Municipal Technical Advisory Service
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

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The ISO Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule Evaluation

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the MTAS website (mtas.tennessee.edu). This website is maintained daily by MTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee municipal government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

The University of Tennessee
Municipal Technical Advisory Service
1610 University Avenue
Knoxville, TN 37921-6741
865-974-0411 phone
865-974-0423 fax
www.mtas.tennessee.edu

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The ISO Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule Evaluation

Reference Number: MTAS-1138

ISO bases the evaluation on a combination of background data collected, the administration of the adopted building codes, the plan review process, inspections and enforcement, and qualifications of employees conducting the previously mentioned processes.

Background Data

The background data is a compilation of information provided by the jurisdiction that supplies ISO with administrative information and a history of the building codes used. This information is collected from a questionnaire. Information provided includes identifying the chief administrative officer and the building official, the size of the jurisdiction including population, the average assessed value of the buildings served by the building department, type of government, (i.e. city manager, county executive, county commission, mayor, etc.), the number of permits issued, type of tools used to save time and increase efficiency, type of natural hazards the jurisdiction is subject to, and the construction value in new construction as well as renovations and additions for commercial, multi-family, residential and modular home occupancies.

Administration of Codes

The administration of codes addresses the current codes and the year in which they were adopted. The adopted codes for building, electrical, mechanical, fuel gas, plumbing, energy, and wild land-urban interface should include any local amendments. The budget of the building department will be examined with references to expenditures for salaries, training, certifications, incentives for additional training, and continuing education. ISO will also review the appeals process and the members of the board of appeals and their background.

Plans Review

The plans review will include the number of plans reviewed during the reporting period and the quantity of inspections required from those reviews. ISO will inquire if plans necessitate detailing structural components so as to identify structural design issues. During the examination of the plans, the jurisdiction must identify other criteria in which it uses to enforce or mandate guidelines, for example using FEMA to establish the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) elevations or state-adopted codes that may be more stringent. Additionally, cities will need to show how the plan review process and the plan reviewers are evaluated.

Inspections-Enforcement

Jurisdictions will be required to indicate the number of inspections conducted for each code enforced by the building department. The ISO field representative will determine, if during the course of an inspection, the building inspector has the authority to issue correction notices or "Stop Work Orders." Critical to the BCEGS evaluation of the inspection program is the building department's ability to conduct "special" inspections for specific structural element deficiencies. Finally, the field representative will evaluate the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy and how the inspections associated with this process are conducted.

The Grade

After the field visit and the site survey, the ISO field representative completes the write up and then submits the BCEGS to the ISO Regional Processing Center (RPC) for review. The center reviews the grading for completeness and accuracy. A grading survey evaluation is sent to the community official who worked with the field representative. This gives the community an opportunity to comment on the quality of the process.

After the RPC verifies the grading to be appropriate, it sends the community officials a survey result letter. The letter includes a summary of the grading results and the classification details explaining the credits the community received while outlining the maximum credit available in the schedule. Insurance companies are then advised of the published classification.

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