

MONTEREY BAY CHAPTER - ICC

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BUILDING STANDARDS COMMISSION MOVES TO ADOPT NFPA 5000 / NFPA 1 AND IRC

By: Dick Stubendorff

After years of wrangling and aggressive efforts by both of the primary code development groups, the National Fire Prevention Association's NFPA 5000 and NFPA 1 model codes have prevailed over the family of codes developed by the International Code Council in California. The exception is the adoption of the International Residential Code for one and two family dwellings.

Depending on which side of the fence you are on the codes to be used in California will either be a leap forward in building life safety or a trip to the back of the bus in a state that has traditionally been the leader in code development. As a result there are now 48 states that are using the I codes and only California (and Pasadena, Texas) will be using the NFPA codes.

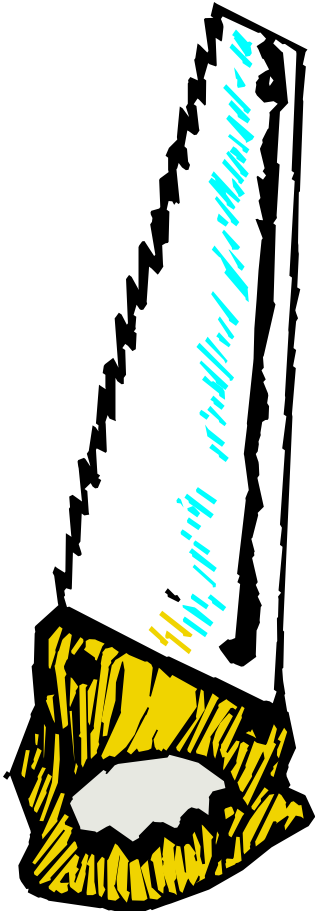
Most of the building officials in this state and a great many fire officials felt that the I-codes would be the natural successor to the now outdated and defunct ICBO codes. In fact at the July 16th BSC meeting in Sacramento, over 70 percent of the speakers spoke in favor if the I-Codes.

Additionally, three of the four most powerful state agencies that regulate building codes came out heavily against the NFPA codes, while one favored their acceptance. In the presentations to the commission at the July 16th meeting, the State Fire Marshal labored over the fire safety aspects of the NFPA codes and did not effectively address the structural aspects. Conversely, the California Dept. of Housing and Community Development, the State Architect and the Office of Statewide Health Planning Development went to great extent to expose the deficiencies of the NFPA codes.

Other organizations including the League of California Cities, the Tri-Chapter Uniform Codes Adoption and Interpretation Program and the California Building Officials, CBIA AIACC, BOMA and NAHB have sent unheeded recommendations to the commission pointing out that the NFPA 5000 is an untested code, does not contain the same level of health and safety protection as the ICC codes and is an incomplete code.

Another problem that may cause significant problems is how code changes are actually approved in the NFPA process. The ICC process provides that any individual may propose code changes the same as the NFPA process does. The

(Continued on page 2)



significant difference is in the voting process. The ICC process provides that only those members authorized by the local jurisdiction may cast a vote on behalf of the jurisdiction thus limiting the chance of special interest voting. Additionally, the voting membership has the power to overturn or modify decisions of the nine member Standards Council during the code development process. In the case of the NFPA, their Standards Council may have anyone sitting on it and jurisdictional representation is limited a small percentage of the total make up. So their could be union , manufacturing and political interests making up the bulk of the council and special interest could become problematic especially since the council has the final vote on code change.

However, even with repeated testimony by individuals and agencies pointing out the deficiencies of the NFPA codes, the Building Standards Commission, heavily lopsided by appointments from Governor Davis in favor of pipe trades council and plumbing union interests proved that the agenda of the commission was more political rather than a distillation of what is best for the people of the state.

In Oregon, there was less political pressure on their equivalent to the BSC. As a result a committee was appointed by their State Fire Marshal and the Administrator of Building Code Division. In their executive summary they make the following findings: “The Committee concluded that it is essential that the selected building and fire codes be from the same set of published codes. The Committee found that the ICC codes are more consistent with existing Oregon codes with respect to organization, occupancy classification and use of terminology. Both the NFPA and ICC codes reflected improvements in technology expected in new code editions. Both sets of codes allow greater flexibility in providing fire safe buildings. However, with respect to structural standards, the NFPA code would impose standards for seismic and wind resistance that would add significant costs to construction. Both sets of codes rely more extensively on referenced standards, however the NFPA codes do so to a greater degree. For the various factors compared, the Committee found that transition to, and long-term use of, the ICC codes would have less impact on state and local jurisdictions and on the private sectors of the building industry. Transition to the ICC codes would be comparatively smoother and would not require reconsideration of other existing codes adopted in Oregon. Finally, the Committee found that the national process for amending and maintaining the ICC codes is more accessible and more appropriate for the adoption of regulatory codes. “

The Oregon Code Review Committee also cited in their report the additional 5 to 8% estimated increase in building costs to satisfy the NFPA’s requirement for building design and construction to resist seismic and wind events. Essentially the NFPA code requires the buildings to be functional to a higher degree than the I-Codes after such events. They also pointed out there was no justification for this higher cost.

