Welcome to the 2018 Annual Conference Educational Sessions

Session: 7 C's for Inspectors
7 C’s for Inspectors

A skills guide for Building Safety Officials - 2018

Authored by ICC
This class was written for Building Safety Officials to;

- Introduce and Reinforce Soft Skills
- Identify approaches to defuse complex problems.
- Provide Statutes to assist in understanding policies and appeals.
- We will structure the course around 7 “C’s“ to convey the concepts
What Are the 7 C’s?

The 7 C’s we set sail on are:

• Context
• Communication
• Consequences
• Consistency
• Competence
• Character
• Customer Service
Why Was This class Written?

This class was written as a resource for inspectors to respond to public attitudes toward Regulations and Regulators and responses to elected officials acting on behalf of constituents.
GOALS

By the end of this class, the Building Safety Official will identify with;

Approaches that are not taught as part of getting your certifications – referred to as “soft skills” that include;

✓ Tools to defuse problematic situations,
✓ A background to the General Statutes that will make policies and appeals easier to understand and explain, and
✓ Identify programs such as “Raise the Profile” to improve impression of the inspector.
One of the main goals of this course focuses on soft skills:

What are hard and soft skills?

- Hard Skills are the specific, teachable abilities that can be defined, observed, quantified and measured. For a code official, these are the technical skills required to perform the job.

- Soft Skills are the personal qualities, habits, attitudes and social graces that enhance an individual's interactions and job performance.
Why are Soft Skills Important Now?

- Public opinions against rules and regulations - desire for
  - “less government”,
  - “less regulation”
  - “Cost” versus “Investment”
- Public apathy towards safety – until there is an accident
- The fact that “people” just do not know what CEO’s do - Elected officials and the public need to be educated about the value Code Enforcement Officers offer

As part of the “Raise the Profile” program, Inspectors need to tell their story and promote value!
As the class begins, each individual needs to step outside of their role. Identify what roles are fulfilled and how each interaction is received -

**WHAT ........IS A "CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICIAL"?**

Where do Inspectors fit in the equation;

- Do inspectors blindly look at the text in the code book without consideration to the persons we are serving – hoping the public does what it says and goes away?
- Do inspectors cultivate a relationship, confirm the public understands the codes and work to a solution?
Consider the roles that a Code Enforcement Official fills;

- Facilitator
- Ambassador
- Educator
- Mentor
- Expert
- Public Resource
- Role Model
- Therapist
- Coach
- Politician
- FRIEND!
What are the public’s expectations of a Code Enforcement Official?

- Specialized expertise
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Respectfulness
- Effective communication
- Reliability
- Confidence
- Fairness
- Responsibility
- Punctuality
- Team-oriented attitude
- Appropriate appearance
The dictionary defines “context” as the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement or idea, and in term of which is can be fully understood and assessed.

We have to see the “whole picture.”
IN THE BEGINNING....

Due to the urbanization of the United States, property losses created a need for building codes.
The Chicago Fire was not the only one...

MORE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED ABOUT LIFE SAFETY...
IF THERE WAS ONLY A WAY TO REMEMBER ALL OF THESE ACCIDENTS IN A WAY TO PREVENT THEM IN THE FUTURE...
BUILDING CODES?

- The building codes are a set of guidelines taken from problems and accidents to prevent them from being repeated.
- An inspector’s job is to enforce the code, in effect preventing history from repeating.
WHAT IS SOCIETY TO DO TO PROTECT CITIZENS?

In each State, the legislature establishes General Statutes creating Building Code Development and Enforcement rules, regulations and processes.

In our State the process begins with.........
Where Does the Authority for Building Safety Officials Come From?

As identified in Law and Admin Classes, authority for inspectors comes from the General Statutes for Cities and Counties;

The General Statutes (GS) have specific chapters that apply to specific areas:

What are ours?
The Building Codes are “Rules” that support General Statute ??????????????.

The Intent behind the creation of the code is the development of consistency in safety, defining the language we all speak.

When the codes are promulgated, input is made by all facets of construction, including; designers input for feasibility, builders input for cost and inspectors input for safety.
If the duty of the inspector is distilled down to a single purpose, it would be keeping our communities safe.

