

# Rejection of Updates to Referenced Standards Raises Questions

By Julie Ruth

The 2015 and 2018 I-code cycles signaled a potential shift in how updates to existing referenced standards are handled and approved. During the cycles, two updates were rejected despite meeting all ICC requirements. The rejections were unprecedented and could have significant ramifications for Standard Developing Organizations.

### Referenced standards criteria

To understand this apparent change in how updates to existing referenced standards are approved, it is important to look at the criteria for all referenced standards. The International Code Council, [iccsafe.org](http://iccsafe.org), Council Policy 28 requires standards that are newly proposed for reference in one or more of the I-codes be developed in “an open and consensus process, such as ANSI

Developing Organizations must weigh the use of ANSI or ASTM procedures on whether they want the standard referenced in the I-codes, or need to publish it in a shorter timeframe.

Acceptance by ANSI or ASTM does not guarantee acceptance of a new standard into the I-codes. There have been numerous instances where standards that were developed through meticulous adherence to ANSI or ASTM protocols were rejected due to concerns about the standard’s content. This can be very frustrating to the SDO and other proponents of the new standard.

While standards newly proposed for reference were often rejected during the code development cycle, the existing referenced standards updated according to CP 28, were approved almost automatically. They were included and approved in a block proposal

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or ASTM.” Although the use of ANSI or ASTM procedures is not specifically required by this provision, they are often used when developing a new standard, because acceptance by ANSI or ASTM clearly demonstrates compliance with this provision of ICC CP 28.

Both the ANSI and ASTM procedures can be rather tedious and time consuming. It is estimated that developing a standard through either of these processes will add at least a year to the standard’s development or update. Therefore, Standards

of all standards proposed for update. Over 1,000 standards were updated in such a manner during the development of the 2015 I-codes.

### Shift in approvals

However, something new happened during the 2015 code change cycle and continued into the 2018 cycle. Two updates were rejected, despite meeting all criteria.

#### **ANSI/ICC A117**

The update of ANSI/ICC A117, Ac-

**What happened:** In the 2015 and 2018 I-code cycles, two updates to existing referenced standards were rejected, despite the Standards Developing Organizations meeting all update requirements.

**Why it matters:** The significance of these events for Standards Developing Organizations is huge. It means that even if an SDO meticulously follows protocol, the update of their existing referenced standard in the next edition of the I-codes cannot be guaranteed or assumed.

cessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities from the 2009 to 2014 edition was disapproved by the ICC Administrative Code Change Committee on the basis of significant changes. It is expected that an updated standard might have significant changes. The standard had been updated following ANSI procedures, and following CP 28 guidelines, which made the rejection of this update unprecedented.

This occurrence was repeated during the development of the 2018 I-codes, when the update to the 2016 edition of ANSI/ICC A117 was disapproved. The American Architectural Manufacturers Association, [aamanet.org](http://aamanet.org), had supported the update to ANSI/ICC A117-16 in the 2018 I-codes because it references AAMA 513, Standard Laboratory Test Method for Determination of Forces and Motions Required to Activate Operable

Parts of Operable Windows and Doors in Accessible Spaces. Reference to the 2016 edition of ANSI/ICC A117 would have made it clear that AAMA 513 was the appropriate method to use to determine the operable forces of windows and doors in accessible spaces.

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#### **ASCE 7**

During the 2016 I-code development cycle, the possibility of the unprecedented being extended to other referenced standards occurred with the update of ASCE 7-10, Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures. Although the update

of ASCE 7-10 to the 2016 edition was approved by the ICC Administrative Code Change Committee, a floor motion to not update the standard was made and approved. This brought the question to the Public Comment Hearings. A proposal to coordinate the text of the IBC had been ap-

proved, but one to coordinate the text of the IRC was not.

As explained in a previous column, “Major Changes to Design Window Pressures Coming in 2018 Codes” on pages 14-15 of the May 2017 issue, the net result was the update of the reference to the 2016 edition in both

the 2018 IBC and 2018 IRC. But, the prescriptive provisions of the 2018 IRC will not be updated to the 2016 edition of ASCE 7.

#### **Future ramifications**

The significance of these events for Standard Developing Organizations, such as AAMA, is huge. It means that even if an SDO meticulously follows the protocol of ANSI or ASTM, the update of their existing referenced standard in the next edition of the I-codes cannot be guaranteed or assumed. Other factors may take precedence. 



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