Now the four major state building code enforcement agencies will have to rewrite significant portions of the NFPA codes to be suitable for use in California. (At the July 16th meeting, all four agencies including the SFM admitted the codes were lacking considerably for California’s needs.) However, if you are of the mind that California should not be in the code writing business, this point is rather mute.

So with the state busily writing away and politics aside, what does it mean to the average building department? Well first there will be a substantial investment in new code books and since the NFPA makes extensive use of reference standards, the purchase of those standards as well will be necessary. Next will be the retraining of inspection services staff. This is a completely reformatted code with familiar sections moved to new places. Topical chapters are relocated into the individual building types and so forth. Depending on where you have to send staff for training it could get a bit pricey. It also appears that code update classes for NFPA are a bit more expensive than ICC seminars, however the way the ICC codes are broken up, it may be a wash.

Finally, the construction community including architects, engineers and contractors will have to become familiar with the new code format and go through similar training that the inspectors and plan checkers will have to attend. For some there is elation at the situation, for others it’s doom and gloom. The important thing to remember is to stay involved in the code development process. If the NFPA code proves to be the wrong code for this state and the nation, then it will change as necessary. Whether or not there is a switch back to the ICC codes remains to be seen. However, it is clear, you will never see it as long as the current BSC makeup remains the same.



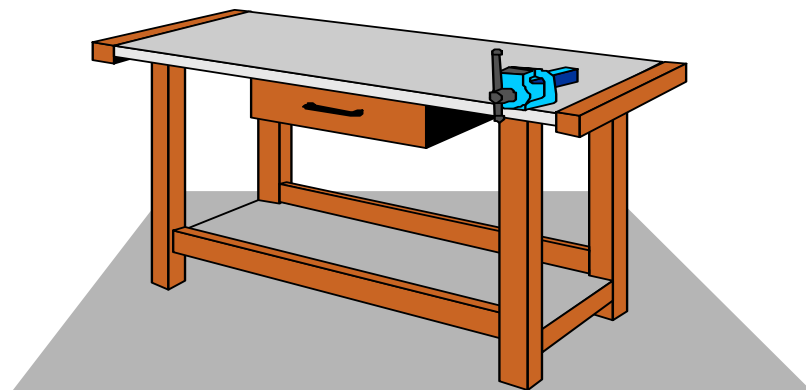
INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL



MONTEREY BAY CHAPTER

MEETING ATTENDANCE FOR JULY 2003

Mike Grace.....	Grace and Associates
Craig Oliver.....	City of Marina
Dick Stubendorff.....	City of Santa Cruz
Carl Henn.....	Santa Cruz Seaside Co.
Daniel Kostelec.....	City of Capitola
Brian Washko.....	County of Monterey
Tom Jason.....	County of Monterey
Moe Tavakolian.....	PSI
Jim Walker.....	County of Monterey (Ret.)
Avon Carpenter.....	County of Monterey (Ret.)
Gwen Wells.....	Builder's Exchange of the Central Coast
Douglas Rick.....	City of Pacific Grove
Salvatore DiSalvo.....	City of Seaside
Stanley Wheeler.....	LP2A
John Villalpando.....	City of Monterey
J.D. Jones.....	Development Consultants
Steve Brunneis.....	Hayward Lumber
Brian T. Conglton.....	Architect



MONTEREY BAY CHAPTER – ICC

Meeting Minutes of July 2003

CALL TO ORDER

1.01 Pledge of Allegiance

1.02 Self-Introductions

CHAPTER BUSINESS

2.01 Approval of the Minutes:

- Avon Carpenter made motion to approve the minutes of the June 2003 meeting. (2nd/Wells).

2.02 Unfinished Business:

- None

2.03 New Business:

- Craig Oliver reported on the Building Standards Commission meeting of July 16, 2003. HCD, OSHPD and OSA recommend I Codes, SFM supports the NFPA 5000. Building Standards Commission will make a decision in a couple of weeks.

