

Overview of Revisions to the Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS)

The Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) evaluates building-code adoptions in a particular community and how the community enforces those codes, with special emphasis on mitigation of losses from natural hazards.



ISO developed the BCEGS program in cooperation with building officials, model-code groups, state and local officials, insurers, and insurance regulators. Over the past six years, ISO has evaluated thousands of building departments nationwide. The experience gained from those evaluations, along with feedback received during a series of meetings with interested groups, prompted ISO to revise several items in the BCEGS program.

ISO made several revisions to the January 1995 BCEGS program. We increased the number of points a community can earn by doing activities that have the greatest potential for mitigating losses from disasters, whether natural or man-made. The changes will recognize more jurisdictions for performing code-enforcement work.

Some revisions to the BCEGS program represent ISO's enhanced recognition of natural-hazard mitigation. Other changes are editorial. ISO revised wording to clarify the intention and edited the format to promote consistency and clarity. This overview outlines the key revisions as they appear in the BCEGS program.

Minimum Conditions for Applying the Schedule

To promote the qualities that make for a favorable BCEGS classification and to acknowledge the work efforts in more communities, ISO modified the minimum criteria. Under certain conditions (detailed in the Schedule), a community may now participate in the program without performing a detailed structural plan review on all 1- and 2-family dwellings.

Training

In consideration of the cyclical nature of the work and possible scheduling conflicts for code-enforcement personnel, ISO decided to eliminate the requirement of providing six hours of training for each employee every six months. Code-enforcement personnel participate in continuing education on varying cycles, and building officials often exceed the minimum number of training hours in the BCEGS criteria. Removing the time limit allows more departments to benefit from the BCEGS program.

Adopted Codes

The BCEGS program encourages jurisdictions to adopt the latest model codes. With this revision, ISO placed more emphasis on the building code and its adoption date.



ISO also increased the number of points available to departments that take more than five years to adopt new editions of the codes. Previously, enforcing such a code would have caused a five- or six-class reduction. ISO adjusted the weights of the code-adoption criteria so that a six-year-old code will result in an approximate two-class reduction. When a jurisdiction enforces

codes with a published date seven to ten years before the survey date, achieving better than a Class 8 will be challenging. When a jurisdiction enforces codes with a published date more than ten years before the survey date, the community will have to exhibit exceptional enforcement efforts to achieve a classification better than 10.



Additional Code Adoptions

ISO created a new item for code adoptions other than building codes. Communities can earn points for adoption and enforcement of electrical, mechanical, fuel gas, plumbing, energy, and wildland urban interface codes.

Method of Adoption

Code organizations take extraordinary measures to ensure that their products are current, coordinated, and comprehensive. The BCEGS program recognizes those efforts by adding this new item. A community can earn 1 additional point by adopting the latest edition of the code within 12 months of its publication, assuming there are no amendments that weaken the natural-hazard mitigation provisions of the code.

Certification

The BCEGS program continues to recognize continuing education and certification of code-enforcement personnel. ISO expanded the criterion to acknowledge the efforts of jurisdictions that require specific code-related education and experience as a prerequisite to certification testing.

Design Professionals

ISO reduced the points available for registered design professionals in a supervisory capacity.

Designer Licensing Violation Reporting

ISO deleted this criterion from the BCEGS program because almost all code-enforcement departments perform the activity.

Public Awareness Programs

In an effort to encourage more public awareness programs, ISO increased the points available for this criterion.

Detail of Plan Review

ISO redesigned this criterion and redistributed the points to acknowledge quality plan-review activity. Departments that wish to improve their classification now have an incentive to document the workload in plan review.

Managing Inspection and Reinspection Activity

Previous surveys indicate a lack of effective record-keeping activity by code-enforcement departments. Ineffective record keeping diminishes the ability to schedule work, plan for staffing, respond to customer requests or complaints, and support budgetary requirements. Departments that wish to improve their classification now have an incentive to document their inspection workload.



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