts of IAS on their behalf provides a common link between all federal, state and local agencies on this issue that, in the absence of IAS, they would have to build themselves, on an agency-by-agency basis.

*Is there any trade impact attributable to IAS programs?*

Yes. Through mutual recognition agreements and relationships with accreditation bodies and regulators in other countries, IAS makes sure that reports prepared by testing laboratories and inspection agencies accredited by IAS can be accepted in other countries. This facilitates acceptance of U.S. products in other countries, which affects the U.S. economy and the locations where the subject products are manufactured.

"The governmental consensus process has been used to develop building safety codes for decades. Local and state governments use this process to develop their own laws. It protects against the influence of special interests, ensures fairness, and makes the issue of public safety the final deciding factor. That's why it works so well."

**Lynn Underwood, C.B.O.**  
*Chief Building Official,  
Arlington, County, VA*

"The ICC process is a much more open process and allows for more public input than any other current process. That's why I like it, because it's easier to go to the ICC hearings and, as an individual code enforcer, make a significant impact on the codes."

**Jackie Gibbs**

*Chief, Marietta Fire Department, Marietta, GA*

"BOMA members will be best served by a proven set of codes that are ready for adoption across the country: The International Codes."  
*2002 BOMA Annual Convention*

"ICC follows a straight forward approach in the development and maintenance of their codes. The process is clear, consistent and conducted in an open forum that assures equal access for all interests."

**Jeffrey T. Inks**

*ASVP, Codes and Standards,  
National Association of Home Builders*

"...ICC's model building code was developed primarily by the building officials and code enforcement officers employed by cities and counties. . .

As public servants under the general direction of city/county managers, local building officials have as their primary concern the broad general interest of local governments and the citizens they serve."

**ICMA web site, posted May 2002**

"The strength of New York State's building, fire prevention and energy codes are a direct result of the active participation of our building and fire officials. By adopting the International Codes and the ICC governmental consensus process, we are assuring that the knowledge and experience of our building and fire officials will continue to benefit the ongoing development of our code."

**Dottie Harris**

*Assistant Secretary of State,  
State of New York*

"When I propose a code change at an ICC forum, I know what the results will be shortly after I have spoken. With the other code processes, I can be led to believe that I know the results, only to have those results later changed by another committee."

**Jim. W. Sealy, FAIA**

*Architect, Dallas, TX*



*Setting the Standard  
for Building Safety™*

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## The ICC Governmental Consensus Process



*Setting the Standard  
for Building Safety™*

In response to America's need for a single set of consistent construction regulations, the International Code Council® (ICC®) developed, through the governmental consensus process, the first set of coordinated and comprehensive construction and fire codes for use nationwide. Municipalities and states across America adopt and enforce the International Codes™.

ICC develops construction and public safety codes through the governmental consensus process. This system of code development has provided the citizens of the U.S. the highest level of safety in the world for more than 80 years.

The ICC governmental consensus process meets the principles defined by the National Standards Strategy of 2000; OMB Circular A-119, Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities (1998). It complies with Public Law 104-113 National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995.

The following principles govern ICC's governmental consensus process:

**OPENNESS:**

- Participation in the development of the codes, including code hearings, is open to all at no cost.
- Anyone can submit a code change proposal or make a public comment.
- Code committees must consider all views before voting.

**TRANSPARENCY:**

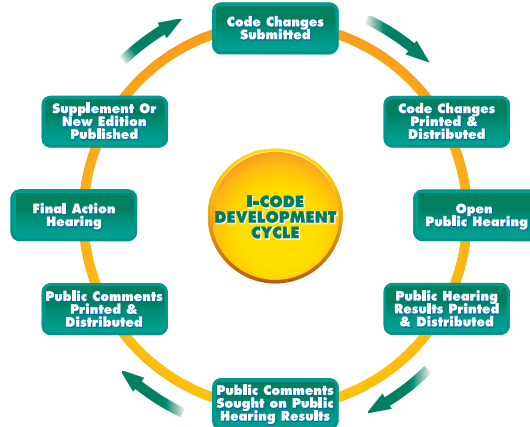
- Final decisions are made in an open hearing by public safety officials.
- Evidence of committee vote, with reason, must be documented.

**BALANCE OF INTEREST:**

- Committee members represent general interests, user interests, producer interests, or multiple interests. One-third of the committee's members must be public safety officials.
- Committee members can not vote on issues that are a conflict of interest.
- Membership on a committee is not conditional on membership in ICC.

**DUE PROCESS:**

- A code change proponent has the opportunity to rebut opponents.
- Anyone who attends the hearing can testify.
- Committees are required to consider all views, objections and the cost impact of all code change proposals.



**AN APPEALS PROCESS:**

- Anyone can appeal an action or inaction of the code committee.
- ICC renders its decision on the appeal based on whether due process was served.

**CONSENSUS:**

- Committee members vote to approve the code change, make modifications to it, or vote against it.
- A simple majority from the committee decides the action of the proposed code change.

**THE INTERNATIONAL CODES:**

- are innovative and coordinated.
- cannot be influenced by vested financial interests.
- are efficient and effective.
- are developed through the efforts of public safety officials.
- are up-to-date and state of the art.
- are revised every 18 months and new editions published every three years.
- are economically viable and practical.

**GOVERNMENTAL CONSENSUS PROCESS:**

- leaves the final determination of code provisions in the hands of public safety officials who, with no vested financial interest, can legitimately represent the public interest.