



NEWS ADVISORY

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International Code Council Statement Regarding Natural Gas Explosion in Connecticut

Our sympathies go out to the survivors of those who were killed and our thoughts are also with those who were injured in the tragic explosion at the Connecticut power plant. This explosion raises new concerns about the safe venting of natural gas lines. The International Code Council's International Fuel Gas Code (IFGC), developed in partnership with American Gas Association (AGA), addresses the discharge of purged gases: "The open end of piping systems being purged shall not discharge into confined spaces or areas where there are sources of ignition unless precautions are taken to perform this operation in a safe manner by ventilation of the space, control of purging rate and elimination of all hazardous conditions." (Section 406.7.3) We encourage all owners and operators of production facilities employing natural gas to adhere to these safety provisions.

The Code Council was notified today (Feb. 8) that the Chemical Safety Board (CSB), an independent federal agency, is investigating the Connecticut explosion. While we await information regarding the specific cause of the Connecticut incident, another incident involving natural gas purging occurred last year at a facility in North Carolina. Since the North Carolina incident, the Code Council has been working with the AGA and other representatives on the National Fuel Gas Code Committee to develop more detailed criteria regarding the safety procedures contained in the code. The Code Council and the CSB have been engaging in ongoing discussions regarding these issues as well. As part of its North Carolina review, the CSB late last week issued a statement formally asking the Code Council and other organizations that develop codes and standards to strengthen their codes to help prevent future natural gas purging incidents. The Code Council looks forward to continued cooperation with the CSB to address these significant concerns. Any changes to the National Fuel Gas Code will be included

in the IFGC, which governmental jurisdictions can consider for adoption and enforcement. To learn more about how codes are developed and enacted into law, go to <http://www.iccsafe.org/newsroom/Documents/factsheet.pdf>.

The International Code Council, a membership association dedicated to building safety, fire prevention and energy efficiency, 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. The International Codes also serve as the basis for construction of federal properties around the world, and as a reference for many nations outside the United States.

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