

An Abridged History of the Statewide “California Building Code”

Introduction

All provisions of the California Building Code are uniformly applicable throughout the State of California, except where made even stricter by a local jurisdiction (i.e., a town, city, or county). While modern construction professionals increasingly tend to assume that State authorities have always enforced a statewide building code, it actually was not until the mid-1980’s that the Legislature seized full control of the codes-writing process from the local communities. This educational brief presents a short history of the development of this statewide California Building Code (CBC).

Local building codes from the early 1900’s to the post-World War II era

By the early 1900’s, California’s leading cities increasingly were adopting their own building codes (primarily addressing commercial property) in lieu of simply relying upon accepted architectural standards and practices of the era. A few examples here in the San Francisco Bay Area include:

- The City of San Jose approved its first construction code in 1890.
- “Building Laws of the City of Oakland” were adopted in 1912.
- Replacing the 1903 “Building Ordinances of the City and County of San Francisco”, the 1906 “Building Law of the City and County of San Francisco” (adopted less than 3 months after the city’s great earthquake in April 1906) was then replaced with a greatly expanded “Building Law” in December 1909.

In an effort to better standardize this community codes-writing process, a volunteer group of building officials organized a new entity, the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO), based in Whittier, CA, which issued in 1927 the first model Uniform Building Code (UBC) for amendment and adoption by any interested city or town --- for example, this initial 1927 edition of the model UBC was adopted by the City of San Jose in September 1928.

- Over the ensuing decades, subsequent editions of the model UBC increasingly were adopted by local jurisdictions throughout the state.

However, in certain large cities there were long periods of strong resistance, often led by builders, against adopting the model UBC, which imposed stricter (and thus more expensive) construction requirements that allegedly would slow the economic recovery from the Great Depression or, subsequently, could impede our wartime economy (thereby purportedly putting our soldiers and sailors at greater risk).¹

¹ Thousands of Bay Area homes built during World War II were hurriedly constructed with less-than-ideal attention to code requirements and structural longevity.

- The City of Oakland, for example, did not modernize its building code until after the War's end (the 1948 Oakland Building Code, modeled on the 1946 UBC, was effective from November 1948 to December 1957).
- Similarly, in 1947, the completely rewritten and reformatted² "1948 Building Codes of the City and County of San Francisco" were approved.³ (While this new building code did incorporate various provisions from the model UBC, it still retained much of its independent 'home rule' philosophy and character.)

State and Federal assaults in the 1960's and 1970's on 'home rule' codes

During the post-War construction boom and associated economic prosperity, even more jurisdictions throughout California and the western United States adopted the model "Uniform" codes published by ICBO --- thereby creating a de facto uniformity (pun intended) for construction professionals regionwide. Even so, certain large jurisdictions – even while selectively incorporating into their newer building codes certain new provisions of the latest UBC – remained fiercely resistant to legislative efforts to mandate a statewide code.

- *"Mr. Bentson traced the history of the State code, noting in 1960 that one code was proposed for the entire State. The Federal government got interested in developing a nationwide uniform building code but ran into funding and other problems resulting in the program being bounced back to the states to solve. The Federal government has looked to California to take the lead in this movement because of our expanding population and the rapid growth of the construction industry. ...The aim is to condense all State codes into one document."*⁴

These ongoing State and Federal activities were strongly resisted by the City and County of San Francisco:

- *"This is a very serious erosion of the basic home rule philosophy, and appears to be backed by certain minority factions in the building industry who feel that through the intervention of State or Federal governments they can get their materials used to a greater extent..."*
*"The coming years will see still stronger attempts at a takeover made, which will require the concerted efforts of local government and the building industry to stop the empire building of the State and Federal Governments at the expense of the local public."*⁵

² San Francisco Department of Public Works (DPW) Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1947: "There had been no complete revision of the building code since 1909. The old code was entirely obsolete and a new code was long overdue and vitally necessary if the supervision of building construction was to continue to be done intelligently. The production of a building code is at all times a controversial matter and at this time became particularly so, due to the fact that for the first time an effort was being made to introduce provisions which would insure reasonable public safety from damage to buildings caused by earthquakes."

³ San Francisco DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1948: "The final passage of the Ordinance adopting a new Building Code was a major landmark in the history of the Bureau of Building Inspection of the Department."

⁴ July 1968 monthly newsletter published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute.

⁵ San Francisco DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1967.

