



ICC NEWS RELEASE

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International Building Code in Harmony with Furniture Store Fire Safety Recommendations

NIST recommends sprinklers; adoption and strict enforcement of codes

A National Institute of Standards and Technology ([NIST](#)) recommendation resulting from the [study of a fire](#) that [killed nine firefighters](#) calls for model building and fire codes to require sprinklers in all new and existing furniture stores regardless of size. Since 2009, the [International Building Code](#) (IBC) has required sprinklers in new construction where upholstered furniture is sold. The code is developed by [International Code Council](#) (ICC) Members and other construction industry safety and fire experts.

“We support NIST’s recommendations and commend our Members and other stakeholders who had the foresight and expertise to suggest and include a similar provision more than two years ago,” ICC CEO [Richard P. Weiland](#) said. “It’s not unusual that a code update is the result of lessons learned, and unfortunately sometimes learned the hard way.”

The recommendation is part of a final report of NIST’s study of the 2007 fire at the Sofa Super Store in Charleston, S.C. The fire trapped and killed nine firefighters, the highest number of firefighter deaths in a single event since 9/11.

If today’s model codes had been in place and rigorously followed in Charleston in 2007, the study authors said, the conditions that led to the rapid fire spread probably would have been prevented.

“The primary application of a building code is to regulate new construction or reconstruction. Existing structures usually are required to meet the code that was enforced when the property was built,” Weiland said.

Another NIST recommendation urges state and local communities to adopt and strictly adhere to current national model building and fire safety codes.

“The Code Council advocates for the un-amended adoption of its ICC Family of Codes and Standards,” Weiland said. “At the same time, we recognize and respect the sovereign right of jurisdictions to amend the I-Codes based on local needs.”

Several professional certifications, which are offered through ICC’s [Education](#) and [Certification and Testing](#) Departments, also are among the NIST recommendations.

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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