Bonus Features

Complimentary online bonus features include:

- Excerpts of top selling great publications
- Permit Application Forms
- Plan review and inspection activity forms
- Violation, placards, and appeals forms
- Select magazine articles related to management and supervision
- Select technical articles related to building hazards
- Select technical articles related to new and innovative products
- Useful links

www.iccsafe.org/CodesPlus
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Building Department Administration
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related areas are so rapid and widespread that further extensive delay in updating the BDA would render it completely outdated and out of touch.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.

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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

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

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

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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.


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.

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Building Department Administration
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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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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).

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