As Building Safety Officials, attempting to quantify every task is difficult, but let's look at a part of how hazards may be mitigated.

Building codes for example mitigate hazards that include activities in:

- Prevention (operations)
- Response (responders)
- Recovery (SERT)
When creating context, the codes and the appellant process establish a common language for the industry.

Throughout the construction community, codes are used to communicate complex ideas:

- Designers use the code as a guideline for the minimum level of safety
- Builders use the code to establish contracts and build to an understood set of guidelines
- Inspectors act as an agent for the jurisdiction, using the code to;
  - Communicate violations in writing.
  - Explain minimum requirements for Alternative Means and Materials
  - Standardize listings
How does your jurisdiction maintain context and consistency?

Should a checklist be used to verify the minimum items checked for consistency?

If a decision is being made, is it challenging and complex to get assistance?

Is the conclusion within the framework and spirit of the code?

The code is the basis, keep an open mind when making a decision.
As a point of contact with the jurisdiction, what should be expected from an inspector?

- One of the hard skills – knowledgeable of the codes
- There is an inherent expectation from the public that buildings are safe.
- Responsible for mitigation of risks associated with construction and safety of the subsequent occupants
- A fair and equal application of the codes
Building Safety Official responsibilities:
- Public safety advocate – community risk reduction
- *Administration* of construction and fire safety codes
- Knowledge of the codes – the letter of the code and the *intent* of the code
- Fair & consistent application of all codes – “AHJ Abuse”
- Effectively working with all stakeholders
- Prioritization of tasks based on community risks and available resources (personnel and budget)
- Obtaining code compliance by educating and changing behavior
Context for this class is conveying mistakes made in our past by using the code to provide guidelines for current construction. The key to success in finding solutions comes from understanding the extent of your hard skills and conveying them using your soft skills.

Without context, the code is simply a book of abstract ideas.
Exercise

Example - An inspector may be tasked with the approval of a unique construction.

Using Alternative Materials and Designs;
• The codes contain the minimum prescriptive and performance guidelines for the most common construction practices,
• The alternative design may be for an element of the code written to protect against a certain accident.

How does an inspector approve the project?
COMMUNICATION
COMMUNICATION IS DEFINED AS THE “IMPARTING OR EXCHANGING OF INFORMATION OR NEWS” AND CAN BE THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT.

Besides the verbal conversation between the owner and the jurisdiction, communication (or the lack of it) can occur in numerous points of a project:

• Written documentation that communicates the scope of the project.
• The permit representing a written communication of what the jurisdiction understands will be done.
• Written violations identifying where construction was not in compliance with the code.
• A Certificate of Occupancy communicating the fact that it is the jurisdiction’s opinion that the building is safe for use.
More About the Permit -

The communication in a permit issuance includes;
- Scope of work
- Limits of the project
- The parties Involved
- Compliance with the UDOs
- Ensure that all parties will know the completed project is safe and the investment has some security
- Allows the Jurisdiction to identify potential problems with;
  - Local zoning
  - Local procedures
  - To become accustomed to the process and to educate the people involved

The permit communicates the overall intent to Jurisdiction
COMMUNICATION

Sounds easy - where do most of the problems come from?

- Performance requirements from the codes
- Construction options
- Zoning and Setback requirements
- Communication, lack there-of, misunderstandings, inflexibility
- Conflict among “interested parties”
COMMUNICATION

How is your communication received?
• How do you communicate with others?
• Is the written and verbal communication understood?
• Does most of the communication occur face-to-face?
• How do you deliver bad news? Is it empathetic?
• Do you try to attach a solution to a problem before you relay the bad news?
• Do you have time to listen to what was intended, even if the explanation is not well-reasoned?
• Do you value “teachable” moments?
• What will spending a few extra minutes with a customer cost you? What might it gain you?
How can Communication help an inspector?

• Understanding the background to the code makes it easier to explain and others will remember the issue on the next project.
• Explaining the importance of the codes can result in closer working relationship with the jurisdiction leaders.
• Conveying the goals, in context, summarizes the purpose of the inspector’s work.
• Overall, there is a validation to the inspection process.