- *“The State Legislature has been enacting legislation over the last three years increasing the amount of overlap between local government and state agencies. Furthermore, they have been, in the bills they consider, writing code at the legislative level rather than providing enabling legislation which would allow the use of the Uniform Building Code or equivalent.*

“As a result, there have been serious problems developing with state agencies thru both the Legislature’s code writing activities as well as the activities of state agencies duplicating code enforcement regulations and activities. These include the State Fire Marshal and the Division of Industrial Safety enforcing the California-OSHA regulations.

“Serious concern exists throughout the State of California and including fire authorities over this new development at the state level which will result in serious overlaps and conflicts between local ordinances and state regulations.”

“The Superintendent, acting through the California Chapter ICBO, will attempt to work with the Division of Industrial Safety to resolve that problem; but as with Federal OSHA, there is a serious lack of awareness on the part of the state enforcement authorities as to the scope of the problem and, in fact, as to the details involved in code enforcement at the local level.”⁶

- *“The Department of Housing and Community Development adopted noise and energy regulations in February 1974 applicable to all new construction effective August 1974 and February 1975 respectively. The Commission of that department is aware of serious problems existing and deficiencies in the regulations and have been urged that they be rectified at an early date.”*

“This is another example of the lack of awareness on the part of state officials as to what is needed for code enforcement activities when a mandated program is legislated into being and the regulations for such a program are to be developed. Unless such regulations are meaningful and enforceable, there is no way in which the Legislature’s intent can be carried out.”⁷

- *“Increasingly there has been a greater degree of activity of Federal agencies entering the code field.”*

“...All of these areas will cause increased incursions into the building code field and will cause problems in this City and County resulting from overlaps and duplications of authority.

“The Superintendent is active at the national level in all these areas, attempting to eliminate as much as possible the overlapping jurisdictional areas. It is too early to determine whether the actions taken by him, through the American Society of Civil Engineers in concert with other professional societies, will be effective but it is hoped so.”⁸

⁶ San Francisco DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1973.

⁷ San Francisco DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1974.

⁸ Ibid.

Over the years, as part of its strategic resistance to State efforts to take control of its codes-writing process, the City and County of San Francisco increasingly implemented measures to revise its 'home rule' codes to better match the ICBO's "Uniform" model codes now being used by most of the State's local jurisdictions.

- *"One of the main comments received in the Bureau from users of the Building Code is, 'Why can't you use the same Occupancy designations as the Uniform Code?'.*

"We have for some time been concerned with this matter as well as the Code format in general.

"People in California generally are familiar with the Uniform Building Code. Therefore, our occupancy numerical system is troublesome for someone versed in the Uniform Code's alphabetical system, which is the same as is used in many other areas.

"Furthermore, there is no reason why a particular article in the San Francisco Building Code does not correspond as to subject with the Uniform Code, and, if possible, even sections should relate if they are on a similar subject.

"To this end an item was placed in this coming year's budget to hire temporary personnel to effect this transition. This request was supported by the design professions. Unfortunately, it was deleted from the budget at final passage. We will attempt next year to obtain this needed revision ...to simplify the use and understanding of our Code by the construction industries."⁹

- *"A review of the Building Code is expected to commence early in 1979. This review is expected to compare each section of the San Francisco Code with the Uniform Building Code (which is used as a base by the State) with the expectation of making the San Francisco Code more similar to the Uniform Code as well as clarifying and up-dating it. It is hoped that the professional groups will aid the Bureau in this time-consuming comparison."¹⁰*

Meanwhile, in 1978, a new Building Standards Commission was given "broader powers" to begin the process of taking full control of writing statewide codes.

- *"To correct the problems and confusion resulting from the uncoordinated proliferation of conflicting, duplicate, and overlapping state regulations, SB 331 (Robbins) (Chapter 1152, Statutes of 1979), effective January 1, 1980, provided the Commission with broader powers. As a result of SB 331, all proposed building regulations adopted by various state agencies must be reviewed and approved by the Commission before the regulations have any force or effect. Further, the legislation called for all building standards to be removed from other titles of the California Code of Regulations and put into a single code - Title 24 - that the Commission is responsible for codifying and publishing."¹¹*

⁹ San Francisco DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1966.

