

**WESTERN STATES SEISMIC POLICY COUNCIL
POLICY RECOMMENDATION 10-4**

Seismic Provisions in the 2009 International Building Code

Policy Recommendation 10-4

WSSPC endorses the prompt adoption and enforcement of the seismic provisions of the 2009 *International Existing Building Code*, the 2009 *International Building Code*, and the 2009 *International Residential Code* as minimum standards by states, territories, provinces and/or local jurisdictions. Further, WSSPC discourages modifications or amendments that would weaken the Code or its required inspections. WSSPC also encourages Code organizations to continue the development and refinement of building codes and consensus standards to remain substantially equivalent to the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) Recommended Seismic Provisions for New Buildings and Other Structures (FEMA 750) with a specific focus on purpose, education, incentives, lifelines and the business/industry and homeowner sectors.

Background

Some states, and many jurisdictions, have not adopted the *International Building Code*, potentially leaving their citizens at continued risk. States should be encouraged to remove obstacles which hinder adoption, and to motivate local jurisdictions to diligently update existing codes. It is recognized that some jurisdictions which have adopted the International Codes have drastically modified or omitted the seismic provisions of the Codes. This action not only jeopardizes their structures by not providing for earthquake resistant structures, but provides a false sense of security to their communities. Once adopted, the Codes must be uniformly and consistently enforced if they are to be effective. This will necessitate the training of building inspectors to some required standards for certification. Partnerships with the homeowners, residents, builders, insurers, owners, elected officials, scientific groups, and others with focused concerns on lifelines and public safety will be required to overcome the inertia of commitment to meet the desired outcomes.

Facilitation and Communication

Incentive measures will need to be developed that involve federal, state, territorial, provincial and local funding to “encourage” adoption of building codes that recognize local natural hazards caused by earthquakes. Education of the public on the need and purpose for codes must work

towards a mindset to mitigate damage from earthquakes before they happen. Local building code inspectors will require training and certification in the new codes.

Assessment

A measure of the acceptance of this policy recommendation is the number of states, provinces, territories and local jurisdictions that have adopted seismic provisions that meet or exceed the seismic provisions in the 2009 editions of the *International Existing Building Code*, the *International Building Code*, and the *International Residential Code*.

History

Policy Recommendation 10-4 was first adopted as Policy Recommendation 01-4. PR 01-4 was revised and re-designed as PR 04-4 and re-adopted by unanimous vote of the WSSPC membership at the Annual Business Meeting September 30, 2004. The Policy Recommendation statement was revised and PR 04-4 was re-adopted as PR 07-4 by unanimous vote of the WSSPC membership at the Annual Business Meeting October 3, 2007. PR 07-4 was revised and re-adopted as PR 10-4 by unanimous voice vote of the WSSPC membership at the Annual Business Meeting July 9, 2010.