



Flanders, Kyle <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Please Oppose Harmful Code Changes

1 message

Gene Goforth <Gene.Goforth.382898327@p2a.co>
Reply-To: ggoforth@ffres.com
To: Kyle Flanders <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Fri, Oct 16, 2020 at 4:35 PM

Dear Chairman Abbasi and Members of the Board,

I am a proud member of Virginia's real estate industry, and I am writing today to voice my opposition to certain proposed changes to the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC). As the Commonwealth continues to cope with the enormous societal and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our industry can ill-afford being saddled with costly new regulatory mandates.

First, I ask that you oppose changes that would make it mandatory for existing buildings to comply with the latest model code energy efficiency requirements for new construction. Our industry supports energy efficiency, and property owners and managers continue to lead the way in adopting innovative technologies and approaches to cost-saving and protecting our environment. However, this proposed change would discourage renovation and rehabilitation projects by driving up costs and diverting funds to energy projects from other, more badly needed building priorities, at a time when property owners are facing tremendous uncertainty about when – or if – financial equilibrium might be restored to our industry. Moreover, it will drive up rent for struggling Virginia businesses and renters already facing extreme hardship resulting from the ongoing pandemic and economic shutdown.

Furthermore, the proposed change is contrary to the General Assembly's explicit legislative edict to regulate new and existing buildings separately, and not subject the latter to new code requirements. Existing buildings are to be regulated "at the least possible cost." Now is not the time to saddle them with costly energy efficiency mandates.

Second, I urge you to oppose radical changes to the USBC's in-building emergency communications systems (IBECs) provisions. The current code provisions on IBECs are the result of years of deliberation by a General Assembly task force, DHCD workgroups, and ultimately, the BHCD, which correctly allocated responsibilities between housing providers and localities. They should not be undone by adopting code change proposals submitted late in the process that have received little deliberation.

Many reasons for signal issues are beyond the control of the building owner, such as the natural terrain, the later erection of a new building or cell tower nearby that causes signal inadequacy, and wide variations in the emergency communications capabilities of fire departments. Additionally, no Virginia fire data was submitted to support the assertion that drastic changes in the current code are needed to protect building occupants and firefighters. Current code provisions on IBECs provide building code officials-- who have the responsibility for applying them-- with latitude to require or accept alternative "equivalent" equipment that is compatible for specific installations.

As Virginia's real estate industry deals with the uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we need steady leadership. We ask that the Board reject rushed regulatory changes that would have a severe impact on our industry as we navigate today's unprecedented challenges.

Regards,
Gene Goforth
[3811 Fairfax Dr](mailto:ggoforth@ffres.com)
[Arlington, VA 22203](mailto:ggoforth@ffres.com)



Flanders, Kyle <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Please Oppose Harmful Code Changes

1 message

Jeffrey Gregory <Jeffrey.Gregory.382923904@p2a.co>

Fri, Oct 16, 2020 at 4:56 PM

Reply-To: jgregory@msc-rents.com

To: Kyle Flanders <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Dear Chairman Abbasi and Members of the Board,

I am a proud member of Virginia's real estate industry, and I am writing today to voice my opposition to certain proposed changes to the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC). As the Commonwealth continues to cope with the enormous societal and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our industry can ill-afford being saddled with costly new regulatory mandates.

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Regards,

Jeffrey Gregory

10128 Parkington Ct
Manassas, VA 20109



Flanders, Kyle <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Please Oppose Harmful Code Changes

1 message

LARRY YATES <LARRY.YATES.359353480@p2a.co>

Fri, Oct 16, 2020 at 5:51 PM

Reply-To: yatesmanagement@gmail.com

To: Kyle Flanders <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Dear Chairman Abbasi and Members of the Board,

I am a proud member of Virginia's real estate industry, and I am writing today to voice my opposition to certain proposed changes to the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC). As the Commonwealth continues to cope with the enormous societal and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our industry can ill-afford being saddled with costly new regulatory mandates.

