



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
April 8, 2004
www.iccsafe.org

Contact: Steve Dagers
1-800-214-4321, ext. 4212
(708) 351-8880

Building officials work with limited resources to enhance public safety

WASHINGTON - A survey released today by the International Code Council shows that workload, a shortage of resources and insufficient budgets are among the biggest concerns of building safety officials across the country. Building safety officials in the nation's 15 largest metropolitan areas were questioned about their top building concerns as part of the International Code Council Foundation's celebration of Building Safety Week, April 4-10.

"The country's building boom has been wonderful and has helped spur the economy," said International Code Council CEO James Lee Witt. "But at the same time, that boom has put huge pressure on local building departments."

In most cities across the country, building departments are responsible for issuing all permits relating to new construction and often are called on to review building plans before work begins.

"The increased demand for services offered by building departments and insufficient budgets can affect the long-term safety of a community," said Witt. "If buildings aren't built to code, or there aren't ample resources to conduct building inspections, public safety is at risk."

Building officials surveyed cited numerous additional concerns including the impact of natural disasters on communities, substandard housing, illegal construction and lack of public knowledge about building and housing safety. Witt released the International Code Council Business Research and Intelligence Department survey during a briefing to Capitol Hill lawmakers. The survey's executive summary can be found on the International Code Council website, iccsafe.org/news/nr.

"This survey shows that there is a great need for citizens to better understand building safety," said Witt. "The International Code Council Foundation, which debuts this week, will work to educate the public about building safety issues."

Building officials across the nation are taking steps to address their increasing workload. The survey shows that some cities are contracting with private inspectors, conducting training programs for inspectors and the public, and streamlining permitting processes.

(MORE)

International Code Council Survey/Add One

The International Code Council, a membership association dedicated to building safety and fire prevention, develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Most U.S. cities, counties and states that adopt codes choose the International Codes developed by the International Code Council.

The International Code Council Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting lives and property by promoting ideas, methods and technology that encourage the construction of safer, stronger, better buildings and homes. To help increase awareness about the importance of building safety and fire prevention codes, the International Code Council Foundation is sponsoring Building Safety Week. Since 1980, this annual event has promoted the use and understanding of construction and building codes worldwide. Building departments across America and around the world will use the week to raise public awareness of building safety and to promote the use, enforcement and understanding of building safety and fire prevention codes.

###