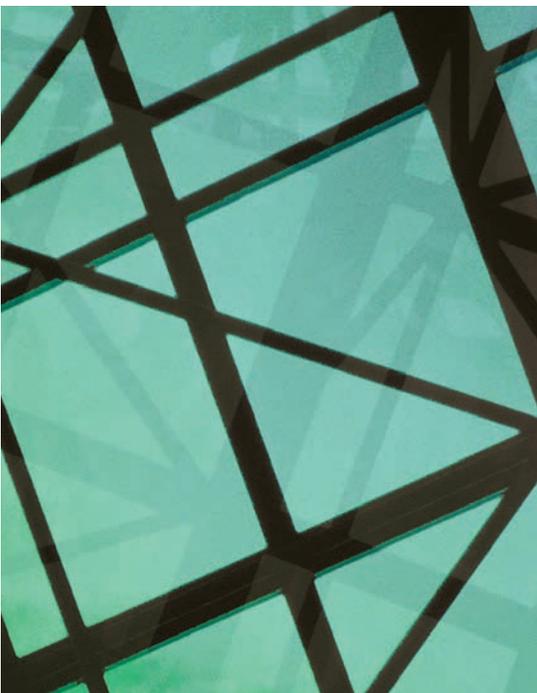




National Council on Building Codes and Standards



States and localities across the United States play a very important role—they serve as the front line, protecting the health, safety and welfare of citizens by adopting and enforcing building codes. Unfortunately, protecting the public is not always easy, especially when government budgets are being cut, employees are being laid off and education and training funds are non-existent. The National Institute of Building Sciences established the National Council on Building Codes and Standards (NCBCS) to help state and local jurisdictions enhance the public's social and economic well-being by coordinating efforts across geographic boundaries to make technical findings, improve performance criteria and promote standards to ensure safe, durable, accessible and efficient buildings.

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When the U.S. Congress authorized the establishment of the National Institute of Building Sciences over four decades ago, one of the Institute's mandates was to conduct programs that would facilitate cooperation among states. The goal was to encourage the states to accept technical findings and nationally recognized performance criteria, standards and other technical provisions for building regulations brought about by the Institute. This program would have several priorities: encouraging states to implement the findings and regulatory provisions; helping states to develop in-service training programs for building officials; and establishing fully staffed and qualified state technical agencies to advise local officials on questions of technical interpretation.

The Council has worked extensively to identify and provide guidance on important issues impacting the built environment. Recent publications and findings include:

- ***The Role of Existing Building Codes in Safely, Cost-Effectively Transforming the Nation's Building Stock.*** Existing buildings define the main streets and the skylines of the nation's communities. Yet, as these communities evolve to address changes in their economy and populations, they don't always have the mechanisms in place to assure the safety and security of their citizens while providing building owners and developers a cost-effective means for updating the existing building stock to meet changing needs. Existing building codes provide just such a mechanism.
- ***Benefits and Challenges of a Timely Code Adoption Cycle.*** The primary purpose of codes and standards is to protect the health, safety and welfare of building occupants, while making communities more resilient and energy and water efficient. There are benefits and challenges to adopting codes every three years. It is important that jurisdictions consider all of these factors when making a decision to change the structure of their current code adoption process and use a balanced approach that considers the costs, benefits and long-term safety of their citizens, properties and communities.

- ***Engaging Code Officials Early in the Process to Achieve High-Performance Buildings.*** The NCBCS proposes a re-imagined role for code officials. Project delivery models continue to change and evolve to recognize changes, ranging from market demands to technology. However, the regulatory component of this system remains largely unchanged. Contrary to the existing role of the code official, where early involvement means a preliminary or courtesy code review and conversation with the design team, NCBCS proposes a recalibration. That recalibration engages code officials as early as possible with all stakeholders.

The NCBCS has developed a comprehensive agenda to help state and local jurisdictions with these challenges. NCBCS is tasked with identifying and providing resources needed to conduct, coordinate, promote and sponsor research and development activities related to information exchange, education and training. The Council will conduct forums and workshops. It will manage research and research-related projects. It will disseminate information and review work performed by other groups. The Council also may develop (or support the development of) and recommend standards, guidelines and conformity assessment programs. It will work to stimulate innovation in states and within the building industry. NCBCS also will promote increased understanding and communications among architects and engineers, builders, manufacturers, product vendors, voluntary standards organizations, users, government agencies and other sectors of the building community. To achieve these objectives, NCBCS will need an active and dedicated membership.

Council membership is open to all individuals or organizations interested in building codes and standards development, adoption and enforcement. ■



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