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Regards,

LARRY YATES

[111 Devil's Backbone Overlook](#)

[Stephenson, VA 22656](#)



Flanders, Kyle <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Please Oppose Harmful Code Changes

1 message

Les Florance <Les.Florance.383188487@p2a.co>
Reply-To: lflorance@legend-mgt.com
To: Kyle Flanders <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Sat, Oct 17, 2020 at 11:39 AM

Dear Chairman Abbasi and Members of the Board,

I am a proud member of Virginia's real estate industry, and I am writing today to voice my opposition to certain proposed changes to the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC). As the Commonwealth continues to cope with the enormous societal and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our industry can ill-afford being saddled with costly new regulatory mandates.

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Regards,
Les Florance
[1355 Beverly Rd](#)
[Mclean, VA 22101](#)



Flanders, Kyle <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Please Oppose Harmful Code Changes

1 message

Casie Hoover <Casie.Hoover.346053414@p2a.co>

Sat, Oct 17, 2020 at 11:45 AM

Reply-To: managermalibu@palms.net

To: Kyle Flanders <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Dear Chairman Abbasi and Members of the Board,

I am a proud member of Virginia's real estate industry, and I am writing today to voice my opposition to certain proposed changes to the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC). As the Commonwealth continues to cope with the enormous societal and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our industry can ill-afford being saddled with costly new regulatory mandates.

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Regards,
Casie Hoover
[3713 Oak Creek Ct](#)
[Virginia Beach, VA 23452](#)



Flanders, Kyle <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Please Oppose Harmful Code Changes

1 message

Clark Melillo <Clark.Melillo.346757413@p2a.co>
Reply-To: clark@kayapartments.com
To: Kyle Flanders <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Mon, Oct 19, 2020 at 5:11 AM

Dear Chairman Abbasi and Members of the Board,

I am a proud member of Virginia's real estate industry, and I am writing today to voice my opposition to certain proposed changes to the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC). As the Commonwealth continues to cope with the enormous societal and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our industry can ill-afford being saddled with costly new regulatory mandates.

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Regards,
Clark Melillo
[15446 Cross Keys Rd](#)
[Haymarket, VA 20169](#)



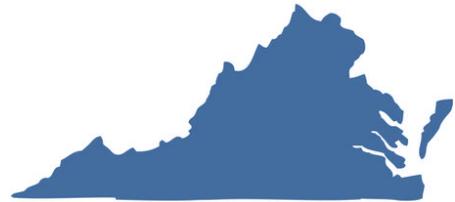
Powering Business Worldwide

Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development (VA BHCD)
600 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23219

October 19th, 2020

Introduction

Arc-Fault Circuit-Interrupter (AFCI) technology is a life-saving technology that has been an essential part of the National Electrical Code® (NEC®) since the 2002. Currently, the Commonwealth of Virginia amends the NEC® to only require AFCI protection in bedrooms for 1&2 family dwellings. There are two proposals before the VA BHCD pertaining to AFCI technology.



What is an AFCI?



- AFCI devices operate by recognizing and de-energizing the circuit during the hazardous event of electricity flowing outside the normal path through the air or a foreign material. This phenomenon is known as “arcing.” Arcing is notorious for starting ignitions with damaged wiring.
- AFCI protection can be installed either via a receptacle (shown on the left) or in your home electrical panel with a circuit breaker (shown on the right.)



What are the RTEs?

