

BUILDING **DEPARTMENT** **ADMINISTRATION**

4TH EDITION



**ONLINE BONUS
FEATURES INCLUDED**



Building Department Administration

4th Edition

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Cover Design:	Ricky Razo
Project Editor:	Roger Mensink
Project Head:	Hamid Naderi
Publications Manager:	Mary Lou Luif
Typesetting/Layout:	Beverly Ledbetter



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Preface

This fourth edition of *Building Department Administration* has been updated based on the third edition. The third edition was published in 2007 after an 18 year lag. Our experience from this 18 year lag taught us that changes in technology, innovative materials, green and sustainability issues, economic globalization, communication and other related areas are so rapid and widespread that further extensive delay in updating the BDA would render it completely outdated and out of touch. The decision was made to update on a five year cycle so as to keep the material as fresh and relevant to the field of building safety administration as possible.

This new fourth edition has been completely updated with changes in every chapter, and it has been reformatted to a more user friendly layout, which also includes a new feature—the tips or “Did You Know?” call-outs.

The first edition, known as the original 1973 edition, was authored by the late Robert E. O’Bannon, who had planned and slowly prepared for several years the preparation of text for an administrative book. Sixteen years later O’Bannon updated the 1973 edition. The 1989 updated edition was completed by O’Bannon as well, under the leadership and management of Roy Fewell, currently the building official for the City of La Habra, California. It was dedicated to the memory of the late John B. Vogelsang, who proved that one could rise to the highest levels of achievement in his or her chosen field despite what some might consider an inauspicious beginning. An uninspired student, Mr. Vogelsang dropped out of high school at age seventeen, but after his discharge from a military tour of duty he completed his high school studies, graduated from college with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering and went on to earn his master’s degree in civil engineering. He sought and gained registration as a civil engineer and, some time later, his structural engineering license—all noteworthy achievements. Mr. Vogelsang’s entire life was devoted to the field of codes. He worked as an inspector, plan examiner, assistant building official and building official.

The fourth edition has been updated through the participation and contribution of many talented and experienced individuals from across a wide spectrum of building safety administration. It includes information on a large variety of areas, such as the incorporation of new technologies and automation, management, leadership and supervision, building sustainability and green building, disaster mitigation and building security, existing buildings and many other subjects of critical importance. It should serve well and be of value to both individuals and departments that serve the public in this important area of the world economy.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to all those code officials who have worked or continue to work passionately, honestly and tirelessly to protect the public's safety and well-being. Their contribution to improving the quality of life in our communities is highly valued.

Also acknowledged are the authors, contributors and peer reviewers of various editions of this classic book who have given their time selflessly with the goal of advancing building safety and effective code administration.

Foreword

The demands placed on code officials are multiple and diverse. In a day's time, we encounter and resolve issues relating to the hard sciences of engineering and physics as code developers and administrators; the human sciences of psychology and sociology as personnel managers; jurist prudence as administrative adjudicators; and accounting, finance, fleet-management and labor relations as corporate business administrators. But our most important function is to protect the lives and limbs of every citizen and visitor in each of our jurisdictions. Every time a person enters a building, turns on a light or water faucet, they are being protected by code officials. Every time a person walks up a flight of stairs, or turns on home heaters or air conditioners, they are being protected by code officials. Every time a vacuum is plugged in or a washing machine or clothes dryer is left unattended, the occupants are being protected by code officials. There are few other government officials at any level of government that affect and protect the lives and health of citizens more than code officials.

Our mission and tasks are often difficult and daunting, leaving many newly appointed code officials feeling underprepared and overwhelmed. Unfortunately, formal education degrees that completely prepare code officials for all their duties do not exist. Code officials holding degrees in engineering or business or public administration may feel inadequate when making plumbing or electrical code decisions. Code officials with backgrounds in code enforcement may feel inadequate when making accounting or personnel decisions. Fortunately, all code officials have since 1973 been able to turn to the first and subsequent editions of *Building Department Administration* by Robert E. O'Bannon as the "bible" of code administration for insight and answers.

The use of *Building Department Administration* was invaluable in assisting Clark County, Nevada in obtaining our IAS Building Department accreditation. Its content, concepts and practices are used extensively by the IAS evaluation teams in their review and consultation process. IAS (International Accreditation Service) is committed to establishing standards and objectives of proficiency to help building department managers evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and improve the level of service to their community.

The publication of the 4th Edition is the latest link in the chain begun by O'Bannon, updating the themes, lessons, advice and guidance of previous editions to encompass changing laws, technologies and practices. This latest edition has been updated/authored by some of the best minds in the construction industry, individuals who have not only many years of experience at administering jurisdictions but also the opportunity through IAS to review the best practices being used in the nation today. Once again, code officials have an enhanced, powerful tool to assist them in their duties, making them better and more productive public servants in protecting the lives of our citizens, which in truth is the most important demand placed on them.

Ronald L. Lynn, Director of Development Services and Building Official for Clark County, Nevada
International Code Council Board President 2009 – 2010

Authors of the Fourth Edition

The following authors made revisions and additions to one or more chapters of the 2007 third edition to update its material and prepare it for this new fourth edition.

Lynn Underwood, CBO, Code Official, City of Norfolk, Virginia – Updated Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4

Lynn Underwood, MCP, CBO – An engineer with 28 years of experience in building safety, Lynn has served jurisdictions across the country. He has a passion for teaching building safety and is an instructor with Virginia's Building Code Academy and at the community college level. He is the author of six books and has published numerous articles. Lynn is also Past-President of the Virginia Building Code Officials' Association and the current chair of the ICC Global Membership Council. www.norfolk.gov

C.P. (Chuck) Ramani, P.E., CBO, President, International Accreditation Service (IAS) – Updated various segments of Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 and IAS Appendix Chapters

Chuck is a California licensed civil and quality engineer more than 40 years of experience in construction quality control. As the founding president of IAS, he has evaluated competence of several building jurisdictions across the country. He has a passion for training building safety professionals and teaches regularly at ICC's Code Academies and at international venues. He has authored numerous articles related to accreditation, conformity assessment, fire testing and inspection protocols. www.iasonline.org

Preet Bassi, M.P.A., IAS Quality Manager, International Accreditation Service – Updated various segments of Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 and IAS Appendix Chapters

Preet is responsible for managing the building department and related code enforcement agency accreditation programs and ensuring the compliance of all IAS accreditation programs to international standards. She has experience working at the state and local governmental levels in California. www.iasonline.org

Brett L. King, CBO, Building Official, City of Carrollton, Texas – Updated Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9

Brett has more than 20 years of experience in building safety and streamlining processes. He holds many ICC certifications, including Certified Building Official. For many years he has participated as an instructor and moderator at the Building Professionals Institutes held in Arlington and Houston, TX. www.cityofcarrollton.com

Jim Olk, CBO, Building Official, City of Farmers Branch, Texas – Updated Chapters 10, 11, 12 and 14

With multiple ICC certifications and state licenses, Jim has more than twenty eight years of experience managing inspection and code enforcement departments. He is the past President of the Building Officials Association of Texas, the past President of ICC's North Texas Chapter and has presented strategic planning and performance based code enforcement nationally. Jim is also the chair of the ICC Plumbing and Mechanical Membership Council. www.farmersbranch.info

Ali Karimi, BSEE, MCSE, MCP, CCA, Technical Director, e-PlanSoft – Updated Chapter 13

Ali is a Senior Technology Architect with more than 20 years of experience in information technology. He has worked with well-known vendors in the industry on design and implementation of enterprise solutions. He has also architected the design and implementation of patented technology for electronic plan review solutions. Ali is currently the Technical Director with e-PlanSoft www.eplansoft.com

Steve Burger, CBO, LEED AP, Chief Building Official, City of Folsom, CA – Updated Chapters 15 and 18

Steve has been in the field of building safety since 1972 and holds many ICC certifications including Certified Building Official and Certified Code Official. He has served on several committees including ICC's Permit Technician Exam Committee and Education Committee. He has been an instructor at the permit technician seminars since 1998 and has authored the 2006 and 2009 ICC *Permit Technician Study Companion* and updated the *You Can Build It!* and *Basic Code Enforcement* books. www.folsom.ca.us

Judith Rothschild Dicine, JD, Supervisory Assistant to Connecticut's State Attorney – Updated Chapters 16 and Appendix F

Supervisory Assistant to State Attorney, Housing, State of Connecticut, for more than twenty years, Attorney Dicine has created and conducted code enforcement training for police officers and code officials on building, health and fire safety laws. She is an ICC Professional Instructor, a Certified Police Instructor for the State of CT, and an Adjunct Professor at the University of New Haven's Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences

Kim Paarlberg, Licensed Architect, ICC Senior Staff Architect – Updated Chapter 17

In addition to her previous work as a practicing engineer and architect, Kim is the ICC current representative to the development committee for ASCE 24, Flood Resistant Design and Construction. She works with the ICC requirements throughout the family of codes for the flood provisions, as well as ICC 500, ICC/NSSA *Standard on the Design and Construction of Storm Shelters*. Kim's other responsibilities at ICC include plan review, code development, code interpretations, instructing technical seminars, and authoring and reviewing technical education and instruction materials and code commentary. She serves as code development secretary for the Means of Egress/Accessibility committee.

Hamid Naderi, P.E., CBO, Senior VP of ICC Product Development – Updated Chapters 19 and 20

Responsible for managing the development of ICC technical publications and implementing business strategies to strengthen such publications through partnerships with associations, publishers and other technical entities, Hamid has nearly 30 years of experience in field inspection, plan review, code development, building code instruction and development of technical publications.

David Walls, ICC Executive Director of Sustainability Programs – Updated Chapter 21

David is responsible for assisting efforts to secure adoptions of the *International Green Construction Code*, assisting with developing and enhancing green-related products and

services, and leading outreach efforts to industry organizations. He has many years of experience in the building industry and in code development as a general contractor and code official. Dave also served as the Executive Director of the California Building Standards Commission, which oversees the adoption and publication of the California building codes, including the adoption of CALGreen.

ICC and ICC-ES Staff Contributors to the Fourth Edition

The following employees of ICC and ICC-ES contributed to various chapters or facilitated gathering information from various sources:

Alberto Herrera, International Services Rep, Government Relations – Chapter 5, Mexico

Rick Okawa, Deputy Vice President, International Services – Chapter 5, Various Countries

Stuart Anderson, Quality Control Administrator, ICC-ES – ES Content in various chapters

Daniel Almasy, Marketing Specialist, ICC-ES – ES Content in various chapters

Zora Golcevska, Marketing Specialist, ICC-ES – ES Content in various chapters

Marion Weiler, Director of Business Planning, ICC – ES Content in various chapters

Steve R. Thorsell, AIA, CSI, Regional Manager, Program Coordinator - ICC-ES Environmental Programs – Chapter 21

David S. Gromala, P.E., Director - ICC-ES Sustainability Program Development – Chapter 21

Other Contributors and Peer Reviewers to the Fourth Edition

The following individuals provided valuable peer review or contributed to a certain part of a chapter.

Naz Karimi, JD Candidate 2012, The University of Oklahoma, College of Law, Norman Oklahoma—Peer review of Chapter 16

Joe Gorfidia, Attorney, Nicholas, Jackson, Dillard, Hager, Smith—Peer review of Chapter 16

Jose Antonio Tenorio Rios, Head, Dept. of Quality in Construction, Eduardo Torroja Institute for Construction Sciences, CSIC, Technical Building Code Coordinator—Chapter 5, Spain portion

Guy Gosselin, Manager, Canadian Codes Centre, Institute for Research in Construction, National Research Council Canada—Chapter 5, Canada portion

Evangelina Hirata-Nagasako, Architect, Technical Director, ONNCCE, Mexico—Chapter 5

Cristina González-Zertuche, Architect, M.S., City and Regional Planning, Mexico—Chapter 5

Foreword to the Third Edition

The job of a building department administrator is demanding, challenging and, if properly understood by the public, would command a higher degree of respect and prestige for the job we do to protect public safety each and every day.

Code officials play a vital role in society, but most members of the public, elected officials and even some governmental officials do not appreciate the fact that our role in local and state governments is just as important as other divisions of government. I say this as someone who has been in the field of building safety for twenty-six years and who has served as a department administrator for more than twenty-three years.

I currently supervise the activities of a multi-disciplined department that includes codes administration, inspections, plan review, property maintenance, historic preservation and land-development codes. I have served on the ICC Board of Directors and a legacy model code organization board for nine years. I have a bachelor's degree in Business Management and a number of International Code Council certifications, including Certified Building Official. You will find that certification is invaluable because formal education in our field is lacking. There are a handful of community colleges that offer associate degrees in code enforcement. Most code professionals pursue public administration or construction technology degrees. With so few formal education opportunities available, you'll find this book an invaluable resource. It will complement your certifications and formal education.

As you read this book you will get a better understanding of the broad responsibilities of a building department administrator, including disaster mitigation, legal issues, staffing,

leadership, property maintenance, green building, automation, records management, customer service and many other issues related to the operation of an effective and efficient building safety department.

I personally know several of the authors and have worked with them closely for a number of years. The dedication, expertise and leadership of these individuals are well known nationally and even internationally. They have served in high offices and made significant contributions to the world of building safety. The experience, knowledge and contributions of the other authors of this book are evident from their extensive and broad experience.

To be successful, code officials must be intelligent, caring individuals who truly give of themselves to ensure that the public goes about their lives in the built environment safely. By doing our jobs each day, we provide the first line of defense from man-made and natural disasters. By doing this we protect lives, property and in many respects our country's economy. We play an integral part in public safety and homeland security from either natural or man-made disasters.

Building department administrators and their staffs need to be recognized as *the* authorities on building safety. When a politician, whether at the local, county, state or national level, has a question about building codes, fire codes, plumbing or electrical, his or her first phone call should be to a local building department administrator or the International Code Council, the professional association that most of us belong to.

I personally like to think that every day we save a life that we don't know about because there was something that we required on a building, and as a result an incident or tragedy did not occur. There may never have been a fire, there may never have been that fall, that tripping accident, or that structural failure, or someone may not have been electrocuted. There's a saying: "When we do our job, nothing happens." That's very true.

Wally Bailey, Director of Development and Construction for the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas International Code Council Board President 2006 - 2007

Authors of the Third Edition

The following individuals either updated/revised existing chapters of the 1989 (second) edition to be included in the 2007 (third edition) or wrote new chapters for the third edition. After each author's name "New" is an indication that the author wrote a new chapter and "Updated" is an indication that the author revised and updated an existing

chapter of the 1989 edition to be placed in the 2007 edition. The reference to the chapter being updated is the chapter of the current third edition, which may not necessarily be the same chapter number in the 1989 edition. Sometimes, information from more than one chapter of the 1989 edition was taken by an author and revised to be placed in a specific chapter of the 2007 edition. The titles and positions of authors following their names is related to the time they participated as authors for the third edition in 2007 and may have changed by the time subsequent editions of this book are published.

Jim W. Sealy, FAIA, Consultant—Updated Chapter 1

David P. Tyree, P.E., CBO, Regional Manager, American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA)—Updated Chapter 2

David Diamantes, CBO, Author, trainer and consultant—Updated Chapter 3

Anne R. von Weller, CBO, Chief Building Official, Murray City, Utah (Updated

Brian J. Meacham, Ph.D., P.E., Principal, Arup—New Chapter 5

Andrew A. Adelman, P.E., M.S., General Manager, City of Los Angeles, Department of Building and Safety—Updated Chapters 6 and 11

Steve Ikkanda, P.E., M.S., Code Development Engineer, City of Los Angeles, Department of Building and Safety—Updated Chapters 6 and 11

James H. Jorgensen, P.E., CBO, Building Codes Administrator, Lenexa, Kansas, Planning and Development Department—Updated Chapter 6

Ravi Shah, CBO, Assoc. AIA, Director of Urban Development, City of Carrollton, Texas—New Chapter 7

Lynn Underwood, CBO, Code Official, City of Norfolk, Virginia—Updated Chapter 8

Henry L. Green, Executive Director, Bureau of Construction Codes, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth—New Chapter 9

