

Alliance for Regulatory Coordination

Summary of Member Meeting

Meeting Date: January 15, 2020

Location: Sun Prairie City Hall, 300 E. Main Street, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin

The meeting was convened at 9:05 a.m. by Bob DuPont, of Regulatory Guidance and Design, LLC.

Regarding fire and smoke dampers, DuPont reported the DSPS has indicated that the Department is working to incorporate the ARC public hearing recommendations into their next draft of rule changes on this matter. He has encouraged the Department to ask the Commercial Building Code Council to review and comment on the next draft of rule changes. Richard Paur provided a recap of the initiative and activities to date. There was a brief discussion about ARC recommendation for a delayed effective date for the proposed DSPS rules, with everyone in agreement with the ARC recommended 12-month delay.

Regarding the opt-out option concerning ARC positions, DuPont said this option was suggested by Brandon Scholz, as a way for the ARC to move forward on matters that are of interest to most members, while at the same time allowing other ARC members to abstain from taking a position via the ARC. After brief discussion, attendees agreed that this new ARC policy was acceptable to them. DuPont said he has heard no concerns about the new policy, so he will continue offering the opt-out option to members.

Regarding new ideas for improving DSPS plan review services, attendees reviewed the January 10, 2020, letter from DSPS Secretary Crim to DSPS customers about changes in plan review procedures. While there were no specific recommendations agreed to by all attendees, the following ideas were each briefly discussed.

- Allowing municipalities or fire departments to review plans for surrounding communities as agents of the DSPS.
- Defining construction project work areas more specifically to allow more addition or alteration projects to be reviewed locally.
- Charging fees for incomplete plan submissions.
- Referring designers of poor plan submissions to the Examining Board of Architects, Landscape Architects, Professional Engineers, Designers and Professional Land Surveyors.

Vern Green suggested that perhaps state licensing of fire alarm contractors and installers would be an effective way of promoting better plan submissions for, and installations of, fire alarm systems. DuPont said he would place that suggestion on the meeting agenda for the next ARC Fire Safety Team.

Regarding DSPS electrical inspection and UDC inspection program operations, DuPont reported hearing that a reduction in communications from the DSPS, and Department of Administration, to third-party inspection providers resulted in a number of UDC inspection contracts not being renewed or replaced. He believes the transition of contract servicing, from the DSPS to the DOA, contributed to the reduction in communications with service providers and potential inspection contract bidders. DuPont said he has encouraged the DSPS Secretary’s Office to resume DSPS communications with current and potential third-party inspection providers. DuPont reported that, according to the DSPS, the state effort to contract with third-party inspection agencies for inspection electrical installations for commercial buildings and farms, has resulted in coverage of only 40 of Wisconsin’s 72 counties. He said the number of municipalities participating in the statewide electrical inspection program has expanded as the result of the statute and code change mandating electrical construction inspection for commercial buildings and farms. DuPont provided the following table in a hand-out to attendees.

Electrical Inspection Agencies on DSPS Website on 1-13-20	Total No. of WI Municipalities	Percent of Municipalities Participating
105 Cities	190 Cities	55%
143 Villages	407 Villages	35%
169 Towns	1255 Towns	13%
2 Counties	72 Counties	2.7%
48 Private	NA	NA
467 Total	1922 Total	21.8%
Population served has not yet been identified; but is estimated to be around 80%.		

DuPont said he believes that Wisconsin adoption of the International Residential Code could help get more municipal and third-party inspectors involved in providing inspection services to administer the Wisconsin UDC because nationally more industry professionals are familiar with the IRC than with the UDC. He said that in the DSPS Boiler and Elevator Programs, third-party inspection agencies from outside the state have been able to participate primarily because the Wisconsin codes for boilers and elevators adopt nationally recognized codes and standards.

Matt Mertens suggested asking the International Code Council about the kind of support they could provide during a transition from the UDC to the IRC. Scott Satula said that the ARC needs to get consensus on fire sprinklers in homes; getting clear agreement between the fire service and building officials. Scott also said he felt the fire service needs to be on the same page among the fire chiefs and fire inspectors. Vern Green, President of the Wisconsin State Fire Inspectors Association, said that he and the president of the Wisconsin State Fire Chief's Association are working on that sort of coordination.

Dajen offered that she would talk to contractors in her organization about the idea of Wisconsin adopting the IRC. Tim Schmitz, with the ICC, reminded that the IRC is completely written as if fire sprinklers are installed in homes. Scott Satula asked what changes were made to the IRC since the editions before 2009 when sprinklers were required. He said he would try to obtain that information from trainers knowledgeable about the IRC, and share that information with ARC members.

Tim Schmitz said the fire sprinkler and plumbing trades need to be on board with use of the IRC and requirements for sprinklers in homes because multipurpose systems are often the system of choice.

Matt Mertens said water utility standby fees are another barrier to utilization of fire sprinklers in homes. He suggested consideration be given to having Wisconsin develop a code where fire sprinklers are presented as a design option. It was agreed, that in such a scenario, the information about trade offs that have gone into the IRC since the 2006 edition relative to fire safety aspects of construction would be essential.

Regarding DSPS code development activities and plans, DuPont reviewed the code development status outlined in the meeting agenda. Concerning the Fire Prevention Code, DuPont asked if the ARC should request that the Fire Code be updated at the same time as the Commercial Building Code. During discussion of the relationships between the Fire Prevention Code and the Commercial Building Code, Vern Green said he thought the State made a mistake by not adopting the International Fire Code 20 years ago. He said that was his own personal opinion. After brief discussion, attendees agreed that the ARC should recommend to the DSPS that they update the State Fire Prevention Code and State Commercial Building Code at the same time. Nobody suggested that such an update should switch Wisconsin from adoption of NFPA 1, to the IFC. DuPont said he would next pose the question to all ARC members, and if there is agreement will communicate that recommendation to DSPS leadership.

Regarding a possible law to require 10-year batteries in smoke detectors, DuPont reminded that ARC members had agreed in December to add this initiative to the list of ARC priorities. The initiative involves advocating for several changes in Wisconsin Statutes pertaining to smoke detectors, as follows:

- Change the term “detector” to “alarm” to reflect the terminology of national standards.
- Require smoke alarm replacement after ten years; or as specified by the alarm manufacturer.
- Require tamper resistant ten-year batteries in smoke alarms powered solely by a battery.

DuPont recommended that he work with Ed Ruckriegel to further develop possible statute language for presentation and discussion during the next meeting of the ARC Fire Safety Team. There was general agreement with that plan of action.

The next meeting of Alliance Members was set for April 22, 2020, from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. The meeting will be held at the Sun Prairie City Hall, 300 E. Main Street, Sun Prairie, WI.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Meeting Attendees	Organization Represented
Corey Gall	Wisconsin Fire Protection Coalition
Dajen Bohacek	Plumbing Mechanical Sheet Metal Contractors Alliance
Doug Zomer	Wisconsin Code Officials Alliance (in for Brian Flannery)
Ed Lisinski	Wisconsin Code Officials Alliance
Joel Meier	Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin
Matt Mertens	Wisconsin Code Officials Alliance
Mark Mlekush	Sun Prairie Fire Department
Richard Paur	Wisconsin Code Officials Alliance
Scott Satula	Wisconsin Code Officials Alliance
Tim Schmitz	International Code Council
Vernon Green	Wisconsin State Fire Inspectors Association
Bob DuPont	Regulatory Guidance and Design, LLC

This summary was prepared by Bob DuPont, Regulatory Guidance and Design, LLC.

It was issued on March 2, 2020.