National programs such as ICC “Raise the Profile” focus on these skills.
Communication extends beyond what is taught;

Raise the Profile/Code understanding
Establishing personal relationships
• Builders
• Local government officials
• Media outlets
• How Inspectors can increase respect
• Who are your partners/customers
In addition to communicating with the traditional stakeholders, are you communicating with the decision-makers?

- Do you share your concerns and responsibilities with elected official or town/city managers?
- Do they understand the priorities of your job?
- Do you get a chance to explain your role and responsibilities?
- Do you have regular communication and reporting?
- Have you built a relationship of trust and mutual respect?

This level of communication signals the Building Safety Official’s work is worthwhile and beneficial to the community.

BSM – What a great opportunity!!!!!!
Ultimately, communication builds confidence by the city or county leaders in a Building Safety Official’s decision making ability. In most cases, BSO’s should be able to work independently. Building trust promotes effectiveness and efficiency.
How does the communication come across?
• Critical
• Judgmental
• Condescending
• Unprofessional
• Caring
• Concerned
• Does your acceptance of their message inspire confidence that the message was delivered to the right place or person?

There are better ways to say no…
Reasons you may not be heard –

- They have already made up their mind
- They hear only what they want to hear
- Both sides have jumped to conclusions
- Lack of interest
- Being angry, upset, or worried about other things
- “I just don’t like that guy/girl”
- Who was the last person that guy/girl talked to, and what did that person say?

So……the reasons you may not be heard by others........ are also the reasons you sometimes might not seem to be listening!
Body Language – what messages are being sent?

- Defensiveness
- Agreement
- Comprehension (or lack of understanding)
- Level of interest
- Level of engagement with the message
- Truthfulness

Appearance – How does your appearance shape your message?

How does my manner of speech, of dress, affect the way my community, my team, my mgmt. staff, view my professionalism?
Nonverbal communication cues can play five roles:

- **Repetition**: they can repeat the message the person is making verbally.
- **Contradiction**: they can contradict a message the individual is trying to convey.
- **Substitution**: they can substitute for a verbal message. For example, a person's eyes can often convey a far more vivid message than words do.
- **Complementing**: they may add to or complement a verbal message. A boss who pats a person on the back in addition to giving praise can increase the impact of the message. (Not to be confused with complimenting, which is also important for reinforcement)
- **Accenting**: they may accent or underline a verbal message. Pounding the table, for example, can underline a message.

*Source: The Importance of Effective Communication, Edward G. Wertheim, Ph.D*
COMMUNICATION: I DID NOT STEAL THAT $5.00
Facial expressions
The human face is extremely expressive, able to express countless emotions without saying a word. And unlike some forms of nonverbal communication, facial expressions are universal. The facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, fear, and disgust are the same across cultures.

Body movements and posture
Consider how your perceptions of people are affected by the way they sit, walk, stand up, or hold their head. The way you move and carry yourself communicates a wealth of information to the world. This type of nonverbal communication includes your posture, bearing, stance, and subtle movements.

Gestures
Gestures are woven into the fabric of our daily lives. We wave, point, beckon, and use our hands when we’re arguing or speaking animatedly—expressing ourselves with gestures often without thinking. However, the meaning of gestures can be very different across cultures and regions, so it’s important to be careful to avoid misinterpretation.
Eye contact
Since the visual sense is dominant for most people, eye contact is an especially important type of nonverbal communication. The way you look at someone can communicate many things, including interest, affection, hostility, or attraction. Eye contact is also important in maintaining the flow of conversation and for gauging the other person's response.

Touch
We communicate a great deal through touch. Think about the messages given by the following: a weak handshake, a timid tap on the shoulder, a warm bear hug, a reassuring slap on the back, a patronizing pat on the head, or a controlling grip on your arm.