¹⁰ San Francisco DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1978

¹¹ Building Standards Commission: http://www.bsc.ca.gov/abt_bsc/history.aspx

The local jurisdictions were not adopting every edition of the model UBC

During this period, even though the proliferating use of the model UBC throughout the State had brought an increasing degree of overall uniformity to the codes used by the local jurisdictions, there was no requirement that these cities, towns, and counties must update their building code every time a new edition of the triennial UBC was published by IBCO. Therefore, UBC revisions that had become applicable in one City were not necessarily applicable in a nearby City.

Consider, in the chronology below, the irregular dates that the cities of San Jose and Oakland adopted only some editions of the triennial UBC. These inconsistencies greatly delayed important life safety upgrades and created a potentially confusing environment for designers and builders who worked in both cities.

- For example, Section 1711 of the 1982 edition of the UBC reduced the maximum spacing of balusters and stair railings from 9 inches to 6 inches.¹²
- This important life safety provision became effective in the City of Oakland in September 1985 but was not required until January 1990 for all construction work in the City of San Jose.¹³

UBC	City of San Jose	Effective	City of Oakland	Effective
1927	Yes	10/11/1928	###	###
1930	###	###	###	###
1933	###	###	###	###
1937	Yes	02/24/1938	###	###
1940	###	###	###	###
1943	###	###	###	###
1946	Yes	06/24/1946	Yes	11/15/1948
1949	Yes	07/06/1949	###	###
1952	Yes	11/27/1952	###	###
1955	###	###	Yes	12/19/1957
1958	###	###	###	###
1961	###	###	Yes	01/03/1964
1964	Yes	12/02/1964	###	###
1967	###	###	Yes	08/10/1968
1970	Yes	12/22/1971	Yes	08/16/1971
1973	Yes	02/03/1975	Yes	02/22/1974
1976	Yes	08/18/1978	Yes	06/16/1977
1979	Yes	05/08/1981	Yes	02/06/1981
1982	###	###	Yes	09/15/1985
1985	###	###	Yes	02/01/1988
1988	Yes	01/01/1990	Yes	02/01/1990

Model UBC chronological adoption matrix (1927 to 1990) for the City of San Jose and the City of Oakland.

¹² Maximum 9” spacing provisions for open rails date back to the 1961 edition of the UBC. It was the 1991 UBC model that then reduced the 1982 UBC’s maximum 6” spacing of open rails to the current 4” maximum.

¹³ While the 1982 and 1985 UBC models never were adopted by the City of San Jose, local enforcement of certain residential provisions of these two codes were mandated by the State’s Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) via the new “State Building Code” promulgated in the early-1980’s ([as further reviewed below](#)); therefore, revised Section 1711 of the 1982 UBC became applicable, per HCD, to new residential construction in San Jose, but not commercial.

The Building Standards Commission issues new State Building Code

In 1981, the Building Standards Commission promulgated a new “State Building Standards Code” that initially took control of only “building” and “electrical” codes.¹⁴ The effective date of these new codes was January 1, 1982 (except July 1, 1982 for new accessibility regulations promulgated by the Office of the State Architect¹⁵).

- This 1981 State Building Code adopted by reference the model 1979 UBC.
- A subsequent 1982 State Building Code was then superseded by a 1985 State Building Code¹⁶ (effective October 1, 1985) which adopted by reference the 1979 and 1982 (residential construction only) editions of the model UBC.¹⁷

Meanwhile, a new 1984 San Francisco Building Code - extensively reviewed, revised and rewritten from 1980 thru 1982¹⁸ – marked the City and County’s surrender in the decades-long ‘home rule’ codes war.¹⁹

- The new 1984 San Francisco Building Code adopted by reference the model 1979 Uniform Building Code²⁰ (with some provisions taken from the model 1982 UBC), in general conformance with the new 1982 State Building Code.²¹

In 1988, the Legislature further strengthened the Building Standards Commission.

- *“SB 2871 (Marks) provided that ...the building standards contained in specified codes (model codes) published by the Commission apply, with certain exceptions, to all occupancies throughout the state.”²²*

¹⁴ Notice at page 1 of 1981 State Building Code (Title 24, Part 2): *“The 1981 publication of the (Compiled) State Building Standards Code only updates Part 2, State Building Code and Part 3, State Electrical Code to the new format. It is the intent of the State Building Standards Commission to update Part 4 and Part 5 to the new format in the 1982 publication of the (Compiled) State Building Code.”*

¹⁵ John Raeber, AIA, CSI, California Architectural Barriers Laws and Interpretive Manual for Barrier-Free Design, Second Printing, Building News, Inc., Los Angeles, 1983: *“The regulations would have become law in January 1982, but the State Architect requested an extension to July 1, which was approved by the Building Standards Commission.”*

