



**INTERNATIONAL
CODE COUNCIL®**

People Helping People Build a Safer World™

ICC CODE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

An Introduction to the Development of
International Construction and Fire Codes



Overview

The Codes and the Process

Municipalities and states across America adopt and implement, and countries around the world adapt and use the International Codes® (I-Codes®). The I-Codes are the first and only set of coordinated, consistent, and comprehensive construction, fire, and energy codes.

Developed by the International Code Council® (ICC®) through the governmental consensus process, this single set of codes offers substantial advantages to all building professionals and the public.

Code officials, architects, engineers, designers, and contractors can work with a consistent set of requirements throughout the United States. Manufacturers can put their efforts into research and development rather than designing to different sets of standards and can focus on being more competitive in worldwide markets. Uniform education and certification programs can be used internationally.

The code development process is key in gaining the trust and confidence of the global building and construction industry. This consensus process through which ICC develops and maintains the comprehensive and balanced codes is designed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of people around the world as well as protect our planet by encouraging sustainability, water, and energy conservation. Finally, the ICC process allows all jurisdictions, regardless of size, to benefit from the expertise of thousands of professionals in the development of the model codes, available for local adoption. The cost to include this expertise and manage this process would be prohibitive for any single jurisdiction.

“The code development process of ICC is a perfect example of a purely democratic activity. Anyone and everyone with an interest in a proposal on the floor of the code change hearings is given the benefit of providing commentary to the entire assembly for consideration and debate. The added value of attending the code development hearings is the knowledge gained while observing the dynamics of the process in motion, while listening to the insightful discussion and questioning that is a part of each new proposal.”

ROBERT F. LOEPER, JR., M.C.P.
Wayne, PA

The Foundation

Governmental Consensus

Similar to the development of laws, the ICC code development follows a governmental consensus process that includes open forums of debate and refinement. It is an open, inclusive, and balanced consensus process with built-in safeguards designed to prevent domination by a single vested interest. The system ensures fairness in the process, controls against conflicts of interest, and prevents vested economic interests from determining the outcome of all code change proposals. This system of code development has provided the citizens of the U.S. the highest level of building safety in the world for more than 80 years. The ICC governmental consensus process meets the principles defined by the U.S. Standards Strategy of 2005; the OMB Circular A-119, Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities (1998), codified by Public Law 104-113, National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995. The key mechanisms that govern the ICC governmental consensus process include:

Open Public Forums

- All forums are open to the public at no cost
- Anyone can submit a code change proposal and testify at the hearings
- All views are considered by the code committees prior to a vote

Decision Transparency

- All testimony and committee recommendations are made in open public hearings
- All final code change proposal decisions are made by public safety officials in an open hearing

Representation of Interests

- Wide-ranging representation
- Full disclosure of conflicts of interest
- One-third of the committee's members must be governmental members with no financial vested interests
- Membership on a committee is not conditional on membership in ICC

Due Process

- Equal opportunities for rebuttal
- Committees consider all views, objections, and the cost impact of all code change proposals
- All who attend can testify

Appeals Process

- Open appeal process
- Appeals considered per due process

Majority Consensus

- A simple majority from the committee decides the action of the proposed code change
- ICC assembly action allows members to challenge the action of the committee



The People

The ICC Code Development Committee

Every ICC Code Development Committee is comprised of people who have specific knowledge and competence in the fields under discussion. They may include:

- Building, plumbing, electrical, mechanical, fire, energy officials
- Design professionals/consultants
- Trade association representatives
- Builders/contractors
- Manufacturers/suppliers
- Government agency representatives
- Any qualified individual with a vested interest

The final determination of code provisions is primarily in the hands of public safety officials who hold a public trust, have no vested interest, and can legitimately represent the public interest. A minimum of 33.3% of a committee's members are required to be regulators who are experts in their fields.

“The ICC code development process provides a direct path for new technologies to become accepted across the nation. The inclusion of these cutting-edge technologies into the I-Codes through the governmental consensus process assures that the codes are widely based and that they have been scrutinized by industry peers, design professionals and code officials during the approval process. No other national code development format provides for this type of rigorous review in a timely fashion to keep new technologies moving out into the marketplace.”

WM. SCOTT COPP
Director of Building
Town of Perinton, NY

The Process

ICC Code Development

The ICC code development process is the framework to develop and provide a comprehensive regulatory system for the built environment that is effective, efficient, and meets government, industry, public health, safety, and welfare needs.

The objectives of the code development process are to:

- Recognize and evaluate in a timely manner technological developments that may affect construction techniques/regulations
- Host an open debate and democratic discussion of proposals
- Present the final determination of code- text modifications
- Create an opportunity for building, plumbing, electrical, mechanical, fire, energy, and sustainability professionals to react to and share lessons and experiences learned in the field.

The International Code family includes:

- International Building Code®
- International Residential Code® for One- and Two-Family Dwellings
- International Fire Code®
- International Energy Conservation Code®
- International Green Construction Code®
- International Plumbing Code®
- International Mechanical Code®
- International Existing Building Code®
- International Fuel Gas Code®
- International Private Sewage Disposal Code®
- International Property Maintenance Code®
- International Swimming Pool Code®—Coming 2012
- International Wildland-Urban Interface Code™
- International Zoning Code®
- ICC Performance Code for Buildings and Facilities™

The International Codes are:

- Comprehensive and coordinated
- Not influenced by vested financial interests
- Developed by bringing together people from all parts of industry, markedly those in positions of public trust
- Up-to-date and state-of-the-art
- Efficient and effective
- Revised every 18 months, and new editions are published every three years
- Economically viable and practical
- Safe and sustainable

“Strong building codes have a positive impact on the safety and welfare of all of our communities. The governmental consensus process assures that public safety professionals make the final decision based on safety—not special interests. The result of the participatory process is a comprehensive code that is widely utilized and respected.”

