

Code Advocacy

ACI's Expanded Mission

The American Concrete Institute recently expanded its mission to include code adoption:

“ACI is a leading authority and resource worldwide for the development, dissemination, and adoption of its consensus-based standards, technical resources, educational and training programs, certification programs, and proven expertise for individuals and organizations involved in concrete design, construction, and materials...”

ACI has long used an excellent technical process to develop its documents and programs, and it is generally revered as a technical authority on concrete design and construction. The updated mission means that ACI is enhancing its efforts related to political influence. It reflects many efforts by ACI members and staff, related to the adoption by reference into the model building codes in the United States, international adoptions as part of national building codes, and state and local adoptions. Code adoption is not as straightforward as many might think. Acceptance and adoption of provisions in building codes are quasi-technical and quasi-political processes. Code advocacy involves creating awareness, gaining recognition and acceptance, understanding the issues, establishing ACI as a resource, fostering support for code change proposals and adoptions, and active engagement in the building code development processes at all levels.

Why Advocate for Code Adoption?

The intent of most building codes is well worded in Provision 101.3 of the *2015 International Building Code*:

“...to establish the minimum requirements to provide a reasonable level of safety, public health and general welfare through structural strength, means of egress facilities, stability, sanitation, adequate light and ventilation, energy conservation, and safety to life and property from fire, explosion and other hazards, and to provide a reasonable level of safety to firefighters and emergency responders during emergency operations.”

As a society of professionals involved in the concrete industry, there is a role—some might even say an obligation—to encourage the acceptance and adoption of current ACI publications and programs developed to satisfy the intent of state, local, and national building codes. This is necessary to assure that the public directly benefits from the advancements in concrete technology as applicable to the minimum requirements for design and construction.

Building Safety Month

The International Code Council (ICC) Building Safety Month (BSM) will take place throughout the month of May. BSM is a public awareness campaign implemented by jurisdictions worldwide to help individuals, families, and



businesses understand what is involved to create safe and sustainable structures. The campaign reinforces the need for the adoption of modern, model building codes; a strong and efficient system of code enforcement; and a well-trained, professional workforce to maintain the system. BSM clearly dovetails with many ACI activities, such as drafting codes and related technical documents, conducting educational events, and providing certification programs designed to qualify individuals involved in installation, testing, and inspection.

This year's BSM theme is "Building Codes Save Lives," with the following weekly themes:

- Week One (May 1-5)—Partnering with code officials to build stronger safer communities;
- Week Two (May 6-12)—Advancing resilient communities through science and technology;
- Week Three (May 13-19)—Protecting communities from disasters;
- Week Four (May 20-26)—Safeguarding our water; and
- Week Five (May 27-31)—Improving education and training standards for a safer tomorrow.

About 64,000 ICC members worldwide will celebrate BSM by hosting events and outreach initiatives that increase public awareness about the importance of building safety and sustainability. Events typically will include mayoral meetings, community gatherings, receptions, training events, banquets and awards ceremonies, outreach at retail facilities and city halls, and mayoral and gubernatorial proclamations.

While there is national awareness and support provided by ICC staff, BSM events are primarily ICC member and chapter driven at the local level, where codes are adopted and enforced.

"Building Safety Month brings attention to issues that are not regularly considered unless disaster strikes. Modern codes and standards incorporate the latest technology and provide the safest, most resilient structures for our families and communities to protect against building failures, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, high-rise fires and other modern-day disasters," said Code Council Chief Executive Officer Dominic Sims. "Building codes really do save lives."

Visit www.buildingsafetymonth.org to learn more about BSM. To identify an ICC chapter in your area, visit www.iccsafe.org/membership/chapters/icc-chapters-and-boardstaff-liason-map.