



INTERNATIONAL
FIRE CODE COUNCIL

International Fire Code

**A Fire Code developed by
fire service professionals for
public safety**

International Fire Code Council

The International Fire Code Council (IFCC) represents interests of the fire service and the ICC by providing leadership and direction on matters of fire and life safety to meet government, industry and public needs. The IFCC was established to oversee and manage the *International Fire Code* and related activities. The council also serves as the appellate body for all appeals to the *International Fire Code*.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the National Association of State Fire Marshals play a key role in the IFCC in furthering the development and progress of national fire codes. Development of the IFC relies on fire service members to define and determine the requirements for life safety. No other code development system provides the fire official this kind of influence and level of responsibility.

The IFCC consists of individuals representing the following organizations: National Association of State Fire Marshals (four), International Association of Fire Chiefs (eight, one for each division); and the model code organizations, BOCA, ICBO, and SBCCI (one each).

International Fire Code

The *International Fire Code* (IFC) is a new code; however, its provisions originate in the model code organization's existing fire codes. These documents collectively are enforced in most of the 50 states, protecting our nation's population.

Development of the *International Fire Code* began in April 1997 with the first meeting of the IFC Prescriptive Drafting Committee and continued with monthly committee meetings through August 1997, culminating in the publication of the First Draft in October 1997.

The development process included a comparative evaluation of the existing model fire codes and melding them into a comprehensive and contemporary fire safety document that was well coordinated with the other International Codes .

The First Draft was included in the 1998 ICC Code Development cycle and was subject to more than 1700 proposed code changes. The resulting Final Draft was published in July 1998 and included in the 1999 ICC Code Development cycle in which it was subject to more than 900 code change proposals. An underlying precept in the drafting process was the recognition that modern fire codes are much more than simply maintenance codes. The *International Fire Code*, as a part of the family of *International Codes*,

provides the most comprehensive fire safety regulations.

Code Development Process

The code development process supported by the ICC is an open, government consensus process, which was driven by the country's fire service. Anyone may submit proposed revisions and participate in the process. The committee consists of both code officials and representatives from the research, academia and design professions. Final action over the content of the codes, however, is reserved for government officials.

There are several opportunities within a code cycle to participate: submitting a proposal, testifying before the committee, taking action in the assembly, submitting a public comment on committee action, and testifying at the annual meetings. Also, there are several cycles between triennial editions.

Family of Codes

To implement the goal of codes compatibility, the ICC created a committee comprised of all code enforcement disciplines to identify areas where coordination is necessary between the *International Codes*. The 2000 editions of the *International Codes* are a well coordinated set of model codes; in particular, the provisions in the *International Building Code* and the

International Fire Code are fully compatible.

Coordination between the *International Building Code* and the *International Fire Code* is evidenced in many ways. For example the provisions in Chapter 9 (Fire Protection Systems) that regulate when and where automatic fire sprinkler systems are required in new construction are duplicated in both the Building and the Fire Codes, but these provisions are maintained by the IFC Code Development Committee. Having one code development committee assigned to maintain these provisions ensures that the provisions will be addressed by the committee with the most appropriate expertise.

IFC Code Development Committee

The IFC Development Committee is composed of 12 members, the majority of whom (three-quarters) are from the fire service. The remaining members represent the private sector, from academic, research and design professions. This committee primarily hears code change proposals submitted to the *International Fire Code* and text from other *International Codes* to be maintained by fire professionals.

Similar to the IFCC, the code development committee consists of representatives from the National Association of State Fire Marshals, the

International Association of Fire Chiefs, the model code organizations and the private sector.

Fire Code Certification

Complementing the *International Fire Code*, a national certification program for fire code enforcement professionals has been implemented. Fire service representatives of the three model code organizations have developed a nationally recognized Fire Inspector I certification exam for the International Fire Code. Work is underway to develop a Fire Inspector II program.