



People Helping People Build a Safer World®

Building Safety and COVID-19

A snapshot of code compliance in the United States during the pandemic

April 2, 2020

The International Code Council surveyed building and fire departments to find out how code officials are coping with the professional challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of April 1, 2020, at 12:00 PM, 1,158 respondents from all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia provided input. Respondents came from jurisdictions of all sizes ranging from 1,000 people to over 4.6 million.

The results of this survey show trends on how jurisdictions throughout the U.S. are keeping up with inspections, new building permits and new construction.

THE MAIN FINDINGS ARE:

- The majority of departments surveyed (93%) are still performing inspections, either remotely or in-person. This falls in line with what the Code Council expected given that many areas have classified construction and code compliance activities as essential.
- More than half (65%) of respondents said that some or all employees that conduct plan review or inspections are working remotely.
- A large percentage of jurisdictions (66%) use a combination of electronic and hard copy versions of building safety codes, while a much smaller percentage of jurisdictions (7%) have advanced to using all electronic. 27% of respondents said their jurisdiction used only hard copies. This could create challenges where hard copies are shared and departments do not have enough hard copies for each now-remote employee that needs them. In fact, 23% said their employees do not have access to needed hard copy code books.
- Many jurisdictions have made the switch to electronic services, but a large percentage still do have the capacity to go virtual. In particular:
 - » 40% do not have the capability to do electronic/remote plan reviews.
 - » 30% do not have the capability to do any aspect of electronic/remote permitting.
 - » 61% do not have the capability for electronic/remote inspections.
- To expand services to fight the coronavirus pandemic, many healthcare facilities are putting beds in alternative locations (like school gymnasiums, hotels, outpatient surgical centers), or in temporary structures in their parking lots. 26% of respondents have encountered requests for permits for temporary occupancy and/or temporary structures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This survey is ongoing, and the Code Council will continue to collect responses to these important questions. Forthcoming will be a document outlining best practices on virtual code compliance activities.

PRESENTED BY THE ICC FAMILY OF SOLUTIONS