RTE and its Location	What is the Proposal?
<p>RTE3902.16(1)-18 Non-Consensus Item Book #6, Tab #4, Page 165</p>	<p>Will restore AFCI protection requirements to as published in the 2018 IRC.</p>
<p>RTE3902.16(2)-18 Consensus Item Book #6, Tab #1, Page 127</p>	<p>Will restore AFCI protection requirements to as published in the 2018 IRC, but provides an exception for outlets required to be GFCI protected.</p>

VIRGINIA FISCAL IMPACT AFCI PROTECTION OF DWELLING UNITS					
Equipment	Price	Quantity	Labor	Total	Fiscal Impact
Standard 20A Circuit Breaker	~\$5	3 per House	N/A	~\$15 per House	\$225 per House
AFCI 20A Circuit Breaker	~\$40	6 per House	N/A	~\$240 per House	

Here are a few more facts pertaining to this issue:

- In 1995, the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) conducted a study alongside Underwriters’ Laboratories (UL) titled “Technology for Detecting and Monitoring Conditions That Could Cause Electrical Wiring System Fires” with the objective of reducing the rates of death, injury, and property loss from residential fires associated with electrical wiring systems. Thus, electrical manufacturers answered the call and developed the Arc-Fault Circuit-Interrupter (AFCI). The Commission estimated that, in 1990, there were **42,000 fires** involving home electrical wiring, resulting in **340 deaths, 1,370 injuries, and \$569 million in property losses**. The total annual cost to society was approximately **\$1.3 billion** according to a CPSC press released titled “Safety Commission Picks Home Electrical System Fires As 1995 Priority”.
- The first requirement for AFCI technology for bedrooms circuits was introduced to the NEC® in 1999. The logic for the choice of protecting bedrooms first was to give the most common victims of house fires, sleeping residents, the added benefit of fire prevention protection. In 2008, living areas in dwellings such as family rooms and living rooms were added under the umbrella of AFCI protection. From there, AFCI technology expanded to kitchens and laundry areas in the 2014 NEC®.
- In the US Fire Administration (USFA) report from December 2018, Volume 19, Issue 8 titled “Residential Building Electrical Fires (2014-2016)”, a **22% reduction nationally was recorded in residential electrical fires between 2006-2017**. This correlates with the expansion of better wiring device methods such as utilizing AFCI technology to protect branch circuits as NEC® required.
- According to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) 2018 data listed on the USFA website, **Virginia suffered 20.2 injuries** per 1000 fires where the **national average was 9.8 injuries** per 1000 fires. More specifically, **Virginia suffered 50.9 injuries** per 1000 residential structural fires compared to the **national average of 25.3 injuries** per 1000 residential structural fires.

As such, Eaton urges the Virginia BHCD to adopt **RTE3902.16(1)-18** to fully restore the language of the 2017 edition of the NEC® and the AFCI protection for dwelling units in this great Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

David Smith
 Codes & Standards Specialist
 Eaton Commercial & Residential Distribution Solutions
 Electrical Sector, Americas



Powering Business Worldwide

Virginia Board of Housing and Community
Development (VA BHCD)
600 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23219

October 19th, 2020

Good Morning,

My name is David Smith and I'm speaking on behalf of Eaton as we encourage the Virginia BHCD to adopt the non-consensus item RTE3902.16(1)-18 located in Book #6 on Tab #4 at Page 165.

Eaton employs over 600 associates in five facilities across our Commonwealth all representing the Electrical Division within Eaton. Eaton develops, manufactures, and sells safe and reliable electrical equipment. These Virginians provide market leading solutions used in general construction, performing to the highest standards of safety and reliability. Many of these products are installed in homes, commercial buildings, industrial facilities, and utilities in the State and across the country.

I have submitted to Mr. Flanders an overview document the facts on "Arc-Fault Circuit-Interrupter" or "AFCI" technology and request Kyle to distribute this sheet to the entire BHCD. This fact sheet goes into detail on the history, fire statistics and cost impact of the proposed change to remove the amendment to the Virginia Code that currently reduces fire safety in residential homes. The current code requires AFCI technology only for bedrooms in this State where the 2017 edition of the National Electrical Code® includes living and laundry areas in dwelling units to be under the fire protection umbrella provided by AFCI technology.