Space
Have you ever felt uncomfortable during a conversation because the other person was standing too close and invading your space? We all have a need for physical space, although that need differs depending on the culture, the situation, and the closeness of the relationship. You can use physical space to communicate many different nonverbal messages, including signals of intimacy and affection, aggression or dominance.
Voice
It's not just what you say, it's how you say it. When we speak, other people “read” our voices in addition to listening to our words. Things they pay attention to include your timing and pace, how loud you speak, your tone and inflection, and sounds that convey understanding, such as “ahh” and “uh-huh.” Think about how someone's tone of voice, for example, can indicate sarcasm, anger, affection, or confidence.

Sometimes the most important thing in a conversation is “What’s not said”!!!!!
Interpretation in conclusion -

• Responsibility and authority
• Performance provisions
• Multiple solutions
• Conflicts
• Meaning and intent

Giving bad news - Empathy (Look at it from their side)
Difficult people - Exception rather than the rule
• Remarks to avoid
  • “I don’t write the code, I just enforce it.”

• Negative message sent
  • “I’m not very interested in learning the reasons for code requirements.”

• Correct action
  • Support the code and give reasons for the rules.
  • Emphasize minimum requirements.

• Remarks to avoid
  • “That’s the way we like to see it done.”

• Negative message sent
  • “We make up rules based on our personal preferences because we think it’s better that way.”

• Correct action
  • Require only what the code requires.
  • Avoid the perception of enforcing rules based on personal preferences.

**RULES WITH NO REASON ....... CORRECTION WITH NO CAUSE**
• Remarks to avoid
  • “There’s a new sheriff in town”
  • “It’s my way or the highway.”
  • “Not in my town.”

• Negative message sent
  • “I’m in charge, I decide…just do what I say.”
  • “Don’t cross me or there will be consequences.”

• Correct action
  • Encourage a collaborative working relationship
  • Avoid “I,” “me,” or “my.”
  • Be respectful

• Remarks to avoid
  • “The code allows it, and you can try it that way, but I’m telling you now that it will fail inspection.”

• Negative message sent
  • “You’re not skilled enough to putt this off…I’m going to fail inspection. Then, you will have to do it my way.”

• Correct action
  • Remain objective – stick to facts – what the code says.
  • Give instructions in a positive and helpful way.
10% of conflicts are due to difference in opinion. 90% are due to wrong tone of voice.

COMMUNICATION STARTS HERE
CONSEQUENCES
CONSEQUENCES

“THOSE WHO CAN’T REMEMBER THE PAST ARE CONDEMNED TO REPEAT IT.”
- GEORGE SANTAYANA

There is a background to each code requirement. “Those who remember the past but do nothing about it are doomed to experience the negative consequences of all the people around them.........busy repeating the past.”
CONSEQUENCES

How does this relate to communication?

In explaining code violations, knowing why a code change was written can make all the difference to your customer.

This is part of the communication, confirming each violation you listed has a basis in an accident it is trying to prevent.

• Without providing the communication and having a context explained later, a code violation simply becomes a rule that has no meaning.
• If you can’t offer background or context, some stakeholders may come to the conclusion that the code section is baseless or even worse, made up by the inspector.
All Code Sections are based on an event;

It is fair to say that each code section has a story. Some people have even said that the code is “written in blood”.

Without the drama; let's look at some case studies that represent the basis for some of the code language.
CONSEQUENCES – CASE STUDY #1

Means of Egress In a Factory

10 story Triangle Shirt Waist Company
March 25, 1911
147 fatalities
The fire's destructive toll

The fire at the Beverly Hills Supper Club was one of the deadliest fires in the United States. The fire started on March 28, 1977, and claimed the lives of over 100 people. The cause of the fire was a malicious act, with a man setting it using a kerosene lamp.

The fire led to significant changes in the laws regarding the safety of public places, including a requirement for smoke detectors and sprinkler systems. The Beverly Hills Supper Club was one of the first places to adopt these measures.

