



# NEWS RELEASE



National Institute of  
BUILDING SCIENCES

For Immediate Release  
August 28, 2014  
[www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org)

Contact: Laurence Genest  
1-888-ICC-SAFE (1-888-422-7233), ext. 3428  
[LGenest@IccSafe.org](mailto:LGenest@IccSafe.org)

## **Survey of Code Professionals Predicts Substantial Retirement Exodus**

### *Highlights Opportunities to Reach New Recruits*

A recent survey conducted by the National Institute of Building Sciences on behalf of the International Code Council (ICC) reveals information that if not addressed in the coming years, may have an impact on the public safety of thousands of communities in the United States.

The survey, which consisted of 25 multiple-choice questions, went out nationwide to building code compliance professionals at the federal, regional, state and local levels this spring. A total of 3,850 code professionals responded, answering a range of questions, from salary and job responsibilities to educational background and retirement plans. The resulting data reveals some key demographic information about the current workforce; forecasts future workforce needs; and highlights untapped avenues for reaching new recruits.

“We must take action now to ensure our communities remain safe and protected by an adequate workforce of code officials,” said ICC Board President Stephen D. Jones, CBO. “This survey highlights important needs and ways that we can now proactively begin engaging, training and producing the next generation of code professionals.”

In general, the survey results largely confirmed the observations of code organizations and on-the-ground code officials: the “typical” code professional is older, works at the local level as a jurisdiction employee and has 20 to 30 years of experience. However, there are a few noteworthy findings, which will be important for ICC, jurisdictions and the building industry to be aware when planning for the future.

Just as baby boomers are having an impact across other industries, code officials are aging and making plans for retirement in significant numbers. Nearly 85 percent of respondents are over the age of 45. More importantly, over 80 percent of respondents expect to retire within the next 15 years, and more than 30 percent plan to do so within five years. Such a massive exodus of public safety professionals could have a serious impact on jurisdictions—particularly those with smaller departments—since more than half of the respondents work in departments of nine or fewer employees.

The survey also collected the educational background of respondents, revealing opportunities for future recruitment. As expected, the majority of respondents entered the profession through building-related educational programs or transitioned from work in a related field. However, more than a quarter of respondents with bachelor’s degrees earned them in seemingly disconnected majors—

particularly business-related programs (business, management, administration, finance, etc.). This information may help jurisdictions to reach disciplines not previously targeted in their recruiting campaigns.

The survey also revealed:

- Almost 80 percent of respondents work in departments of less than 15 employees (57 percent have nine or less).
- A majority of respondents (59 percent) serve communities of less than 75,000 residents.
- Respondents are experienced, with a majority having worked in the building industry for more than 25 years (60 percent).
- More than a quarter of respondents hold bachelor's degrees (27 percent) and nearly half either attended community college, hold an associate's degree or have a high school diploma (48 percent).
- Respondents wear multiple hats in their departments, and are often responsible for more than one job function, such as plan review (52 percent), building inspections (48 percent) and department management (46 percent).
- The median salary for respondents is between \$50,000 and \$74,999 per year.

The Institute will present the survey results during ICC's "Town Hall Meeting on the Future of Code Officials," to be held Tuesday, September 30, during the [ICC Annual Conference](#) in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. The Town Hall serves to bring together key stakeholders to identify methodologies for addressing the challenges facing the code profession.

Download a copy of the report of survey results [here](#). Visit the ICC website to view the conference schedule and register to attend.

###

**About the International Code Council:**

The [International Code Council](#) is a Member-focused association. It is dedicated to developing model codes and standards used in the design, build and compliance process to construct safe, sustainable, affordable and resilient structures. Most U.S. communities and many global markets [choose the International Codes](#).

**About the National Institute of Building Sciences:**

The National Institute of Building Sciences, authorized by public law 93-383 in 1974, is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that brings together representatives of government, the professions, industry, labor and consumer interests to identify and resolve building process and facility performance problems. The Institute serves as an authoritative source of advice for both the private and public sectors with respect to the use of building science and technology. For more information, visit [www.nibs.org](http://www.nibs.org).