



“CAN WE TALK? ”

PERMITS? WE DON'T NEED NO STINKEN PERMITS

When I see the building failures and loss of life in Haiti, I can't help but think that if building codes had been in effect, many of the buildings would still be standing. And thousands of lives would have been saved. I saw a report that it took seven years to construct the Palace in Port-au-Prince. I guess they didn't consider the possibility of a major earthquake in the design of the palace. Many people see the enforcement of building codes as another government intrusion in their lives, however when a disaster occurs the need for codes becomes evident. For example after the Chicago fires the Insurance industry wanted the building they insure protected and applied pressure to require the enforcement of the building and fire codes. The fire at the MGM Grande in Las Vegas resulted in major changes in the fire codes. When the commercial properties in Cripple Creek were destroyed by fire for a second time in the 1800's the Town required that all commercial buildings to be rebuilt out of masonry.

The Building Codes are called a 'living document' since they are in a constant state of change. New codes are published every three years. Changes to the Codes are submitted for a variety of reasons some for economic reasons, some for improved safety, and some for new products that are always being developed for the building industry. Locally we review all of the changes to the codes and in some cases will amend parts of the code for our jurisdiction. We are currently enforcing the 2003 codes and next year we are looking to adopt the 2009 'I' Codes and our local amendments to the codes

The February ICC newsletter stated that the International Code Council has reached out to the U. S. State Department and other federal agencies to offer any

technical assistance that would help in the rebuilding efforts in Haiti. I'm hopeful that the leaders of Haiti will accept the expertise the ICC brings to the table.

The International Code Council is a non-profit, membership organization composed of code officials ranging from building inspectors to fire suppression officials, along with architects, engineers, developers and building owners, and others involved in the building safety community. The Code Council develops model codes which have been adopted in all 50 states and are either adopted or used as resources around the world including nations in the Caribbean, Central and South America, Asia and the Middle East. The family of International Codes includes specific sections addressing natural hazards, which are regularly updated in coordination with U. S. federal agencies and reflecting current data and field experience.

All of the previous 'CAN WE TALK' columns are available on our website www.pprbd.org under the PPRBD title.

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