

NIST WTC recommendations are basis for new set of revised codes

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Faster and more efficient emergency evacuations from buildings—especially tall structures—and better communications between first responders during an emergency are among the safety improvements expected from 17 major and far-reaching building and fire code changes approved recently by the International Code Council (ICC) based on recommendations from the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The recommendations were based on NIST's investigation of the collapses of New York City's World Trade Center (WTC) towers and WTC 7 on Sept. 11, 2001.

The new changes, adopted at the ICC hearings held May 15-23, 2010, in Dallas, Texas, will be incorporated into the 2012 edition of the ICC's I-Codes (specifically the International Building Code, or IBC, and the International Fire Code, or IFC), a state-of-the-art model code used as the basis for building and fire regulations promulgated and enforced by U.S. state and local jurisdictions. Those jurisdictions have the option of incorporating some or all of the code's provisions but generally adopt most provisions.

The 17 new code changes include important safety improvements to the existing requirements for elevators in tall buildings used during an [emergency](#) by occupants evacuating and firefighters entering, and provisions to ensure that emergency radio communications will effectively serve [first responders](#) throughout their local communities.

The newly adopted code changes are the second set adopted in the past

two years by the ICC based on recommendations from the NIST WTC investigation. Twenty-three changes were approved in October 2008 and incorporated into the 2009 edition of the I-Codes.

"With their adoption and reaffirmation over two code cycles, we believe that the safety improvements stimulated by the NIST WTC investigation are now well integrated within the mainstream of U.S. [building](#) and [fire](#) codes," said WTC Lead Investigator Shyam Sunder.

Provided by National Institute of Standards and Technology

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