

InsideICC

ICC Evaluation Service (ICC-ES)

ICC-ES Evaluation Committee – Its Role and Makeup

By ICC-ES Staff



Introduction

ICC Evaluation Service, LLC (ICC-ES), is a nonprofit, limited liability company that does technical evaluations of building products, components, methods and materials. The evaluation process culminates with the issuance of ICC-ES evaluation reports that are extremely useful to both regulatory agencies and building product manufacturers because they directly address the issue of code compliance. Agencies use evaluation reports to help determine code compliance and enforce building regulations; manufacturers use reports as evidence that their products meet code requirements and warrant regulatory approval (and this is especially important if the products are new and innovative). The reports are not only useful to building regulators and manufacturers, but also to contractors, specifiers, architects, engineers and anyone else with an interest in the building industry. All of these people look to ICC-ES evaluation reports for evidence that products and systems are code compliant.

What Makes ICC-ES Unique?

One might ask, “What makes the ICC-ES evaluation process unique, so that it is widely accepted by all

these groups as a means of documenting code compliance?”

There are a number of reasons that might be given for this wide acceptance, but undoubtedly part of the answer lies in the process by which ICC-ES develops its acceptance criteria. Acceptance criteria are needed for new and innovative products because the International Codes do not have any specific provisions for such products, due to the lag time that exists between product innovation and a new product being recognized in the code. Also, even if a product is mentioned in the code, the code requirements may be so vague that an acceptance criteria is still needed.

What makes ICC-ES acceptance criteria so widely accepted is the fact that all interested parties have an opportunity to participate in the criteria development process. This participation also brings quality to the acceptance criteria, which leads to even greater acceptance of ICC-ES evaluation reports.

“The ICC-ES Evaluation Committee is a cross-section of building code enforcement officials,” said Scott Marsell, chairman of the committee. “You have building officials, plans examiners, building inspectors



The ICC-ES Evaluation Committee and interested parties participate in a public meeting to consider new and revised acceptance criteria.

and others. With this diverse cross-section of code officials, products are being evaluated not only for code compliance, but also for how the product will perform in real world installations. Code officials can be confident when they accept a product that has an ICC-ES report. There is no special interest represented on the committee. All committee members are government officials employed by jurisdictions across the country to enforce the codes.

Marsell added, "I have worked with the ICC Evaluation Service staff for the past 10 years, and I know and have trust in the review process they have in place. The entire staff is dedicated to work with and help code officials in the enforcement of the codes, by giving code officials the ability to accept products that are outside the specific prescriptive requirements of the code."

The Role of the ICC-ES Evaluation Committee

Although ICC-ES report applicants and the technical staff draft acceptance criteria, the real test comes when criteria are posted on the ICC-ES website for public comment. Written comments submitted to ICC-ES are reviewed by ICC-ES technical staff. Perhaps more importantly, the ICC-ES Evaluation Committee, usually at one of its open public hearings, considers these written comments, as well as verbal testimony.



“The committee members come from various parts of the country, from jurisdictions large and small,” said Michael Clack, a past committee member and Director of Development Services for the City of Scottsdale, Arizona. “Each of the committee members brings to the hearings their education, background and experiences. Testimony is presented in an open forum, and all points of view are allowed to be presented. No matter the outcome, both sides in a particular matter can agree that they had ample opportunity to state their points of view, and that the decisions of the committee are based on the best information available.”

These Evaluation Committee meetings take place three times a year. Although an alternative process exists for certain situations where a hearing is determined to be unnecessary, the Evaluation Committee must adopt any criteria before it becomes effective.

Who Makes Up the ICC-ES Evaluation Committee?

The ICC-ES Evaluation Committee is composed of representatives of agencies that enforce building regulations and is an objective body with no special interests.

“I was recruited to join the ICC-ES Committee three years ago by John Nosse, who was then the President of ICC-ES,” said committee member Hussain Bhatia. “Since then, the relationship of my agency, OSHPD [Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, State of California], and ICC-ES has grown closer. I have not missed a single committee meeting, as I consider them very important in keeping pace with the new products that my agency encounters in our reviews. I have been impressed by the technical competence and professionalism of ICC-ES staff who author the acceptance criteria, and have learned a lot from them. I even call and email questions to the ICC-ES staff on evaluation reports between committee meetings. I also have been impressed by the questions that committee members have posed to staff and manufacturers – not many acceptance criteria get by without a lively discussion on technical, instal-

2011 ICC-ES Evaluation Committee

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- **TOM BARRS**, Senior Plans Examiner, City of Scottsdale, Arizona.
- **HUSSAIN BHATIA**, Ph.D., SE, Office of Statewide Health, OSHPD – FDD North Region, Sacramento, California.
- **DANIEL F. DIVITO**, Director of Permits and Inspections, Washington County Department of Permits and Inspections, Hagerstown, Maryland.
- **ALI M. FATTAH**, PE, Senior Research Engineer, City of San Diego DSD, San Diego, California.
- **SHARON GOEI**, Plan Check Engineer, City of Walnut Creek, California.
- **WILLIAM L. KING JR.**, Plans Review Supervisor, City of Goodyear, Arizona.
- **CARL OPATRNY**, Chief Building Official, City of Independence, Ohio.
- **MICHAEL P. RICKABAUGH**, Deputy Manager of Building and Safety/Deputy Building Official, Reedy Creek Improvement District, Lake Buena Vista, Florida.
- **BRIAN S. TOLLISEN**, PE, Building Construction Engineer, Technical Services Unit, New York State Division of Code Enforcement and Administration, Albany, New York.



lation and inspection issues.

“Being a member of various committees of SEAOC [the Structural Engineers Association of California], I have actively encouraged SEAOC to get involved with the ICC-ES committee meetings,” Bhatia added. “Now, SEAOC has created a separate committee to monitor and comment on ICC-ES acceptance criteria and participate in the open hearings. The SEAOC Evaluation Service Committee has provided important feedback and comments during the open hearings.”

A positive vote by the committee on proposed acceptance criteria represents the committee’s sense that the criteria meet the needs of the code official who enforces building regulations. ICC-ES acceptance criteria also generally reflect the needs of industry, since, as noted earlier, all interested parties are able to provide input during the criteria development process. Attendees at committee meetings have the opportunity to speak on acceptance criteria and provide information to committee members.

The Meetings

With regard to the committee meetings, the role of the ICC-ES technical staff is to prepare draft acceptance criteria, present them to the committee, respond to questions raised by hearing participants and make recommendations to the committee about criteria approval. Two-thirds of the voting Evaluation Committee members must be present at a meeting to establish a quorum. A majority vote of members present is required to take any action on acceptance criteria.

Additional Information

For additional information on the ICC-ES Evaluation Committee, ICC-ES acceptance criteria and the development of the ICC-ES acceptance criteria, please refer to the following links on the [ICC-ES website](#):

- PowerPoint presentation entitled [Description of ICC-ES Evaluation Committee hearing process and flowchart](#), which provides information on the committee process.
- [Approved criteria](#). Note that the search engine on the website will give the user the option to view a list of all criteria or to search criteria by number, name or CSI number. Any criteria can be downloaded free of charge.

- [Development of ICC-ES acceptance criteria](#). The website will give the date, time and location of future committee meetings; important deadlines related to future committee meetings; items going to the next committee meeting and the related agenda (posted 30 days prior to the meeting); and the agendas of past meetings and approved criteria.
- [Alternative criteria process](#). The website will have current postings, previous postings and a schedule of future postings, as well as information as to what items are eligible for the alternative process and how the alternative process works.
- [Biographical information on the ICC-ES Evaluation Committee members](#). **bsj**