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## **Code Hearings Feature Major Issues, Dramatic Moments**

International Code Council members debated and voted on code change proposals shaping the future of building safety and fire prevention during the organization's recent Final Action Hearings. The hundreds of approved code changes will be included in the 2009 version of the *International Codes*, used to guide construction in all 50 states and Washington, D.C.

"We are exploring improvements in the areas of structural and fire safety alongside sustainable and energy efficient building, all of which will have enormous impact on virtually every aspect of safety in the built environment," said Code Council President Adolf Zulia, Fire Chief for Las Cruces, N.M.

Among the major changes approved:

- Fire sprinklers are required in all new one- and two-family residences beginning Jan. 1, 2011.
- Fire sprinklers are required in all new townhomes.
- Carbon monoxide detectors are required in homes with attached garages or fuel-fired equipment such as gas furnaces, gas stoves and gas water heaters.
- A new standard, ANSI/APSP-7-06, brings the I-Codes in line with the Virginia Graeme Baker Federal Pool and Spa Safety Act of 2007. It addresses suction entrapment avoidance in swimming pools, wading pools, spas, hot tubs and catch basins.
- For skyscrapers, buildings greater than 420 feet in height, an additional stairwell is required to assist firefighter access to upper floors. The additional stairwell is not required if the building includes special elevators that can be used to evacuate occupants during an emergency.
- Members did not approve the comprehensive energy package in EC-14 purporting a 30% increase in energy efficiency. However several energy efficiency-related changes were approved, including:
  - A requirement to install programmable thermostats in new homes and buildings with forced air furnaces.

- High-efficiency light bulbs required in at least 50% of permanent lighting fixtures in new homes.
- Maximum fenestration u-factors are lowered in warmer climates to reduce the amount of heat loss or gain through windows and doors to lower energy costs during cooling periods.
- An increase in insulation R-values for walls, floors and basements in cold climates to achieve heating and cooling savings.

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.

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