You will find in this submitted document the following facts:

- In the US Fire Administration (USFA) report from December 2018, Volume 19, Issue 8 titled "Residential Building Electrical Fires (2014-2016)", a **22% reduction nationally was recorded in residential electrical fires between 2006-2017**. This correlates with the expansion of better wiring device methods such as utilizing AFCI technology to protect branch circuits as NEC® required.
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Thank you,

David Smith
Codes & Standards Specialist
Eaton Commercial & Residential Distribution Solutions
Electrical Sector, Americas



Flanders, Kyle <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Virginia's energy code - voting to adopt the complete 2018 IECC

1 message

Sandra Leibowitz <sandra@sustaindesign.net>

Mon, Oct 19, 2020 at 8:25 AM

To: "kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov" <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Good morning Mr. Flanders:

I understand that this morning, Virginia's Board of Housing and Community Development will consider a proposal to have Virginia's residential building energy code come into compliance with the "model" energy code, the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC). Please pass along my message to the Board prior to this morning's meeting:

To best support affordable housing in Virginia, please vote for adopting the complete 2018 IECC without any weakening amendments. Virginia has lagged behind the model code since 2012. We can't wait another year to get caught up.

The 2018 IECC has been demonstrated to reduce the total cost (mortgage + energy bills) of home-ownership, reduce the risk of mortgage default, grow quality jobs in the construction industry, and create homes with better air quality that can better withstand disasters. The energy code is a simple, fair process for making homes more affordable and responding to climate change at the same time. It's so much easier to build something right the first time! This is something truly good that can happen here and now in Virginia!

Rigorous energy codes are a win for

- housing affordability (increased predictability of monthly utility expenses and reduced total cost of housing)
- home buyers/renters of all kinds (comfort, savings, cost predictability, indoor air quality)
- local jobs (framing and insulating don't happen overseas, pressure testing is new work, quality takes time)
- the construction industry (increased value and quality of their product, more jobs, increased customer satisfaction)
- the mortgage industry (32% less risk of default (IMT/UNC report))
- energy policy (reduced system costs, grid stability, demand predictability)
- environmental policy (global warming, resource use)

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The logo for Sandra Leibowitz Consulting (sdc), with the letters 's', 'd', and 'c' in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The 's' is red, the 'd' is green, and the 'c' is black.

Sandra Leibowitz, AIA, LEED Fellow

Managing Principal

Sustainable Design Consulting, LLC

1421 Lombardy Alley

1st Floor

Richmond, VA 23219

o: 804-644-3880 x1101

c: 202-277-5687

sandra@sustaindesign.net

www.sustaindesign.net



Flanders, Kyle <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Comments in support of E1301.1.1.1-18

1 message

Narissa Turner <narissa@vcnva.org>
To: kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov

Mon, Oct 19, 2020 at 8:45 AM

Mr. Flanders,

Please transmit the following comments to Members of the Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development, for their meeting this morning.

I write to express my support of the Board adopting the entirety of E1301.1.1.1-18 - This proposal would adopt the full 2018 IECC by eliminating outmoded exceptions. It would bring envelope efficiency standards and air leakage standards into compliance with the 2012-2018 IECC. Adoption would save residents energy and money continuously for 70+ years; reduce risks of evictions and utility shut-offs for low-income residents; increase resiliency; reduce harmful pollution"; and help to meet Virginia's climate goals. Compliance costs are low and far less expensive than retrofits.

Furthermore, I would like to call special attention to:

RE402.1.2(6) Building envelope efficiency-This proposal would adopt just the envelope standards in the 2018 IECC and would be unnecessary if E1301.1.1.1-18 is adopted. According to an analysis by the Responsible Energy Codes Alliance (RECA) using Virginia-specific data and DOE's methodology, the incremental construction costs would be only 0.002 of average new home and be fully repaid in 6 years, on average. Both walls and ceilings are important. Updating wall insulation is particularly important: savings are 7.5 times greater than for ceiling insulation, have a 4.4-year payback, and retrofitting would require removing/replacing/refinishing walls at huge expense.

