



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS
Fire Chiefs on the Hill, November 2018

January 14, 2019

Mr. Douglas Crawford
Chair of the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes
C/O Ms. Anne Gribbon
Secretary, Building Codes Commission
National Research Council
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Mr. Crawford,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC), please find attached a summary of the comments we are submitting into the database as they pertain to the Public Review of the Building and Fire Codes. We truly appreciated the extension.

To accompany the comments, we wanted to offer some suggestions for future processes:

First, we would encourage the Codes Commission to rethink the timelines through which it asks for comment, for three reasons.

- (1) The fire service could, conceivably, be impacted by any or all of the 172 changes in the building code and/or 34 changes in the Fire Code and the timeline is too brief to allow for a meaningful review of what is proposed.
- (2) For the past two years, the 8-week timeline has included the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, which makes an already tight timeline tighter. We appreciate the extension, but would encourage rethinking the deadline.
- (3) The website requires the entry of individual responses which requires more time than simply making one submission. This is fine for groups that may have one or two particular interests or issues, but impractical for sectors that would be broadly impacted.

Second and related to the last point under timelines, we would encourage the Codes Commission to advance its software so that respondents choosing to respond to all or multiple changes are not filling as many forms. The way the system is set up almost discourages response which is unfortunate for such an important process.

Third, we would very much appreciate if the Codes Commission would be willing to synthesize the types of respondents and responses it receives into a type of "What We Heard" document. Many other federal consultations do this and we would find it more helpful than to simply reiterate the same comments with no sense of the discussion or debate. We also believe that this would help to dispel the perception of a lack of transparency in the process.

We realize this would require additional resources. However, the Codes Commission is important. If further resources are needed, perhaps the broader community can help build the case for resourcing this type of continuous improvement. Again, thank you for the important work that is being led and the opportunity to participate. We hope this feedback is helpful. If you have any questions or wish to discuss this with me or the Building Codes Committee of the CAFC, please feel free to reach out to our Executive Director, Dr. Tina Saryeddine, at 613-695-8462.

Sincerely,

Chief Sean Tracey
Co-Chair CAFC Building Codes Committee
CC: CAFC Board, National Advisory Council, Members of Building Codes Committee, CAFC Executive Director

Building Code Proposals

PCR	Topic	Article (s)	Comments
1320	Firefighter Safety Objective		Non Support – The proposed language falls short of the approach taken in other relevant international documents such as the International Building Code. It provides no further impact from the original language. Professionals and lay persons alike, know that a first responder is a person and that he or she may be in or adjacent to the building. This is not what needs clarification. The real issue is to establish the expectation that in the event of a fire or other structural emergency, the safety of a person either trapped in the building awaiting assistance or a firefighter who would enter a building when others evacuate has been considered. This is important to avoid loss of life, limb and even economic consequences of being unable to enter a building when it could otherwise be salvaged. If the Commission supports the premise that firefighters are protected, then assigning them a separate objective should not be an issue. Retaining reference to this issue as an explanatory note does not create the necessary impact. Finally, if the Codes Commission is not willing to make explicit that those trapped inside a building or entering a compromised building need special considerations, we would ask for a publicly stated rationale so that there may be an accountability for this decision.
1324	Interconnection of Smoke Alarms	NBC 3.2.4.20, 9.10.19.5.	Support with Comments – We support the interconnection of smoke alarms in principle. However, not having the ULC standard as a reference creates ambiguity. Verification of the requirements for interconnection should be established. Justification for this PCR should provide sufficient information to reviewers to establish that the referenced CAN/ULC standards adequately cover the requirements for design, installation, testing, and maintenance of wirelessly interconnection smoke alarms and that those standards are updated in the 2020 NBC. More information is required.
1339	Concealment of Egress Doors	NBC 3.4.6.11.	Non-support - Execution of the process provided in the justification relies on subjective criteria (e.g. "discernible") and fire safety plans which are governed by other regulations (NFC). The proposed appendix material is in itself guidance towards an alternative solution. The code requirement remains the same (exit doors shall be clearly identifiable) however if concealment is desired, unless standardized solutions are available an alternative solution is the obvious route. Such an alternative solution should involve informed and qualified professionals, in which case the provided appendix commentary is insufficient, and "good engineering practice" should prevail. Case in point, the Society of Fire Protection Engineers in December 2018 published the core competencies for those practicing fire protection engineering, which included Human Behaviour and Evacuation.
1146	Consolidation of FSP	NFC 2.1-5.6	Support - The consolidation of emergency planning requirements should facilitate improved application of all appropriate aspects of a fire plan relative to occupancy type, specific use of a building, activity or process.
1033	Separation of Major Occupancies	NBC 3.1.3.1.	Non-support - While the proposed changes to this table represent easily conceived increases in passive fire protection through