The fire's effects were felt throughout the community, with many businesses and individuals struggling to recover. The city of Beverly Hills was forced to implement stricter fire safety regulations, which had a lasting impact on the local community.
CONSEQUENCES – CASE STUDY #3

Blowing Rock CO Poisonings
CONSEQUENCES – CASE STUDY #4

Frozen high-efficiency furnace discharge
Sometimes the consequences are related to the individual’s actions;

- Not being diligent on an inspection can create the potential for larger issues later in the process.
There are rules to address malfeasance and misfeasance by the individual;

How does your jurisdiction or your state determine if you are guilty of any of the below:

• Gross Negligence
• Gross Incompetence
• Willful Misconduct
Law Dictionary: **What is GROSS NEGLECT OF DUTY?** When a public official has done things to endanger welfare of the public. Gross negligence is a conscious and voluntary disregard of the need to use reasonable care, which is likely to cause foreseeable grave injury or harm to persons, property, or both.

Law Dictionary: **What is GROSS INCOMPETENCE?** Gross Incompetence is a difficult one, and will reflect not only on the Inspector but his/her entire Inspections Department. Obviously, flagrantly or exceptionally wrong or culpably unable to perform in his or her duties in a reasonably professional or expected manner.

Law Dictionary: **What is WILLFUL MISCONDUCT?** Willful misconduct generally means a knowing violation of a reasonable and uniformly enforced rule or policy. It means intentionally doing that which should not be done or intentionally failing to do that which should be done, knowing that injury to a person will probably result or recklessly disregarding the possibility that injury to a person may result. (Note that injury can also be substituted for the word “costs”).
CONSEQUENCES

Consequences aren’t restricted to just what happens to buildings or other people. **CONSEQUENCES** are what happens to YOU!

- How do you keep your self mentally prepared to deal with your responsibilities daily?
- What are your “Coping” techniques?

- Don’t take it personally
- Write down what annoys you
- Think about why it annoys you
- Which of your buttons does someone frequently push
- Why do you respond to that person the way you do?
- How would you rather respond
- Do you monitor yourself and your behavior
- Do you try to give yourself positive feedback, or accept positive criticism from others
- **Q-TIP**
- You are not as likely to change someone else as you would be to change yourself.
CONSISTENCY

What is the one thing you hear most often in the field?

- “This is the only place that requires this”
- “I have built it like this for years”
- “Another jurisdiction doesn’t require this”

There is a common belief among the public and our customers that all Building Safety Officials don’t work from the same book.

Do all contractors work from the same book?
KEEPSING CONSISTENCY IN CHECK

How does your jurisdiction keep track of policies?

- Do you use check lists to confirm spot check items?
- Do the plan review staff work with the field staff for difficult items to check in the field? What are some of these items?
- Are the deficiency's shared with the entire staff to confirm no unusual violations are identified? Are they documented?
- Do you talk...to one another....across jurisdictional boundaries...to your partners and stakeholders?
Which common resources are available to everyone?

- Commentary
- Monograph (Specialized documents)
- Networking
- Idea Sharing
- Other staff
- ICC ESR reporting
- Trade Journals
- Association participation
- Association websites w/ Q&A forums
- Continuing Education

CONSISTENCY
CONSISTENCY:

A CHECKLIST IS A GOOD THING FOR THE BEGINNER, BUT CAN’T BE A REPLACEMENT FOR:

1.) PROPER GUIDELINES
2.) SHARED PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES
3.) COMMON GOALS
4.) METHODOICAL APPROACH AND
5.) EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS AMONG ALL STAKEHOLDERS.
CONSISTENCY:

WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION.

WE ALL HAVE STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT QUALITY CONSTRUCTION.

WE ALL “CARE”, BUT WE ONLY HAVE A “MINIMUM” STANDARD WE CAN ENFORCE.

THE CODES CHANGE AND SO SHOULD YOU!!!!!!
COMPETENCE
§ 143-151.13. Required standards and certificates for Code-enforcement officials. (a)

No person shall engage in Code enforcement under this Article unless that person possesses one of the following types of certificates, currently valid, issued by the Board attesting to that person’s qualifications to engage in Code enforcement: (i) a standard certificate; (ii) a limited certificate provided for in subsection (c) of this section; or (iii) a probationary certificate provided for in subsection (d) of this section. To obtain a standard certificate, a person must pass an examination, as prescribed by the Board or by a contracting party under G.S. 143-151.16(d), that is based on the North Carolina State Building Code and administrative procedures required for Code enforcement. The Board may issue a standard certificate of qualification to each person who successfully completes the examination. The certificate authorizes that person to engage in Code enforcement and to practice as a qualified Code-enforcement official in North Carolina. The certificate of qualification shall bear the signatures of the chairman and secretary of the Board. […]
What do you think of when you think of competence?