Susan H. McLaughlin, Supervisor, Education Unit, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs—Updated Chapter 10

Steve Burger, CBO, Director of Building Safety Services, Bureau Veritas Code Consultants—Updated Chapter 12

David Hattis, MA, President, Building Technology Incorporated—New Chapter 13

Al Godwin, CBO, Building Official, Fort Worth, Texas—Updated Chapter 14

Roy Fewell, CBO, Building Official, La Habra, California—Updated Chapter 15

Linda S. Pieczynski, J.D., Attorney at Law P.C., Hinsdale, Illinois—Updated Chapter 16

James Lee Witt, CEO, James Lee Witt Associates—New Chapter 17

Linda Lichtenberger, Supervisor, Property Standards Customer Service, Nashville and Davidson County Department of Codes and Building Safety—Updated Chapter 18

Jim Olk, CBO, Building Official, Farmers Branch, Texas—Updated Chapter 18

David Listokin, Ph.D., Professor of Urban Planning, Edward J. Bloustein School, Rutgers University—New Chapter 19

Melvyn Green, FASCE, Structural Engineer, Melvyn Green and Associates—New Chapter 20

Anthony C. Floyd, AIA, LEED—AP, Green Building Program Manager, Scottsdale, AZ—New Chapter 21

Contributors to the Third Edition

The following individuals contributed significantly to the content of some specific chapters in the third edition published in 2007.

Evangelina Hirata-Nagasako
Maria Cristina Gonzalez-Zertuche
Brett King
Steve Hagarty
G. Kimball Hart
Todd A. Johnston
Jessie Simmons
William I. Whiddon
O. Edgar Ermis
Gary E. Caldwell
Patrick J. Crawford

ICC, ICC-ES and IAS Staff Authors and Contributors to the Third Edition

The following employees of ICC, ICC-ES and IAS made significant contributions or authored certain parts of some chapters in the third edition published in 2007.

John Nosse
C.P. (Chuck) Ramani
Terry Eddy
Alberto Herrera
Beth Tubbs
Lisa Leffel

Lorri Rosenfeldt
Dominic Sims

Peer Reviewers of the Third Edition

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Susan Gentry
Maureen Traxler
Gregori S. Anderson, CBO
Ken Schoonover, P.E.,
Ronald M. Kolbe
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Ron Bell
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Ravi Shah, Director of Urban Development for the City of Carrollton, Texas, was one of the

main planners and organizers of this project. He was involved from the beginning in discussions of format and reorganization and provided valuable input and advice throughout the entire project. He also authored the new Chapter 7.

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Primary Author (First and Second Editions)

Robert E. O'Bannon

The late Robert E. O'Bannon was involved in the field of code enforcement and administration for more than thirty-eight years, serving jurisdictions in Southern California including Los Angeles County, Ventura County and the City of El Segundo. He was a believer in education and conducted classes for inspectors and firefighters; he was the director of education for the ICC legacy organization ICBO for ten years. He was a registered professional engineer and served on the National Academy of Code Administration, CABO's ad hoc Committee for Certification of Building Officials and the board of trustees of the National Certification Program for Construction Code Inspectors.

About the International Code Council

The International Code Council (ICC), a membership association dedicated to building safety, fire prevention and energy efficiency, develops the codes and standards used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. The mission of ICC is to provide the highest quality codes, standards, products and services for all concerned with the safety and performance of the built environment. Most United States cities, counties and states choose the International Codes, building safety codes developed by the International Code Council.

The International Codes also serve as the basis for construction of federal properties around the world, and as a reference for many nations outside the United States. The International Code Council is also dedicated to innovation and sustainability. ICC Evaluation Service, a subsidiary of ICC, issues Evaluation Reports and Listings for innovative building products as well as environmental documents such as ICC-ES VAR Environmental Reports and ICC-ES Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs).

Headquarters: 500 New Jersey Avenue, NW, 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20001-2070

District Offices: Birmingham, AL; Chicago, IL; Los Angeles, CA

1-888-422-7233

www.iccsafe.org