



NEWS RELEASE

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Disaster prevention and response goal of FEMA, Code Council agreement

The International Code Council and the Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are teaming up to reduce the loss of life and property caused by natural disasters. A memorandum of understanding calls for FEMA and the Code Council to support the maintenance, adoption, outreach, training and enforcement of disaster-resistant building safety codes to reduce human and economic losses resulting from natural hazards including hurricanes, earthquakes, tornados and flooding.

“Our agreement with FEMA addresses the role of First Preventers, code and fire officials who prevent harm by ensuring compliance with building safety codes before a disaster occurs,” said Code Council Immediate Past President Steve Shapiro, who called for creating the Council’s Disaster Support Program. “Our members also have the experience and capability to provide help to communities during those moments when skilled extra hands are needed during response and recovery from natural disasters. Code compliance and permits are vital to a community’s safety.”

“Hurricane Katrina taught us some valuable lessons about partnerships,” said FEMA Administrator David Paulison. “Our pre-disaster partnerships are key and this new, formalized partnership with ICC will go a long way toward making America safer. Mitigation – reducing disaster losses before events strike – is more important than ever in today’s economy. Small investments now will provide big returns when disasters do strike. We’re glad to be partnering with the Code Council. Bringing together all of the energy, creativity and knowledge our two organizations represent is a big step forward in reducing America’s risk profile.”

Under the agreement, the Code Council will provide direct assistance to FEMA on a range of programs designed to reduce losses during natural disasters. FEMA will participate in the Council’s code development process, using its data to help develop future codes that increase public safety. The organizations also will jointly develop a strategy to promote code adoption to enhance disaster resistance in the built environment.

FEMA and the Code Council have a history of cooperating successfully to enhance public safety. FEMA was one of the first federal agencies to recognize the benefits of model building codes and to participate in the code development process. The two organizations worked together to incorporate the National Flood Insurance Program floodplain management regulations and the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Recommended Provisions in safety codes developed by the Council.

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 choose the International Codes, building safety codes developed by the International Code Council.

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

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