- Qualification and examination
- Pre-service / In-service training
- Assessment and feedback / best practices / benchmarks

What about TRUST, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, PERSONALITY, CHARACTER, etc. You don’t just earn your “Hard” skills, you also earn your “Soft” skills. You have to have both to be competent!
COMPETENCE:

- Professionalism
- Time Management
- Teaching/Learning
- Consensus Building
- Decision Making

THE INCOMPETENCE

IS STRONG WITH THIS ONE
Competence in both hard and soft skills can be found;

- Training – Networking
- Staff Meetings
- Mentoring
- Encouragement
- Recognition
- Engaging work
- Incentives (Certifications)
- Chapter and Regional/National Meetings
One of the most important responsibilities held by the code official is applying and enforcing the code – which includes “interpretations” and “intent”.

The following has to be taken into consideration when an interpretation is made;
• Responsibility and authority
• Performance provisions
• Multiple solutions
• Conflicts
• Meaning and intent
When is a code prescriptive based or performance based?
Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.

-Abraham Lincoln

**CHARACTER.......... WHAT IS IT? AND WHERE CAN I GET A BOTTLE OF IT?**
What defines character?

- Courtesy toward contractors and consumers
- Confidence among peer group
- Courage (conflicts of interest and other ethical considerations)
- Honesty in all public and private dealings
- Accuracy in assigned tasks, no matter how trivial
- Morality, Tolerance, Understanding, Fairness, Values
- Sense of Duty and a Commitment to our mission
Unknown character or a poor attitude can be an inadvertent obstacle for a Building Safety Official. Some of the best, and most simple approaches you can use are:

- Positivity
- Respect, courtesy and diplomacy

While these suggestions sound simple, they can:

- Raise bar of professionalism
- Improve your image as well as that of other BSO’s
- Makes life easier all around
1. Define ethics.
2. How do CEO’s make ethical choices?
3. Describe what it means to act ethically as a code official.
4. Avoid ethical traps for the code official.
   a.) What are some of those “ethical traps”
5. Develop a personal code of ethics.
   a.) Do you have a copy of your COCO Code of Ethics
• Should your job be subject to public scrutiny
• Do good inspectors welcome that scrutiny or hide from it
• Do good CEO’s embrace ethical principles of honesty and lawfulness
• Is what you do a benefit to your community
• Do you apply rules fairly and objectively with no vested interest
• Has avoiding the public eye created a situation where we have no voice for “good”

Unless he or she is the owner of the building, no member of an inspection department shall be financially interested or employed by a business that is financially interested in furnishing labor, material, or appliances for the construction, alteration, or maintenance of any building within the county's territorial jurisdiction or any part or system thereof, or in making plans or specifications therefor. No member of any inspection department or other individual or an employee of a company contracting with a county to conduct inspections may engage in any work that is inconsistent with his or her duties or with the interest of the county, as determined by the county. The county must find a conflict of interest if any of the following is the case:

(1) If the individual, company, or employee of a company contracting to perform inspections for the county has worked for the owner, developer, contractor, or project manager of the project to be inspected within the last two years.

(2) If the individual, company, or employee of a company contracting to perform inspections for the county is closely related to the owner, developer, contractor, or project manager of the project to be inspected.

(3) If the individual, company, or employee of a company contracting to perform inspections for the county has a financial or business interest in the project to be inspected. (1937, c. 57; 1941, c. 105; 1947, c. 719; 1951, c. 651; 1953, c. 984; 1955, cc. 144, 942, 1171; 1957, cc. 415, 456, 1286, 1294; 1959, cc. 399, 1031; 1961, cc. 763, 884, 1036; 1963, c. 868; 1965, cc. 243, 453, 494, 846; 1967, cc. 45, 73, 113; c. 495, s. 3; 1969, cc. 675, 918; c. 1003, s. 7; c. 1064, ss. 1, 4; c. 1066, s. 1; 1973, c. 822, s. 1; 1993, c. 232, s. 2; 1999-372, s. 2.)
What would you do?