2.04 Treasurer's Report:

- Mike Grace gave report.
- Craig Oliver received a check in the amount of \$2404.00 from CALBO for the ATC-20 course.
- Gwen Wells made motion that the Chapter buy lunch for chapter members and their families for a joint barbecue with the Builders Exchange this summer. (2nd/Kostelec). Motion approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

3.01 Code Change:

- None

3.02 Legislation:

- None

3.03 Special Inspection:

- Doug Rick attended the special inspector meeting on July 10, 2003. No new approvals. The next meeting will be held at the Dynamic Consultants office, 1300 Space Parkway, Mountain View, on August 7, 2003. The program will last about 4-5 hours, contact Doug Rick if interested in attending.

3.04 Membership and Honors:

- Doug Rick received a thank-you letter from the Peninsula Chapter to Dick Stubendorff and Reggie Lee for their work on the Special Inspection Committee.
- The Builders Exchange will be hosting an open house Friday, August 22, 2003 at 12:00 pm.
- Gwen Wells will check on the status of Joe Mitchell.
- Gwen Wells suggested forming a committee to work on a barbecue with the Building Exchange. Volunteers, Brian Washko, Tom Jason and Moe Tavakolian will work with Gwen on setting it up this summer.
- Dick Stubendorff made motion to approach Cabrillo College to ascertain if there is still interest in the educational scholarship fund of \$500.00. (2nd/Kostelec). Motion passed.
- Craig Oliver read a thank-you letter from Dave Pasquinelli.

3.05 IAEI:

- No report.

3.06 2003 CALBO ABM:

- None

3.07 Education:

- Craig Oliver reminded the members that our chapter gets two free training days from ICC. Advise Craig Oliver of any courses of interest.
- Craig Oliver reported the fees for NFPA training is double the cost of ICC training.

4.0 OTHER REPORTS

- None

4.01 CALBO:

- None

4.02 ICBO/ICC:

- None

4.03 Code Discussion:

- Discussion regarding shaft termination.

5.0 PROGRAM

- Discussion with AIA members present on code

Agenda

August 21, 2003 @ 11: a.m.
Bay Park Hotel, Monterey

1.0 Call to Order

- 1.01 Pledge of Allegiance
- 1.02 Self- Introductions

2.0 Chapter Business

- 2.01 Approval of Minutes
- 2.03 Unfinished Business
- 2.03 New Business
- 2.04 Treasurers Report

3.0 Committee Reports

- 3.01 Code Change
- 3.02 Legislation
- 3.03 Special Inspection
- 3.04 Membership & Honors
- 3.05 IAEI
- 3.06 Education

4.0 Other Reports

- 4.01 CALBO
- 4.02 ICBO / ICC
- 4.03 Code Discussion

5.0 Program

***Ken Thurman, Chair of Tri-Chapter Committee on
Basement Guidelines.***

Lunch \$15.00

MONTEREY BAY CHAPTER ICC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meetings

August 21, 2003.....Chapter Meeting

September 17, 2003Building Standards Commission Adoption Publication and Enforcement date setting for new state codes.

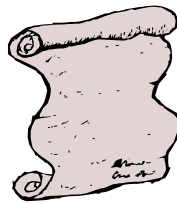
September 18, 2003.....Chapter Meeting

October 16, 2003.....Chapter Meeting

This space for rent.

You too, can be a contributor to the Chapter News.

Articles of interest to the Chapter are always welcome and encouraged. They don't have to be long and they can be fun to produce.



KNOW 'DA LINGO (Answers to last months quiz)

1. Fenerell— A louvre ventilator in a roof
2. Laid Yard—A trade term for the amount of tongue and groove boarding required to cover nine square feet.
3. Patand—A sill or plate resting on the ground and supporting vertical timbers.
4. Salle— A hall or large room. A public dining room in a hotel.
5. Three, four, five rule— The application of trigonometry (Pythagoras Theorem) for setting out a right angle. If the sides of a triangle are 3,4, and 5 units it is a right angled triangle.

OK, Here's this month's brain teasers. These are old construction terms that may or may not still be used today: Can you guess what they are?

- 1) Tile Battens 2) Wind Stick (aviation) 3) Stylobate 4) Plain Sawn 5) Jack Chain

The **Chapter News** is published and distributed by:

Craig Oliver, Dick Stubendorff and Gwen Wells.

If you have an item you wish to contribute and comments about the news letter, please contact us .

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