

Code Professionals Focus on IMC Changes in Chattanooga

Did you know that there are now four approved methods for preventing pan overflow in drain systems? Or that the minimum air velocity in a grease hood exhaust duct has been reduced by two-thirds? Or that Chapter 7 of the *International Mechanical Code* (IMC) is on the chopping block?

These and many other changes have come about as part of the International Code Council's continuous 18-month code development process, which includes changes to the IMC and the 2006 *International Fuel Gas Code* (IFGC).

Code Council Senior Staff Engineer Larry Simpson recently summarized the biggest changes in a one-day presentation to the Tennessee Valley Chapter of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Simpson explained, "Industry professionals need to pay close attention to changes highlighted in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the IMC and Chapters 4 and 5 of the IFGC, as these are particularly relevant to day-to-day design, installation, construction and operation/maintenance of mechanical systems."

For instance, in the IMC Chapter 3 segment on auxiliary and secondary drain systems, the code development committee added a fourth method of preventing pan overflow, which uses a water level detection device installed in the factory-supplied drain pan or the primary drain line to shut down the appliance. It also stipulates a new requirement for roof-top package units and other coils with no secondary drain pan to have a water level detection device installed in the primary drain pan to shut down the appliance. In IMC Chapter 5, the committee decreased the minimum air velocity required in a grease duct from 1,500 to 500 feet per minute, and in Chapter 6 allowed for shaft penetrations by kitchen and bathroom exhausts in B and R occupancies without a smoke damper.

Perhaps even more relevant, are the imminent changes anticipated to the 2009 codes.

The 2009 code will completely rework Chapter 4 on ventilation to incorporate many provisions from ASHRAE 62.1-2004, provide more flexibility for the designer, and reduce ventilation air requirement for many applications. There is also a new section in Chapter 5 that stipulates makeup air must be provided for domestic kitchens with exhaust hoods capable of exhausting 400 CFM or more, and automatically controlled to start and stop with the hood. An increase in the clothes dryer exhaust duct length from 25 to 35 feet has been approved for the *International Residential Code* and will appear in the 2009 code.

Also of note, the 2009 code will delete the content of Chapter 7 on combustion air. Instead, the code will reference the manufacturer's instructions for solid fuel-burning appliances and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard NFPA 31 for oil-fired appliances.

The International Code Council revises its *International Codes* every 18 months and publishes new editions every three years.