¹⁶ John Raeber, AIA, CSI, California Architectural Barriers Laws and Interpretive Manual for Barrier-Free Design, Second Edition, BNiBooks, 1989: *“...the changes in 1984 were predominately related to including the requirements held up by the State Fire Marshal and including the first Housing and Community Development regulations for privately funded housing.”*

¹⁷ Notice to 1985 Triennial Edition of the State Building Code (Title 24, Part 2): *“Except for the Department of Housing and Community Development, the state agencies adopting building standards have adopted by reference with amendments the 1979 Uniform Building Code. **The Department of Housing and Community Development has adopted the 1982 Uniform Building Code.** To minimize the confusion this may create, the State Building Standards Commission has placed the number 79 and 82 in the adoption tables.”* [Bold emphasis added.]

¹⁸ San Francisco DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1982: *“The update of the building code initiated in 1980 was given full impetus in 1981-82, and the new code will be submitted for adoption by early 1983. This code will adopt by reference the Uniform Building Code with amendments to reflect the needs of local conditions.”*

¹⁹ San Francisco DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1984: *“The Uniform Building Code and Uniform Mechanical Code were adopted along with some amendments necessary to reflect local conditions, as codes of the City. This was the first step in the conversion of all the City’s heretofore unique construction codes to the model codes.”*

²⁰ Explanatory Notes to 1984 edition of San Francisco Building Code: *“The 1984 edition of the San Francisco Building Code is a completely revised and updated edition. This edition is a significant departure from all previous editions in that, for the first time, the Uniform Building Code (UBC) is adopted by reference as an integral part of the San Francisco Building Code.”*

²¹ Monthly newsletter (October 1988) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: *“The 1984 San Francisco Building Code was written to make the City Code conform with the State Code, with only those variances necessary as determined by special circumstances.”*

²² Building Standards Commission: http://www.bsc.ca.gov/abt_bsc/history.aspx

The State Building Code becomes the statewide “California Building Code”

In 1989, the empowered Building Standards Commission promulgated a new code (“State of California 1989 Amendments to the 1988 Uniform Building Code”²³) that adopted by reference the 1988 UBC. (The various State agencies that contributed to this codes-writing were now required to always reference the same model code.²⁴)

- This new “California edition of the 1988 Uniform Codes” became effective on July 1, 1989 for State projects and January 1, 1990 for private construction.²⁵

Meanwhile, in further confirmation that the ‘home rule’ codes war had ended, a new 1990 San Francisco Building Code adopted by reference the model 1988 Uniform Building Code as amended by this new 1988/1989 California Building Code.²⁶

- To the widespread acclaim²⁷ of many active design professionals, one model building code now controlled all construction projects (except Federal) located throughout the State of California.²⁸

Further, the long history of local jurisdictional strife – such as San Francisco’s great building code vs. fire code battle in the early 1980’s regarding the new Moscone Center²⁹ – had now been substantially (but not fully) resolved with the Building Standards Commission’s promulgation of the statewide California Building Code and the closely integrated California Fire Code (CFC).

²³ Monthly newsletter (July 1989) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: “*Totally revised for the first time since 1979, the Building, Mechanical, and Plumbing Codes will be published as a California Edition of the 1988 Uniform Codes.*”

²⁴ Monthly newsletter (August 1987) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: “*For those not familiar with the present code, it consists of various agencies revisions to various editions of the Uniform Building Code (UBC). The twelve adopting agencies have referenced all three of the last UBC editions, 1979, 1982 and 1985. The next triennial edition should at least eliminate the use of the various editions of the UBC.*”

²⁵ Monthly newsletter (July 1989) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: “*On July 1st the California State Building, Electrical, Mechanical and Plumbing Codes goes into effect for state projects. On January 1, 1990 the new California Codes will go into effect for all projects.*”

²⁶ Introduction to 1990 San Francisco Building Code: “*Like the cities and counties, the State adopts model codes by reference, with substantial amendments to accommodate State needs. The State is mandated by law to adopt latest editions of these model codes within six months of their publication date. In turn, cities and counties are mandated by law to adopt the same editions of the model codes with six months of their adoption by the State.*”