• You inspect poor quality work by a local contractor. So you call the homeowner, report an unusual number of deficiencies, tell the owner that you’ve had problems with this contractor in the past. Is this appropriate?

• You have a side business unrelated to your job as a CEO. You occasionally need copies made, so you use the copier at work. Is this ethical?

• During a housing inspection for some rental units you find violations. You present the building owner your personal business card and let them know that you do work on the side. Is there an issue?

• Your County is divided into areas for different inspectors. Your Brother-in-law is building his own house. Even though it’s not in your area, you make it a point to swing by and “catch” his inspections.

• A licensed contractor that you occasionally work with, in jurisdictions other than your own, now begins doing work in your county. What do you do the next time he asks you to work for him in another jurisdiction. By the way, you have to make your car payment next week.

• You are performing a framing inspection for a tract builder and notice a roll of housewrap and two windows (they were the wrong size) in the dumpster. You’re getting ready to build a detached garage this fall. So you…

CHARACTER AND ETHICS
CUSTOMER SERVICE
서비스
CUSTOMER SERVICE: WHO IS “YOUR” CUSTOMER?

Co-Workers, Property owners, Homeowners, Associates, Installers, Designers, Contractors, Homebuilders, Technicians, Council members, Commissioners, City and County Managers, Everybody you know, Everybody you don’t know, ME!!!!!! I am your Customer!

Every Citizen Who Uses a Private or Public Building, or who wants to use a private or public building, or who knows someone who wants to use........ get it?
As a representative of the jurisdiction, do you come across as a strict rule enforcer of the codes or as an ambassador?

- Have you gained their trust?
- Are you taken seriously when you explain the details of a violation.
- Are you the first point of contact? Do you have the ability to correct the problems?

The key is to come across more as a facilitator rather than regulator!
Safety, Health and Well-being in the built environment!

• Public safety advocacy – community risk reduction

• Enforcement and Administration of building and fire safety codes

• A thorough knowledge of the codes – both the letter and the intent of the code

• Always fair and always consistent application of the codes

• Effective working relationships with partners and stakeholders

• Prioritization of risks based on community needs and available resources, an effective work plan to meet those needs (personnel and equipment needs vs. the budget)

• Code compliance attained by communication, education and by changing behaviors of our customers and ourselves

Risk reduction, Response, Recovery, Mitigation

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE BUILDING SAFETY OFFICIAL?
In an environment where the politics seem to indicate there is a:

- Public desire for “less government”
- Public desire for “less regulation”
- “Cost” versus “Investment” narrative on every project
- Public apathy about safety codes
- Elected officials have absolutely no idea about the value code officials bring to the community.

We have to Raise Our Profile and tell our story!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Every interaction can be used as a chance to educate.

Does your jurisdiction have;
• Outreach efforts for the department
• Informational handouts/application guides
• Website
• Plan review and constructive feedback
• At the jobsite, do you have non-enforcement interaction with the Designer, the GC, the sub-contractors
Choose your ways and your words carefully

Avoid – You can’t do that. Avoid constantly saying “NO”!
Better – You know there are several ways to accomplish this and still meet the code requirements.
Comment – Be open minded, flexible and look at alternatives and solutions. Make suggestions from your knowledge, expertise and experience. Turn a negative situation into a positive one.
These efforts will result in;

- Improved Public’s perception
- Become a resource rather than adversary
- Be known as a person who works on finding solutions

Being a Building Safety Official goes far beyond the simple duty of inspections and enforcing rigid rules. Sometimes a smile and kindness can resolve or prevent unnecessary heartache.
CUSTOMER SERVICE

Why are People Difficult?