BECKY BAKER
Chief Building Official
Director of Building Safety
Jefferson County, CO

The Process *(continued)*

The 8-Step I-Code Development Cycle

The 8-step ICC code development process demonstrates a continuous cycle that adjusts to the changing times of the world we live in, incorporates the latest lessons learned in the construction industry, and keeps up with technological changes that help us protect communities and build a safer world. ICC publishes new editions every three years.

Step 1: Code Changes Submitted

Any interested person may submit a code change proposal. Before code changes are due for the current cycle, an announcement is posted on the ICC website and in other media, including a notice in the Federal Register.

Step 2: Code Changes Posted

Code change proposals are posted at least 30 days prior to the public hearing.

Step 3: Code Development Hearing (Public Hearing)

The Code Development Hearing is a public meeting open to all parties. Anyone can attend, testify, and take part in debates. There is no cost to attend or participate in the hearing, which can also be viewed via webcast. During the code development hearing, interested parties can present their views including the cost, benefits, and impact of the code change proposals. The hearing includes the following steps:

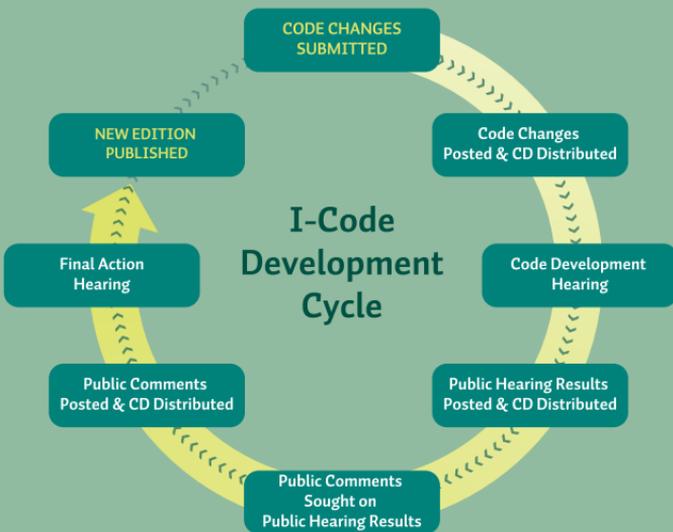
- **Floor Discussion**—The code change proposals are considered and discussed at the floor discussion
- **Committee Action**—The code development committee makes a recommendation on the code change proposal disposition
- **Assembly Action**—ICC members in attendance can challenge committee actions

Step 4: Public Hearing Results Posted

The results of the public hearing are posted not less than 60 days prior to the Final Action Hearing.

Step 5: Public Comments Sought on Public Hearing Results

Any interested person can submit comments on the results of the public hearing to challenge Committee Action or Assembly Action. This public



comment process provides an opportunity to consider specific support for or objections to the results of the public hearings.

Step 6: Public Comments Posted

Code changes that received a public comment as well as code changes that had a successful assembly action are posted in the Final Action Agenda at least 30 days prior to the Final Action consideration. The proposed changes receiving neither an assembly action nor a public comment will be block voted on by simple majority at the Final Action Hearing.

Step 7: Final Action Hearing

Eligible voters consisting of designated governmental members and honorary members cast votes on the final determination of all code change proposals presented in a code development cycle. The Final Action Hearings are open, fair, objective, and allow no proprietary interests to influence their outcomes. The Final Action Hearings are open to the public and also webcast with streaming video and audio.

Eligible voters: The eligible ICC Governmental Member Representatives and honorary members in attendance at the Final Action Hearing will each have one vote per code change/public comment considered. ICC Governmental Members are those who, in their positions of public trust, enforce the code and are charged with the public's safety. Any change to a representative's voting status must be received by the Code Council no later than 10 days prior to the commencement of the first day of the Final Action Hearing to ensure the voter's eligibility.

For information on the detailed procedure for the Final Action Hearing, please visit the ICC Code Development Process website at www.iccsafe.org/cs.

Step 8: New Edition is Published

The final actions on all proposed code changes are incorporated in the next edition of the applicable I-Code. In year one of the code cycle, Group A codes begin this revision process. Group A codes currently include the IBC, IFGC, IMC, IPC, and IPSDC. In year two of the code cycle, Group B codes begin this revision process. Group B codes currently include Administration (Chapter 1 of the I-Codes except the IRC), IEBC, IECC, IFC, IGCC, IPMC, ISPC, IRC, IWUIC, IZC, and ICC PC.

New Editions: The ICC Board has determined that new editions of the codes are to be published every three years. Each new edition will incorporate the results of the code development activity since the last edition.

“Jurisdictions of every size benefit from participation in the ICC’s code development process. By attending hearings and volunteering on committees, not only do our employees gain a deeper understanding of the codes and their intent, but our city is able to give something back. For instance, New York City’s involvement has resulted in the adoption of several code changes to the IBC based on our unique experience with the design and construction of high-rise buildings.”

JAMES P. COLGATE, RA
Executive Architect
New York City Department of Buildings

For further information, please visit the ICC code development web page at www.iccsafe.org/cs.

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The International Code Council® (ICC®), a membership association dedicated to building safety and fire prevention, develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Most U.S. cities, counties and states choose the International Codes®, building safety codes developed by the International Code Council.