

## Changes to the 2015 I-Codes

The 2012 editions of the International Building Code (IBC), International Fire Code (IFC) and the International Residential Code (IRC) have entered a revision cycle to create the 2015 editions. During the week of 9/30/13 the International Code Council (ICC) held their Public Comment Hearing (PCH) to vote on Proposals for the 2015 I-Codes. Here is a summary of the new requirements:

### • **Emergency Voice Alarm Communication (EVAC):**

- The threshold to install an EVAC system in Group-E occupancies (kindergarten through grade 12) will change from an occupant load of 30 or more to 100 or more. The intent is to exempt small one and two room schools from having an EVAC system. Fortunately two Public Comments seeking to increase the threshold to 500 and 1,000 occupants were defeated.

### • **Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detection:**

- Group-E occupancies (kindergarten through grade 12) containing a fuel-burning appliance, fuel-burning fireplace and fuel-burning forced air furnaces will be required to install CO detection.
- The CO detection requirements in Group-R and Group I-1, I-2 and I-4 occupancies will be relocated from section 908.7 to section 915 and reorganized in a more logical order that adds clarity. The reformatted requirements do not change the technical requirements.

### • **Smoke Detection:**

- Smoke "detectors" will be permitted to be installed in lieu of smoke "alarms" in occupancies such as hotel guest rooms, dormitory sleeping rooms and dwelling units within apartment buildings.
- The IFC, IBC and IRC will have a new requirement for the specific placement of smoke alarms or smoke detectors in close proximity to fixed cooking appliances and bathrooms. The new requirement is consistent with NFPA 72 and is intended to reduce frequent unwanted alarms in Group-R occupancies such as hotels, motels, dormitories, boarding houses assisted living occupancies, detached one- and two-family dwellings and townhomes not more than three stories.
- The activation of a duct smoke detector will be required to report as a supervisory signal, not as a fire alarm signal.

### • **Fire Alarm Systems:**

- The IFC/IBC zoning requirements (not to exceed 22,500 sq ft or the length not exceed 300 feet in any direction) will be replaced with a point identification requirement. For 2015 the fire alarm system must identify the specific initiating device address, location, type and floor level. Smaller buildings less than 22, 500 square feet and systems with only manual boxes and water flow switches will be exempted 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.

- **Household Alarm Systems:**

- Deleted the requirement in the 2012 IRC for household fire alarm and CO detection systems to be monitored by a supervising station was deleted.

**The following Public Comments were disapproved during the PCH:**

- **Alarm Verification:**

- The Fire Chief is permitted to require the supervising station personnel to verify a fire alarm signal in accordance with NFPA 72-2013.

- **Central Station Service:**

- The Fire Chief is permitted to require Central Station service for systems that produce chronic nuisance alarms.

- **Smoke Alarms:**

- Smoke "alarms" must be tested and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions in all occupancies.
- Smoke alarms are required to be replaced after 10 years in one- and two family dwellings.

The ICC has posted all the results of the PCH at [PCH Results](#). The 2015 I-codes will be published in fall of 2014. A resolution to move to a 5-year code cycle was defeated by a slim 63% to 37% margin. Subsequent to the vote the ICC is considering appointing a Task Group to study this issue more fully and report back at the 2014 annual meeting.

Richard Roberts  
Vice President, IL-AFAA

Industry Affairs Manager  
Honeywell Life Safety