

Committee Debates over 2,000 Code Change Proposals

The 2012 editions of the International Building Code (IBC), International Fire Code (IFC) and the International Residential Code (IRC) have entered the 2015 revision cycle. During the week of April 22, 2013, the International Code Council (ICC) held the Group B Committee Action Hearing in Dallas, Texas. Over 700 ICC members, building safety professionals and other interested stakeholders debated and considered action on 2,000 code change proposals. Here are the results of several key proposals of importance to the life safety community:

Education Occupancies (Group-E)

- Carbon Monoxide: Proposal F182 to require carbon monoxide (CO) detection was approved. This action may have a positive impact on several state bills to require CO detection in schools. The bill sponsors were waiting to see if the proposal passed before continuing to advocate passage of their bills.
- Emergency Voice Alarm Communication (EVAC): Proposal F158 to increase the threshold for the installation of an EVAC system from 30 to 100 occupants was approved. The intent is to exempt small one- and two-room schools from having an EVAC system. Fortunately, a proposal to increase the threshold to 1,000 occupants was disapproved.

Smoke Detectors

Proposal F163 to permit smoke detectors to be installed in lieu of smoke alarms was approved. This relates to permitting the installation of smoke detectors in occupancies such as guest rooms in hotels.

Smoke Alarms

- Proposal F359 and Proposal RB156 to add specific placement requirements of smoke alarms in close proximity to fixed cooking appliances and bathrooms was approved. The requirements are consistent with the requirements in NFPA 72®. The intent is to reduce frequent unwanted alarms.
- Proposal F162 Part 1 to require smoke alarms to be tested and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions in all occupancies was approved.
- Proposal F162 Part 2 to require the replacement after 10 years in one- and two-family dwellings was approved. This requirement is only applicable to smoke alarms, not system-connected detectors.



Fire Alarm Systems

Proposal F174 to replace the 2012 zoning requirements (not to exceed 22,500 sq ft or the length not to exceed 300 feet in any direction) with a requirement to identify the specific initiating device address, location, device type, floor level was approved. The proposal exempts smaller buildings less than 22,500 square feet and systems with manual boxes and waterflow switches from the point identification requirement. The intent is to help emergency first responders to quickly identify the exact location and status of an initiating device. Even though the text does not use the word addressable, the new requirement should result in more addressable fire alarm systems being installed.

Alarm Verification

Proposal F176 to permit the Fire Chief to require the supervising station personnel to verify a fire alarm signal in accordance with NFPA 72: 2013 was approved.

Central Station Service

Proposal F178 to require "central station service", where required by the fire code official, for systems that produce chronic nuisance alarms was approved.

The ICC has posted all the code change proposals and Committee Action Hearing results at: <http://www.iccsafe.org/cs/codes/Pages/cycle.aspx>.

The next step will be the public comment phase. The Public Comment closing date is July 15, 2013 and the Public Comments will be debated at the Public Comment Hearing (PCH) during the week of 10/7/13 in Atlantic City, NJ. The 2015 I-codes will be published in fall of 2014. The early state adopters will begin adopting the new codes in late 2015 or 2016 with an effective date of approximately 6 months out.