Plan Review Skills

ISBN: 978-1-963845-00-6

Project Head: Doug Thornburg
Publications Manager: Anne Kerr
Project Editor: Mary Lou Luif
Publication Technician: Sue Brockman

Publication Technician: Sue Brockm Cover Design: Ricky Razo



COPYRIGHT © 2024 by INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This publication is a copyrighted work owned by the International Code Council, Inc. ("ICC"). Without advance written permission from the ICC, no part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means, including, without limitation, electronic, optical or mechanical means (by way of example and not limitation, photocopying, or recording by or in an information storage and retrieval system). For information on use rights and permissions, please contact: ICC Publications, 4051 Flossmoor Road, Country Club Hills, Illinois 60478, phone 888-ICC-SAFE (422-7233).

The information contained in this document is believed to be accurate; however, it is being provided for informational purposes only and is intended for use only as a guide. Publication of this document by the ICC should not be construed as the ICC engaging in or rendering engineering, legal or other professional services. Use of the information contained in this workbook should not be considered by the user as a substitute for the advice of a registered professional engineer, attorney or other professional. If such advice is required, it should be sought through the services of a registered professional engineer, licensed attorney or other professional.

Trademarks: "International Code Council," the "International Code Council" logo, "ICC," the "ICC" logo and other names and trademarks appearing in this book are registered trademarks of the International Code Council, Inc., and/or its licensors (as applicable), and may not be used without permission.

Errata on various ICC publications may be available at www.iccsafe.org/errata.

First Printing: March 2024

PRINTED IN THE USA

T030105

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pre	efacevii
	About the Author viii
	About the International Code Council viii
1	Safe Buildings1
	An Important Job
	Understand Your Role
	Foundation
	Support9
	Principles of Code Administration
	Minimum Requirements
	Interpretation13
	Alternatives
	Key Points
2	Approaches to Plan Review19
	Scope of Plan Review23
	Code Compliance Process25
	Level of Review
	Managing Time
	Plan Review Philosophy35
	Finding Solutions38
	Teaching and Learning39
	How to Format Comments

iv — Plan Review Skills

	Communicating Comments	
	Professionalism	. 45
	Key Points	. 46
3	Getting Along	. 51
	Plan Reviewer as Facilitator	. 53
	Respect	. 54
	Keeping an Open Mind	. 55
	Giving Bad News	. 57
	Difficult People	. 58
	Common Plan Review Mistakes	. 61
	Key Points	
4	Department Success	
	Submittal Guidelines	. 69
	Plan Review Checklists	
	Deferred Submittals	. 80
	Phased Approval	
	Counter Plan Review	
	Third-Party Plan Review	
	Interdepartmental Coordination	
_	Key Points	
5	Customer Service	. 95
	First Impression	
	Listening	
	Honesty	
	Expectations	
	Choose your Words Carefully	
	Obstacles	
	Complaints	
	Build Relationships	110
_	Key Points	
6	Doing the Right Thing	
	Professional Integrity	
	Code of Conduct	119

	Public Welfare	120					
	Rights	121					
	Accuracy	122					
	Conflict of Interest	123					
	Making Ethical Decisions	125					
	Key Points	128					
7	Communication Skills	131					
	The Counter	134					
	In-Person Meetings	137					
	Video Conferencing	138					
	Telephone Calls	140					
	Written	141					
	E-mails	143					
	Key Points	155					
8	Conclusion	157					
Appendix A							
	The Review Process	163					
Appendix B							
	Electronic Plan Review Considerations	185					
Appendix C							
	ICC Evaluation Service Report (ESR)	189					



Plan Review Skills addresses the soft skills that are essential for plan reviewers to excel in their role to ensure safe, code-compliant buildings for the public and the safety and general welfare of building occupants. Soft skills are non-technical traits and behaviors that enhance the plan reviewer's ability to interact and collaborate with design professionals and building owners with a common goal of timely completion of plan review efficiently and accurately. In addition to people skills—those social graces that improve interaction with people—soft skills include decision making, problem solving, professionalism, integrity, honesty and time management, to name a few. As important as the process is that leads to efficient and consistent reviews, this topic is covered also in Appendix A.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jay Elbettar, PE, CBO, LEED-AP, CSP, BSCE, MSSE

Jay Elbettar is an ICC consultant with over 40 years' experience in building design and construction and in building code plan review, inspections, and administration. He is a Past President and a lifetime honorary member of the International Code Council. He served on the State of California Hospital Safety Board and was the Vice Chair of the Seismic Safety Commission. He is a licensed professional engineer in the states of California, Florida, Texas, Colorado, Nevada, Tennessee and Georgia and holds a bachelor and master's degree in civil and structural engineering, is a certified building official, building inspector, plans examiner and a LEED Accredited Professional and holds many other certifications and honors. Mr. Elbettar was the recipient of the 2010 Gerald H. Jones Code Official of the Year Award from the International Code Council and is a California Building Officials Hall of Fame inductee and a lifetime honorary member. Mr. Elbettar is an ICC instructor and an expert code consultant in building codes, accessibility and sustainability. He was an adjunct professor at Coastline Community College and provided training to design professionals, engineers and plan reviewers, nationally and internationally. He also assisted in the development of the Saudi Certification Exams and authored the Saudi Building Code Guide and the English Arabic Constructionary.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL®

The International Code Council is the leading global source of model codes and standards and building safety solutions that include product evaluation, accreditation, technology, codification, consulting, training and certification. The International Code Council's codes, standards and solutions are used to ensure safe, affordable and sustainable communities and buildings worldwide.

The International Code Council family of solutions includes the ICC Evaluation Service (ICC ES), S. K. Ghosh Associates, the International Accreditation Service (IAS), General Code, ICC NTA, ICC Community Development Solutions, Alliance for National & Community Resilience (ANCR) and American Legal Publishing.

Office Locations:

Headquarters:

200 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 250, Washington, DC 20001

888-ICC-SAFE (888-422-7233)

www.iccsafe.org

Eastern Regional Office

900 Montclair Road, Birmingham, AL 35213

Central Regional Office

4051 Flossmoor Road, Country Club Hills, IL 60478

Western Regional Office

3060 Saturn Street, Suite 100, Brea, CA 92821

MENA Regional Office

Dubai Association Centre Office, One Central,

Building 2, Office 8,

Dubai World Trade Centre Complex, PO Box 9292, Dubai, UAE

OCEANIA Regional Office

Level 9, Nishi Building, 2 Phillip Law Street, New Acton, Canberra ACT 2601

Family of Solutions:

