Understanding the ICC Model Building Code Development Process

The International Code Council (ICC) publishes and maintains a family of model codes that provide minimum safeguards for the construction of buildings in order to protect people at home, at school and in the workplace. The fire safety standards in today's building codes regulate the use of plastics, including foam insulation products, and are based on decades of experience, careful analysis, extensive testing and an inclusive public code development process managed by the ICC. These requirements are important as plastics comprise many of the state-of-the-art building materials that play a critical role in the construction of homes and buildings that exceed energy efficiency targets, improve durability and meet fire safety standards.

The Code Development Process

1 Code Development Committees

2 Code Change Proposal Submission

3 Committee Action Hearings (CAH)

4 Public Comment Period

5 Public Comment Hearings (PCH)

6 Online Governmental Consensus Vote (OGCV)

7 New Edition Published

- The ICC model code development process is based on the principles of openness, transparency, balance of interest, due process and consensus.

- The ICC process draws on an array of experts, including architects, builders, building code officials, contractors, building owners and government officials, as well as experts from industry, academia and product testing organizations.

- Final votes are cast only by validated representatives of a "Government/Municipality (includes agencies, departments & units) engaged in administration, formulation or enforcement of laws, regulations or ordinances relating to public health, safety and welfare".

- The ICC updates its model codes every three years.

- The ICC codes benefit public safety and support the need for regional building code consistency.

- All fifty states, the District of Columbia, multiple federal agencies and an increasing number of countries around the world use the ICC codes.

What Happens in Each Step of the Code Development Process?

1 **Code Development Committees –** Any person may submit an application to serve on one of the committees that preside over specific code topics during the development process. ICC rules require that one-third of a Code Development Committee's membership is comprised of public safety officials.

2 **Code Change Proposal Submission –** Any person or organization may submit a proposal to add, delete or modify current code provisions. Technical arguments must support each proposal.

3 **Committee Action Hearings (CAH) –** At the CAH held in the spring, the Code Development Committees hear public testimony from experts, stakeholders and the general public. The Committees vote to Approve, Disapprove, or Approve as Modified (making recommendations for amendments) each of the proposals. While influential in the ultimate success of a code change proposal, these Committee votes are not final.

4 **Public Comment Period –** The public comment period provides any person the opportunity to comment on the results of the Committee Action Hearings. Public comments can be submitted in support or in opposition to code change proposals as well as to modify the proposals.

5 **Public Comment Hearings (PCH) –** At the PCH, held in conjunction with the ICC Annual Conference each fall, all interested stakeholders are provided an opportunity to present testimony for or against code change proposals that received public comments or were challenged at the CAH. After testimony is heard on a particular proposal, the ICC Governmental Members present at the PCH vote on whether to affirm or deny the results of the Committee Action Hearing. Results of the PCH are then posted for the Online Governmental Consensus Vote.

6 **Online Governmental Consensus Vote (OGCV) –** The OGCV presents an opportunity for all eligible ICC Governmental Members to make their voices heard during the code development process. The OGCV is conducted after the conclusion of the PCH and provides for a 2-week voting window. The results from OGCV are combined with the PCH to total the final vote count that determines the fate of individual code change proposals.

7 **New Edition Published –** The final vote count from the PCH and OGCV is reviewed by the ICC Validation Committee and then confirmed by the ICC Board of Directors. Once finalized, the results serve as the basis for the next edition of the ICC codes.

The ICC Codes include:

- International Building Code
- International Energy Conservation Code
- International Existing Building Code
- International Fire Code
- International Fuel Gas Code

- International Green Construction Code
- International Mechanical Code
- ICC Performance Code
- International Plumbing Code
- International Private Sewage Disposal Code

- International Property Maintenance Code
- International Residential Code
- International Swimming Pool and Spa Code
- International Wildland Urban Interface Code
- International Zoning Code

References
1. ICC. Council Policy CP #28-05 CODE DEVELOPMENT. https://cdn-web.iccsafe.org/wp-content/uploads/CP28-05.pdf
2. ICC Code Development Process: https://www.iccsafe.org/products-and-services/i-codes/code-development/
3. ICC Code Development Principles: https://www.iccsafe.org/products-and-services/i-codes/code-development/code-development-procedures/

More detailed information on the ICC code development process is available on the ICC website at
http://www.iccsafe.org/cs/codes/Documents/misc/CodeDevelopmentProcess.pdf.