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1210	Street Access for mid-rise	NBC 3.2.2.10, 3.1.4.8	<p>separation of major occupancies, there appears to be no rationale for this proposal other than as a compensatory measure to support EMTC. These types of changes should be scrutinized and justified with some rigor to ensure it is clear what they are intended to achieve. For example, the same CCR/PCR could be applied to existing building forms, such as to increase the FRR for separation of C from A2 to 2 hours in all buildings, and the justification would have to show why this change is required. One of the fundamental reasons for this rigor is exemplified in the current PCR 1210 (reduction of fire access routes in mid-rise combustible structures from 25% to 10%); the requirement was added as part of a compensatory measure with mid-rise construction. The PCR to relax this requirement is as vague with respect to the issue or expected outcome as the PCR which created it, leaving little ground for any meaningful debate. This CCR should be rejected until proper rationale is provided.</p> <p>Non Support - Street Access – the proposal is to go from 25% of frontage to 10% frontage on a street for midrise combustible construction. The 25% was too restrictive thus limiting projects in BC. This is much more controversial in terms of how we make sure our aerials get the needed front access, even though they are saying non-combustible cladding this is a serious concern requiring study. There are also requirements to support roof-top operations, access to fire department connections, etc. Our issue is all too often the street access to a building is very quickly limited because responding agencies take up space. As well there are requirements for access to fire department connections as well as space to set up aerial operations. This needs to be reviewed in more detail for the negative impact this will have on fire department operations, potential delays in set and corresponding fire loss and liabilities cities may face from these losses.</p>
1289	Use and meaning of the terms “public way” and “public thoroughfare	PCFs 1289, 1308 & 1309 -	<p>Non-Support In reviewing the document the concern has been brought forward that while a public way has been defined as sidewalk, street, highway, square, or open space that designers will apply this to access route design. Today’s fire service has attempted to purchase apparatus that is multifunctional. By including street and highway in public way could compromise fire department access route design in respect to width and turning radius. Language needs to be struck the intent of dedicated fire department access routes need to be maintained accessible at all times and not multifunctional design that could hamper fire department response.</p>
1320	Home care type facilities		<p>Non Support - Home-Type Care Facilities – a proposal for a new care occupancy where by a single family dwelling is used for care (not treatment) services. While the proposed change recognizes that the structure needs to be fit up with i.e. two means of barrier free egress, emergency lighting and interconnected smoke alarms, it permits the omission of residential fire sprinklers in favour of floors with limited occupancy and barrier-free egress. There have been numerous examples of multiple fatal fires in North America in non-sprinkler protected properties with direct or barrier free access. NFPA 101 and its Residential Board & Care chapters have been amended over decades to reflect this type of use and the loss record. It should be the benchmark. There has been no discussion of how these will be identified or licensed in a province only that the code</p>

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			will permit these. BC has a similar provision and these properties would be required to be sprinklered. Changing the NBC to disallow sprinklers would be a step backwards in protecting vulnerable population.
1284	Sprinklers in Row Houses		Support - Sprinklers in Row Houses – clarification in the code when NFPA 13D applies to row houses.
999	Visual signals		Support.
1015	Definition of Farm Building		Support – Defining clearly what constitutes a farm building is important particularly considering that they have been used in the past for industrial occupancy and processing. With the legalization of Cannabis this may become an increasing issue that clearly defining farm building will help to minimize.
1210	Non combustible cladding		Non support – We are concerned that while the cladding may be non-combustible, there may be combustible materials on the surfaces such as on the balconies etc. This would still require standpipes, vehicles and aerial equipment. Further, the provision seems random and unresearched. We do not support this.
1024			Non Support – For the same reasons as presented last year by the CAFC, we do not support EMTC. It is premature and there is not sufficient research or experience to justify it and will remain on the record as such.

Fire Code

PCR	Article	Topic	
1372	Firefighter Safety Objective	Div.A 2.2.1.1 Objectives	Non Support – The proposed language falls short of the approach taken in other relevant international documents such as the International Building Code. It provides no further impact from the original language. Professionals and lay persons alike, know that a first responders is a person and that he or she may be in or adjacent to the building. This is not what needs clarification. The real issue is to establish the expectation that in the event of a fire or other structural emergency, the safety of a person either trapped in the building awaiting assistance or a firefighter who would enter a building when others evacuate has been considered. This is important to avoid loss of life, limb and even economic consequences of being unable to enter a building when it could otherwise be salvaged. If the Commission supports the premise that firefighters are protected, then assigning them a separate objective should not be an issue. Finally, if the codes commission is not willing to make explicit that those trapped inside a building or entering a

			compromised building need not have special considerations, we would ask for a publicly state rationale so that there may be an accountability for this decision.
1146	Consolidation of FSP	NFC 2.1-5.6	Support - The consolidation of emergency planning requirements should facilitate improved application of all appropriate aspects of a fire plan relative to occupancy type, specific use of a building, activity or process. We commend this.
1323	Home care type facilities		Non Support - Home-Type Care Facilities – the vague requirements in this proposed change are not acceptable considering that we do have the ability to put clear requirements in place. As currently proposed, the standard fall short of the NFPA 101 Life Safety Code provisions for Residential Board and Care occupancies which was developed in response to fatalities in care home situations. This standard in adopted international, throughout the US as the basis for health care accreditation, and in 2 Canadian provinces. There is no reason to be lax in the Canadian Code. The individuals in these care homes will age in place. They may or may not be able to exit and there is no reason, considering these may be revenue generating opportunities that the home cannot be outfitted with sprinklers. Recent news coverage has highlighted the lack of enforcement in current care facilities. Increasing the number and type of these facilities in communities without adequate enforceable provisions will put these residents at significant risk.
1340	Concealment of Doors		Non Support – We understand that the concealment of doors might reduce the likelihood of wandering but they also have the unintended consequence of being missed as egress opportunities during an emergency. Concealing doors is not the right solution to the problem which we do understand. The concealment of doors shall also put firefighters at risk during emergency responses as means of egress will not be apparent during an emergency.
1013	Introduction of new major occupancy category for residential care		Non Support – the introduction of the category is correct but the ensuing benchmarks suggested in NFPA 101 Residential Board & Care are not being followed. Until there is clarity on this item, it may be better not to introduce this category as backtracking will be difficult once these homes are established.