²⁷ Monthly newsletter (November 1988) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: “*There have been extensive changes to the Uniform Building Code (UBC) since the 1984 San Francisco Building Code adopted the 1979 UBC with modifications. Within a few months San Francisco plans to adopt the 1988 UBC with amendments. ... We are now faced with the possibility that for the first time most of the state and local municipalities will actually be using one edition of the UBC. This may not be quite as earthshaking as would be the adoption of a single model building code throughout the United States, but it’s close.*”

²⁸ Monthly newsletter (September 1989) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: “*For perhaps the first time no matter where you are designing in California, you will be working with one and only one Basic Code in each discipline and surely the amendments or additions adopted by a city or county will be easier to deal with.*”

²⁹ Monthly newsletter (October 1988) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: “*In the early 80’s there were projects approved by the Building Department which were later rejected by the Fire Department. ... The life safety requirements of the State Building Code are adopted by the State Fire Marshal, and enforcement in San Francisco is by members of the Fire Department. Where there are differences between the State Code and the City Code, the City Fire Department will be enforcing the State Code and the City Building Department (Bureau of Building Inspection or BBI) will be enforcing the City Code.*”

Over the following decade, subsequent editions of the new California Building Code (CBC) published by the Building Standards Commission included:

- 1991 CBC (modeled on the ICBO's 1991 UBC) – effective August 14, 1992
- 1995 CBC (modeled on the 1994 UBC) – effective December 28, 1995
- 1998 CBC (modeled on the 1997 UBC) – effective July 1, 1999

ICBO merges into new nationwide International Code Council

In 1994, the leaders of the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO), Building Officials and Code Administrators International (BOCA), and the Southern Building Code Congress International (SBCCI) formed an alliance as the nationwide International Code Council (ICC) in order “to promulgate a comprehensive and compatible regulatory system for the built environment” by merging the regional Uniform Building Code, National Building Code, and Standard Building Code into a single model International Building Code (IBC).³⁰

- The last edition of the regional Uniform Building Code (serving the western United States) was published in 1997.
- The first edition of the new nationwide model International Building Code was published in 2000 (followed by updated editions in 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018).³¹
- While many states (and regional jurisdictions in states – e.g., Nevada – that do not exercise statewide control) rapidly transitioned to the new IBC, there was resistance in some jurisdictions, including New York City, the State of Hawaii, and the State of California, to accepting these new ICC model codes.

Rekindled turf war between California's fire chiefs and building officials

In particular, here in California, the demise of the historic ICBO's model codes initiated a multiyear political turf war between building officials supporting the new ICC model codes and the fire chiefs, who supported an alternate, and not yet even published, model building code, “NFPA 5000 – Building Construction and Safety Code”, still being written by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

- NFPA had joined forces with IAPMO (International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials), WFCFA (Western Fire Chiefs Association,) and ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) to promote a proposed new model “Comprehensive Consensus Code” (CCC) to compete with the ICC's new “International” model codes.

³⁰ March 2008 edition of International Code Council's Building Safety Journal: “Not surprisingly, each of the regional organizations felt that its codes were excellent, so it took a remarkable level of give-and-take by all involved to reexamine every section of the draft documents, thoroughly debate the associated concepts and agree on specific language.”

³¹ 2003 IBC: “With the development and publication of the family of International Codes in 2000, the continued development and maintenance of the model codes individually promulgated by BOCA (‘BOCA National Codes’), ICBO (‘Uniform Codes’) and SBCCI (‘Standard Codes’) was discontinued. This 2003 International Building Code, as well as its predecessor – the 2000 edition, is intended to be successor building code to those codes previously developed by BOCA, ICBO and SBCCI.”

- California Governor Grey Davis, whose election in November 1999 had been strongly supported by certain unions and industry groups, soon loaded the Building Standards Commission with supporters of the proposed new model codes being developed by NFPA and its partners.

In December 2000, this newly constituted Building Standards Commission voted to reject the various ICC codes (including the 2000 IBC model) being proposed for the upcoming 2001 California codes cycle.³² Further, because the NFPA 5000 model building code had not yet been finalized, the Building Standards Commission voted to readopt the 1997 UBC model for the 2001 CBC (effective November 1, 2002).

In July 2002, the NFPA finally completed its model Building Construction and Safety Code, which states: "*NFPA 5000 is a key document in the collection of integrated consensus codes for the built environment known as the Comprehensive Consensus Codes (C3) which is currently being developed by NFPA and its partners. The first of its kind, C3 is the result of model code and standard developers bringing their expertise together to form one fully integrated, consensus-based code set.*"

- In July 2003, the Building Standards Commission adopted NFPA 5000 and NFPA 1 (Uniform Fire Code) as the models for the intended 2004 editions of the CBC and CFC.

