

A resolution recognizing the essential services that building and fire prevention departments provide and supporting investments that permit these departments to enforce building and life safety codes remotely

Offered by:
International Code Council

WHEREAS, code officials ensure that healthcare infrastructure, including temporary structures and occupancies, is built and maintained to ensure occupant safety;

WHEREAS, code officials enforce regulations that require disinfection of ventilation systems in hospitals, adequate facilities to ensure handwashing, safe and sanitary plumbing systems that mitigate the spread of contagions, fire sprinklers and other fire and life safety systems, and maintenance of these systems in a safe and sanitary condition within their original design parameters;

WHEREAS, code officials protect the health and welfare of building occupants when dangerous or unsafe sanitary, air quality, structural, or electrical hazards arise;

WHEREAS, on March 28, 2020, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency released an updated list of “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers,” which expressly recognizes code officials who administer building inspection, plan review, and permitting work;

WHEREAS, as of April 1, 2020, more than half of states have expressly recognized code official functions as essential while no state has determined code officials to not be essential;

WHEREAS, according to roughly 1200 building and fire prevention department respondents from all 50 states who participated in a survey conducted by the International Code Council between March 22 and April 1, 2020:

- Two-thirds of plan reviewers and inspectors are working remotely;
- One-quarter of employees do not have access to needed hard copy code books;
- Four in ten departments do not have the capability to do electronic/remote plan reviews;
- Three in ten departments do not have the capability to do any aspect of electronic/remote permitting; and
- Six in ten departments do not have the capability for electronic/remote inspections;

WHEREAS, many departments are under resourced and many state and local governments are facing severe revenue downturns resulting from the coronavirus pandemic;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Congressional Fire Services Institute supports legislation, funding, and policies that:

1. Recognize building and fire prevention departments as providing essential services; and
2. Assist building and fire prevention departments in developing the capability to utilize code resources and conduct plan review, permitting, and inspections, remotely.