



In February 2009 had Clark County Building Department Inspection Specialist Wesley Walters laying out a proposed framing certification program to attendees at a Framing Contractors Association luncheon.

That proposal, dubbed Clark County's Journeyman Wood Framing certification program, has come to fruition under Clark County ordinance 22.02.250. Program enforcement will begin October 1.

The certification program encourages framing contractor employers to certify employees via an International Code Council-administered test. Employees who pass the test earn ordinance-compliant certification and proper identification credentials from ICC. The certified worker is then considered proficient and competent to interact with county inspectors in the face of a problem on the jobsite. Beginning October 1, should an inspector have a problem on a framing contractor's jobsite he will ask to speak with the certified individual to assist in the rectification of the problem.

"There are technically two certified individuals at a company – the Nevada State Contractors Board licensee and the individual who has taken the ICC-administered certification test," Walters said. "Should one of these individuals not be readily available for the inspector, the inspector will fail your inspection until which point he and the certified individual can be onsite at the same time."

Walters noted this program is the first of its kind locally and will follow the guidelines of similar professional certification programs such as certification programs the county currently runs for plumbing, electrical and mechanical contractors.

"The average house inspection usually takes an hour to an hour and a half to complete, if inspectors can improve on their inspection time, it will make life easier on all of us," said Walters.

Individuals seeking framing certification must pass a 50-question, open-book test that will take examinees the better part of two hours.

Walters, who is responsible for educating the inspection staff and new employees on the International Building and International Residential Code Requirements at the county, has also offered his services to provide an examination preparatory class for interested framers. Walters has several sample test questions, making him a logical pre-test stop.

"So far only Select Build has taken me up on my offer for preparation," Walters said.. "While the test is open-book and many people know the codes, they may have not actually ever read a code book. There is a certain style that goes into reading a code book. I also highlight which ICC chapters to study and main points to emphasize to facilitate passage of the exam."

Walters engaged the Framing Contractors Association to market the program and to encourage framing input so that the correct information would be tested.

Walters stressed program seeks to educate and that this new certification will allow the subcontractors and the inspectors to do their jobs better and more quickly.

The certification will apply to both commercial and residential work. The program is designed to give framers a general knowledge of the code requirements and will not include practical application requirements.

“I’m not asking people to be code experts, I just want them to have a general knowledge of what the codes include,” Walters explained. “This is your profession. Be wise on what you do and continue to improve on your trade so you can make more money.”

He said knowledge of the code can help framers avoid costly remedial work. He encouraged framers to build a core of knowledge that might even allow them to challenge their inspectors on whether the code really requires remedial work they request to be done over.

“If the inspector can’t prove it, it doesn’t exist,” Walters said.

The International Code Council assisted in the development of the electrical, plumbing, mechanical and now framing certification process.

“Ideally, this information will enhance the transition process for the framing contracting community,” said Walters.

He reiterated that not having a certified individual available if an inspector identifies a problem on a framer’s jobsite will result in a failed inspection.

For additional information Walters may be contacted at 455-0557 or by email at hww@co.clark.nv.us.

The ICC was established in 1994 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing a single set of comprehensive and coordinated national model construction codes. The founders of the ICC are Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc. (BOCA), International Conference of Building Officials and Southern Building Codes Congress International, Inc. Important web links offering additional information on the program and testing information may be found at www.iccsafe.org/Accreditation/Pages/ThirdPartyContractorTradesExams.aspx, www.iccsafe.org/Accreditation/Bulletins/Co NV-Clark County.pdf and www.asisvcs.com/indhome.asp?CPCAT=4100PROFCERT.