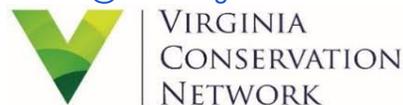
RE402.4.1.2(2) Limit Air Leakage/Infiltration-This proposal addresses a subset of the Full Adoption proposal and would be unnecessary if E1301.1.1.1-18 is adopted. This measure would require that blower door tests confirm that air leakage is at or below 3 air changes per hour (ACH), rather than the 5 ACH permitted by the existing USBC and the December 2019 proposal. Leaky houses are more costly to heat and cool, less resilient and less comfortable to live in. Materials (such as caulking and tape) to repair envelope leaks cost little when construction is undertaken. It is much more costly to locate and stop leakage later, which is a burden that builders should not impose on buyers.

RE407.1.1 Builder Choice of Additional Energy Efficiency Measure. This amendment is modeled on provision in the near-final 2021 IECC, but easier to meet. Builders would choose any one of four additional building efficiency measures: (1) envelope insulation equal to the 2021 IECC minimum envelope insulation (not the higher 2021 optional level); (2) an ERI score equal to the minimum 2021 IECC minimum (not the higher 2021 optional level); (3) more efficient HVAC equipment (per the 2021 IECC options), or (4) energy-saving water heaters (per the 2021 IECC options). It would improve energy savings by approximately 5-10%.

It is my hope that in lieu of adopting the entirety of 2018 IECC, that the Board find the above mentioned items necessary and beneficial in improving the safety and efficiency of our buildings.

Thank you,

Narissa Turner
Climate & Clean Energy Policy Manager
Virginia Conservation Network
(804) 644-0283
narissa@vcnva.org





Flanders, Kyle <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Please Oppose Harmful Code Changes

1 message

Harald Mangold <Harald.Mangold.345943859@p2a.co>

Mon, Oct 19, 2020 at 9:03 AM

Reply-To: hmangold@scottmanagementinc.com

To: Kyle Flanders <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Dear Chairman Abbasi and Members of the Board,

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These new regulations and mandates would most certainly further erode affordable housing since the significant cost would most certainly have to be passed thru to the residents of these older and more affordable apartment buildings.

First, I ask that you oppose changes that would make it mandatory for existing buildings to comply with the latest model code energy efficiency requirements for new construction. Our industry supports energy efficiency, and property owners and managers continue to lead the way in adopting innovative technologies and approaches to cost-saving and protecting our environment. However, this proposed change would discourage renovation and rehabilitation projects by driving up costs and diverting funds to energy projects from other, more badly needed building priorities, at a time when property owners are facing tremendous uncertainty about when – or if – financial equilibrium might be restored to our industry. Moreover, it will drive up rent for struggling Virginia businesses and renters already facing extreme hardship resulting from the ongoing pandemic and economic shutdown.

Furthermore, the proposed change is contrary to the General Assembly's explicit legislative edict to regulate new and existing buildings separately, and not subject the latter to new code requirements. Existing buildings are to be regulated "at the least possible cost." Now is not the time to saddle them with costly energy efficiency mandates.

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Many reasons for signal issues are beyond the control of the building owner, such as the natural terrain, the later erection of a new building or cell tower nearby that causes signal inadequacy, and wide variations in the emergency communications capabilities of fire departments. Additionally, no Virginia fire data was submitted to support the assertion that drastic changes in the current code are needed to protect building occupants and firefighters. Current code provisions on IBECs provide building code officials-- who have the responsibility for applying them-- with latitude to require or accept alternative "equivalent" equipment that is compatible for specific installations.

As Virginia's real estate industry deals with the uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we need steady leadership. We ask that the Board reject rushed regulatory changes that would have a severe impact on our industry as we navigate today's unprecedented challenges.

