

2012 PERMIT TECHNICIAN STUDY COMPANION

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INTRODUCTION

This study companion provides practical learning assignments for independent study on subjects applicable to the responsibilities of a permit technician. It is based on the 1999 edition of *Basic Code Enforcement*, the 2012 *International Building Code*® (IBC®) (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 12 and 34), the 2012 *International Zoning Code*® (IZC®) and the 2002 edition of *Legal Aspects of Code Administration*.

Independent study lets the student complete the program in an unregulated time period. Progressing through the workbook, the learner can measure his or her level of knowledge by using the exercises and quizzes provided for each study session.

The workbook is also valuable for instructor-led programs. In jurisdictional training sessions, community college classes, vocational training programs and other structured educational offerings, the study guide and the referenced publications can be the basis for classroom instruction.

All study sessions begin with a general learning objective specific to the session, the referenced sections or chapters under consideration and a list of questions summarizing the key points of study. Each session addresses selected topics from the referenced publications including excerpted text, related commentary, illustrations representing the topic under discussion and multiple choice questions that can be used to evaluate the student's knowledge. Before beginning the quizzes, the student should thoroughly review the referenced publications, focusing on the key points identified at the beginning of each study session. In addition, the definitions found in Chapter 2 of both the IBC and IZC, as well as the glossaries in the other two referenced publications, should be referred to often to understand the meanings of the terms and their application.

Although this study companion is primarily focused on those subjects of specific interest to the permit technician, it is also a valuable resource to other individuals who would like to learn more about code and zoning administration. The information presented is of importance to many building officials, plans examiners, field inspectors and property maintenance staff members.

This publication was initially developed by Steve Burger, CBO, Building Official for Folsom, California. Steve has been continuously involved in code administration since 1972 and has been involved in various activities related to the field of Permit Technician, including service on committees and the development of a comprehensive seminar, which he presents nationally to receptive audiences.

Steve Van Note, ICC, provided technical review on the 2009 edition and updated the text for the 2012 edition.

Questions or comments concerning this study companion are encouraged. Please direct your comments to ICC at studycompanion@iccsafe.org.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Back in the early 1990s, the value of broader educational opportunities and appropriate recognition for permit technicians was becoming more and more apparent. This awareness spawned the formation of several Permit Technician organizations in California, Washington and several other states. These organizations sent requests to their legacy code organization asking that a certification program be developed similar to those offered for inspectors, plans examiners and building officials. After several years of defining goals and tasks, a voluntary certification category for Permit Technicians was created.

A Permit Technician Certification Exam Committee was selected, and the group had their first meeting in January, 1998. The committee comprised eight individuals, working in building departments in Washington, California, Texas, Colorado and Arizona, who were intimately familiar with the activities that occur at the front counter. Their ultimate task was to develop questions for a certification exam. However, prior to the development of exam questions, a job task survey was sent to 461 permit technicians asking what duties they performed and how often they performed these duties. Sixty-four percent responded to the survey. From this survey four exam categories were created: General Administration, Legal Aspects, Plans and Documents, and Zoning and Site Development. Each category had a certain percentage of related questions, and all questions were required to have a reference to one or more specific applicable publications. The Permit Tech Certification Program's first examination was offered in 1998, and certification continues to be available through the International Code Council® (ICC®).

Since 1998, there have been numerous Permit Technician seminars, many of which have addressed the categories established by the Permit Technical Exam Committee and other critical areas related to working the front counter. Although many of these seminars have offered course handout materials valuable for use in future reference, there were many requests for a formal study guide for permit technicians.

In late 2004, I was approached by ICC to evaluate the potential for development of a *Permit Technician Study Companion*. The first edition of this new publication in 2006 was the result of the efforts of many people over several years. Special thanks go to Doug Thornburg, AIA, CBO, ICC Technical Director of Product Development for his expertise, guidance and extreme patience; Roxanne Michael, CBO, for her invaluable input and keen proofreading abilities; and various other staff members at ICC, all of whom helped make the *Permit Technician Study Companion* a long-awaited reality.

Steve Burger, CBO