



Code Development

A road map of the code development process

The open debate and broad participation that characterize the code development process ensure consensus of the construction community in the decision-making process. The American Architectural Manufacturers Association, aamanet.org, remains involved at each stage to ensure members and the industry at large are fully represented.

New editions of the 15 different “I-codes” covered by the International Code Council are published every three years. These various codes are divided into two groups, A and B, so that the development process is staggered, minimizing bottlenecks and facilitating participation by interested parties. In the first year of each three-year development cycle, Group A codes begin the revision process. Group B codes begin the process the second year.

The ICC code development process, which is identical for each group, is long. And, in an effort to incorporate the latest lessons learned in the construction industry and keep up with technological changes, it also takes into consideration many viewpoints. Each group goes through the following 10-step process.

Step 1: Code Change Proposals Submitted

Any interested person may submit a code change proposal. Code change proposals are submitted online via ICC’s online cdpACCESS system and must include reason and cost impact statements.

Step 2: Code Change Proposals Posted

Proposals are found on the ICC website at least 30 days prior to the public hearings and are made available to all interested parties.

Step 3: Committee Action Hearing Takes Place

The CAH is a public meeting open to all interested parties, any of whom can testify during the floor discussion phase

What’s in the Code Groups?

The I-codes, published every three years, are divided into groups A and B, which staggers the development process to minimize bottlenecks and facilitate participation.

Group A (2018) codes typically of interest to the fenestration industry include:

- International Building Code (egress, fire safety and general provisions)
- International Fire Code
- International Wildland-Urban Interface Code

Group B (2019) codes of interest include:

- International Building Code (structural provisions)
- International Residential Code (building and energy provisions)
- International Existing Building Code (non-structural provisions)
- International Energy Conservation Code (commercial and residential)
- International Green Construction Code

as to their position on the cost, benefits and impact of the code change proposals. Testimony is given by the proponent and by both those in support of and opposition to the proposal. A code development committee constituted for the particular code addressed defines each proposal as “approved as submitted,” “approved as modified” or “disapproved.” Any of these decisions can be challenged in an assembly motion.

Step 4: Online CAH Assembly Floor Motion Vote

All ICC members can vote on assembly motions raised at the CAH using cdpACCESS.

Step 5: Committee Action Hearing Results Posted

The results of the CAH are posted on the ICC website not less than 60 days prior to the public comment hearings.

Step 6: Public Comments on CAH Results Sought

Any interested person can submit comments for or against the results of the CAH.

Step 7: Public Comments Posted

Comments are posted at least 30 days prior to the public comment hearings.

Step 8: Public Comment Hearings Held

The public comment hearings are open to the public and are also webcast with streaming video and audio. Testimony is given to the general assembly and the

voters—code officials and other governmental employees—electronically vote on the proposals.

Step 9: Online Governmental Consensus Voting

Approximately two weeks after the PCH, online voting takes place. The code change proposals, CAH disposition, any public comments and the video testimony from the hearings are available to help the voters make their decisions.

Step 10: Final Action Published

Following validation of all the results, the final action is posted, marking the end of the code development cycle one group.

As of publication of this article, the 2018 development cycle of the Group A codes is well underway, with the PCH being held October 24-31 in Richmond, Virginia. The OGCV will follow that, with the final action results posted by year’s end. 2019 will see the same process for the Group B cycle followed by publication of the 2021 editions of the I-codes.

For more information, visit iccsafe.org/codes-tech-support/codes/code-development. ☐

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