Regards,
Harald Mangold
[300 N Lee St](#)
[Alexandria, VA 22314](#)



Flanders, Kyle <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Please Oppose Harmful Code Changes

1 message

Greg White <Greg.White.384099755@p2a.co>
Reply-To: greg.white@copt.com
To: Kyle Flanders <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Tue, Oct 20, 2020 at 10:09 AM

Dear Chairman Abbasi and Members of the Board,

I am a proud member of Virginia's real estate industry, and I am writing today to voice my opposition to certain proposed changes to the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC). As the Commonwealth continues to cope with the enormous societal and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our industry can ill-afford being saddled with costly new regulatory mandates.

First, I ask that you oppose changes that would make it mandatory for existing buildings to comply with the latest model code energy efficiency requirements for new construction. Our industry supports energy efficiency, and property owners and managers continue to lead the way in adopting innovative technologies and approaches to cost-saving and protecting our environment. However, this proposed change would discourage renovation and rehabilitation projects by driving up costs and diverting funds to energy projects from other, more badly needed building priorities, at a time when property owners are facing tremendous uncertainty about when – or if – financial equilibrium might be restored to our industry. Moreover, it will drive up rent for struggling Virginia businesses and renters already facing extreme hardship resulting from the ongoing pandemic and economic shutdown.

Furthermore, the proposed change is contrary to the General Assembly's explicit legislative edict to regulate new and existing buildings separately, and not subject the latter to new code requirements. Existing buildings are to be regulated "at the least possible cost." Now is not the time to saddle them with costly energy efficiency mandates.

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Regards,
Greg White
[13454 Sunrise Valley Dr](mailto:greg.white@copt.com)
[Herndon, VA 20171](mailto:greg.white@copt.com)



Flanders, Kyle <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Please Oppose Harmful Code Changes

1 message

Laurie Shade <Laurie.Shade.383910709@p2a.co>
Reply-To: lshade@legend-mgt.com
To: Kyle Flanders <kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov>

Mon, Oct 19, 2020 at 1:56 PM

Dear Chairman Abbasi and Members of the Board,

I am a proud member of Virginia's real estate industry, and I am writing today to voice my opposition to certain proposed changes to the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC). As the Commonwealth continues to cope with the enormous societal and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our industry can ill-afford being saddled with costly new regulatory mandates.

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As Virginia's real estate industry deals with the uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we need steady leadership. We ask that the Board reject rushed regulatory changes that would have a severe impact on our industry as we navigate today's unprecedented challenges.

Regards,
Laurie Shade
[1355 Beverly Rd](#)
[Mclean, VA 22101](#)



NEII

NATIONAL ELEVATOR INDUSTRY, INC.

SETTING STANDARDS IN MOTION

November 13, 2020

Kyle T. Flanders
Senior Policy Analyst
Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
Policy Office
600 E. Main St. Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23219
kyle.flanders@dhcd.virginia.gov

Re: Conflict Between the 2018 International Building Code (IBC) and ASME A17.1/CSA B44

Mr. Flanders,

The National Elevator Industry Inc. (“NEII”) is concerned because there is a conflict between the 2018 IBC (and state or local codes based on same) and ASME A17.1/CSA B44 Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators (“A17.1”). NEII is a strong supporter of the model code process and supports adoption of the 2018 IBC by Virginia with minimal or no deviations. However, we strongly recommend a modification to IBC 2018 to eliminate a conflict between the codes.

Specifically, IBC Requirement 3001.2 mandates an elevator emergency communication system for the deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired. NEII supports the intent of this code change, but the actual code language in the IBC is vague, unenforceable, and conflicts with the technical requirements for emergency communication in A17.1, Requirement 2.27.1. This will create an ongoing issue for the life of the elevator. Because the provisions in IBC include neither technical criteria nor a reference to another standard containing such criteria, the result will be a wide variety of communication systems and, ultimately, a disservice to the people who need to use these systems. IBC, Requirement 1009.8, also requires a two-way communication system for areas of refuge on an accessible route, but the new requirements were not added to that section, even though that communication means is needed in a true emergency. This difference in the two requirements has caused confusion in the field as well.

NEII members worked very closely with the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Emergency Operations Committee to develop technical requirements for a communication system that would meet the intent of the IBC code change. It is important to remember that the emergency communication system in the elevator is provided to request help for an elevator entrapment, not to connect to the 911 system; therefore, the amount of information that needs to be shared is minimal. The requirements in A17.1-2019/B44-19 were developed for consistency with the guidelines in the Americans with Disabilities Act Title III - the regulation specifically for effective communication with the deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired. The new requirements have been published in the 2019 edition of A17.1 Requirement 2.27.1 and provide clear guidance to manufacturers and code authorities to ensure new systems will meet the needs of the deaf, hard of hearing, and speech impaired users. The conflict exists when the building code is based on the 2018 IBC in conjunction with the 2016 or earlier edition of A17.1. Elevator inspectors will inspect the elevator communication system based on the requirements in A17.1. When conducting periodic inspections and tests (typically annually), your inspectors will look to the elevator code in effect when the elevator was installed or modernized (as marked on the data plate) and not to the building code in effect at that time.

In order to eliminate the conflict, NEII encourages Virginia to consider the following code language to replace Requirement 3001.2 of the 2018 IBC when adopting the new IBC 2018 version:

3001.2 Emergency elevator communication systems. The elevator emergency communication system shall

1. be installed in accordance with the provisions of ASME A17.1/CSA B44 and NFPA 72,
2. be available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, as a live interactive system.

IBC Section 3001 defines the scope and reference standards for elevator Emergency Communication design requirements. This NEII proposal to amend Section 3001.2 retains the base requirement for the system in the 2018 IBC but references the technical requirements included in the A17.1/B44 model elevator code. The NEII recommendation requires the system to comply with A17.1; thereby, providing direct reference to technical requirements and allowing the building code to align with the edition of A17.1 adopted in the jurisdiction because the year is not included. This would allow the A17.1-2019 changes to be brought in when a jurisdiction adopts that edition of the code. This also eliminates any confusion that might result when inspecting elevators installed to an earlier edition of A17.1 because the communication system would match the edition of the elevator code. NEII submitted a proposal IBC to correct this conflict for the 2021 IBC. That proposal was not incorporated directly but the language in 3001.2 was modified and ASME A17.1-2019/CSA B44-19 was included as the referenced edition.

In situations where your jurisdiction has already adopted a building code based on the 2018 IBC and changes were not made to Requirement 3001.2, there may be other solutions to address the conflict. IBC section 104.1, along with sections 104.10 and 104.11, in the IBC code allow for modifications or alternatives on a case by case basis. These rules could be applied to this situation to eliminate the conflict. For this scenario, NEII recommends that the jurisdiction publishes a guideline to let elevator manufacturers, installers and building owners know the A17.1-2019 requirements are going to be enforced in the jurisdiction.

NEII is committed to public and elevator personnel safety and is ready to support the State of Virginia in reviewing the latest version of the code and assisting in the adoption process. NEII and representatives from its member companies are available to meet with you and other key stakeholders to assist your jurisdiction in a review of the most recent edition of A17.1 and facilitate your efforts to update the portions of the code related to elevators. We support updating the state building codes but feel it is vital to amend the requirements for the communication system to ensure it serves those who need it most. We look forward to hearing from you and are available to assist you in this effort.

For additional information, please contact:

Kevin Brinkman
NEII® Vice President, Codes & Safety
klbrinkman@neii.org
Tel: 703-589-9814

NEII® is the premier national trade association representing the interest of firms that install, maintain and/or manufacture elevators, escalators, moving walks and other building transportation products. The NEII membership includes the top elevator companies in the United States, if not the world, and reports more than eighty percent of the work hours for the industry. Member companies include: Otis Elevator Company, Schindler Elevator Corp., ThyssenKrupp Elevator Corporation, KONE, Inc., and many other companies. Safety for the riding public and industry personnel is a top priority for the industry and the NEII member companies.