*Let’s hope it’s not quite this bad out there!*

But:

People

• Are rushed – not enough time
• Feel insecure
• Feel angry
• Have some need or interest
• Are stressed
• And they just don’t understand buildings
“CUSTOMER SERVICE” MEANS MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

• We are Building Safety Officials!
• We are professionals and we are committed to excellence through service.
• We “expect” positive results from our efforts, and we “inspect” to ensure those results.
• We do not just “make” inspections.
• We perform inspections, and expect our efforts to “MAKE A DIFFERENCE”!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Flexibility</strong></th>
<th><strong>Boundaries</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Explores alternatives</td>
<td>• What are the requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Intent of the code</td>
<td>• Where does the code end?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Meets minimum standards</td>
<td>• Don’t ask for more than code requires</td>
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<td>• Open mind</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Precision</strong></th>
<th><strong>Consistency</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Level of precision varies</td>
<td>• Consistent and fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not an exact science</td>
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**Problem or Issue?**

Is 3.75 inches good enough for a house number...the code requires 4 inches.
The servant is calm, confident, positive and professional; and doesn’t take things personally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Never</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defuse</td>
<td>Escalate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stay Calm</td>
<td>Argue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listen</td>
<td>Interrupt</td>
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<td>Let Them Vent</td>
<td>Don’t Blame</td>
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<td>Speak Quietly</td>
<td>Don’t Raise Your Voice</td>
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<td>Be Objective</td>
<td>Don’t Criticize</td>
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EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE:
PEOPLE CAN BE DIFFICULT, AND WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH ALL
OF THEM. DO YOU RECOGNIZE ANY OF THESE
PERSONALITIES?

- Hostile or Aggressive
- Know-it-all
- The Yes person
- Whiner
- Never says a word
- Indecision
- No Answer Whatsoever

You know them all; your job is to
find a unified way to get both of
you to a common goal.
The Bully tries to belittle you.....”I Pay Your Salary”!, “You don’t have a clue what you’re doing, I’ve been in business for 30 years.” “I’ll just call your boss, I know her.” “I’ve never had to do this in ____________’s County”

How to handle them......Let them vent..... let them save face..... don’t back down, and gently make sure they know the “FACTS”...... Explain to them the benefit of doing things the right way..... appeal to their professionalism AND to their pocketbook.

Service!
The know-it-all tries to dominate the situation and the people in it; often by finding fault with everything and everyone?

You can help the know-it-all by listening carefully, repeating the main points he/she says, and then pointing out the facts (be prepared to reinforce them). Use further questions to raise issues that will help their performance in the future.
• The codes serve as only one basis for the actions of the inspector.
• Inspections is following a checklist
• Success of a building department depends on buy-in from the public.
• The inspector is an ambassador for the building department in securing the public trust.
• The general public enthusiastically values the work of the inspectors
• Customer service does not apply to code enforcement.
• The success of an inspection can be measured by the number of violations identified.
• Building Safety Officials are Educators
• Soft skills are specific, teachable abilities that can be defined, observed, quantified, and measured.
• Soft skills are personal qualities, habits, attitudes, and social graces that enhance an individual’s interactions and job performance.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
So, Overall, Do You…

- have an agency or department Mission Statement?
- have a personal Mission Statement?
- perform periodic self-assessments and situation assessments (lessons learned)?
- value your impact on “your” community?
- feel like safety in the built environment is your job?
- know your jurisdictions strategic plan and how you fit in to it?
SO, WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
Use opportunities like Building Safety Month to raise awareness in your jurisdiction. Management’s trust in you will:

- Build confidence in your decision making abilities
- Enable you to work more independently
- Send a signal to the public that the Building Safety Official’s work is:
  - Not just worthwhile, but essential.
  - A valuable outreach between municipality and the public.

This makes it easier to get the needed support from your Department Director, City/County Manager, Elected officials

WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT FROM YOUR JURISDICTION?
SOURCES

- Inspector Skills – Steven A. Van Note
- Dan Dockery – Chief Building Official, WS/FC Planning & Development Services
- Hundreds of Inspectors Everywhere
- Builders, Designers, Tradespeople Everywhere
- CITIZENS!!!!!!!!!
Thank You For Attending