The recall of Governor Grey Davis suddenly changes the political calculus

However, in October 2003, Governor Grey Davis was recalled by the State's voters. Arnold Schwarzenegger won the recall replacement election on November 17, 2003. In 2004, Governor Schwarzenegger replaced many of the voting members of the Building Standards Commission who had supported the NFPA 5000 model code.

In March 2005 (to broad acclaim from building and code professionals statewide who had concluded that the hastily written NFPA 5000 model was not workable³³), the newly constituted Building Standards Commission (by an 8-to-2 vote) rescinded its July 2003 adoption of NFPA 5000 and NFPA 1 as the models for next set of California's building and fire codes. The State's fire chiefs had lost this turf war.

³² December 2000 news update by Walls & Ceiling magazine (<https://www.wconline.com>): "*In addition to the rejection of the International Building Code, the Commission voted to use the 2000 edition of the Uniform Fire Code and the 2000 editions of the Uniform Mechanical Code and the Uniform Plumbing Code to address other safety issues. ... 'We are proud that the state of California will publish the 2000 Uniform Fire Code as the fire prevention code in the state,' said Andy Vanderlaan, executive director of the Western Fire Chiefs Association. 'The Commission is charged with examining and recommending safety codes in the interest of public safety and they fulfilled that charge in this decision.'*"

³³ March 17, 2005 news release by California Building Industry Association: "*Wednesday's action was prompted by the unanimous recommendation of the seven state agencies that oversee most of California's building standards. For a variety of reasons, these agencies had all but stopped work on attempting to 'fix' the NFPA publication. In fact, the agencies determined that they would need to add more than 500 pages of amendments to a book that was initially 515 pages long. The agencies were estimating that, in order to administratively process that unprecedented amount of amendments, it would have taken them 4-5 years to complete the 2004 Edition of the California Building Code. None of the state agencies had budgeted for such a workload, and certainly the extensive use of taxpayer funds needed to complete this "private sector" publication would have been brought into question. Most importantly, the state agencies stressed the need to move to a set of publications that needed only 'fine-tuning' by the state rather than a complete overhaul.*"

The Building Standards Commission voted to instead use many of the ICC's model "International" codes --- including its 2006 IBC model for the proposed new 2007 edition of the California Building Code.

- The 2001 CBC, based upon the model 1997 UBC, continued to rule statewide construction until January 1, 2008.

The modern era of the "I-Codes"

Since the January 1, 2008 effective date of the 2007 edition of California's many Title 24³⁴ construction codes, most (but not all) of these codes have been based upon the model International codes (I-Codes) published by the ICC.

Upon the Commission's adoption of the model I-Codes, the following editions of the statewide CBC have been published:

- 2007 CBC (modeled on 2006 IBC) – effective January 1, 2008
- 2010 CBC (modeled on 2009 IBC) – effective January 1, 2011
- 2013 CBC (modeled on 2012 IBC) – effective January 1, 2014
- 2016 CBC (modeled on 2015 IBC) – effective January 1, 2017

The upcoming 2019 edition of the statewide CBC similarly will be modeled on the 2018 IBC and will become effective on January 1, 2020.

Happily, the overt political wars between the State's fire chiefs and building officials have ended --- in part, because the model International Building Code addresses many of these fire officials' safety concerns (e.g., with increased requirements for the installation of fire sprinklers) compared to the old model Uniform Building Code.

The International Code Council's nationwide IBC and IFC models (and, therefore, the associated California Building Code and California Fire Code) are well integrated consensus documents that serve the complementary needs of California's building departments, construction and design professionals, and fire-protection officials.

(This educational brief is general and introductory in nature and is not intended or authorized for any project-specific use by attorneys, building professionals, or other participants in the construction, codes, or litigation fields.)

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Lonnie Haughton is a principal codes/construction consultant with Richard Avelar & Associates in Oakland, CA (www.RAvelar.com) and is one of about 900 individuals nationwide who have been certified by the International Code Council as a Master Code Professional. His additional ICC certifications include California Commercial Building Inspector, California Residential Building Inspector, Certified Code Official, Certified Building Code Official, and Fire Inspector I.

³⁴ <http://www.bsc.ca.gov/Codes.aspx>