

## Innovation

Can we wait until 2018 for New Product Recognition?

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Manufacturers of roofing products face real challenges regarding R&D innovation and getting their products to market via current code cycles. Today's requirements for code approvals through extensive testing to external standards, is now outpacing the timelines of the current code cycles.

For products that require formal code approvals, the current approval process timeframe is almost two years. That is, if there is current language already in place. There are so many new products entering the market place where the review backlog to current standards is posing a serious challenge to all issuing agencies. If code changes are required there are even longer timeframes.

The resolution to the problem will require a collaboration of all interested parties to help identify a shorter path for recognition. The time for finger pointing is past; we need the "can do it" attitude on all sides of the issue.

With the current 2012 ICC codes in print and the 2015 codes in draft form, the next available code cycle for possible revisions will be 2018, with

discussions beginning in 2015. For new products coming to market, or for current ones requiring changes, this can seriously impact the bottom line or market penetration. For the roofing professional this will mean extra effort to review actual approvals and installation requirements that are applicable to codes when they were issued. While a manufacturer might claim to have the newest codes covered, they may actually not.

For example, an ICC-ES product evaluation report for any roofing product will state the code year it covers and how the product was rated. There are still products with current reports in place that reference older versions of the building code. For instance, they may reference the 2006 codes. With new requirements in 2009, some holders have not upgraded. These acceptance reports are still valid reports, but the roofing professional will need to read the special conditions to properly understand what they might need to do for installing them if a newer code has been adopted in their local jurisdiction.

With the new 2012 codes now in place, there is the option for compliance to these codes as well. In order to understand the roofing material you have selected and compare apples to apples on multiple products, a quick review of the ICC-ES report or other formal code approvals should be reviewed. Product literature is used for marketing, and may not be inclusive of all the restrictions that are required in the actual application of the product to a specific code.

One major issue regarding code requirements is that all building materials are required to have the most current versions of a standard reference. In most building codes there are references to standards that are external to that organization. For instance, the California Building Code, International Residential and Building code all reference standards such as those from ANSI, ASTM, UL, and FM. In each version of the code they try to capture the reference to the actual standards that were referenced in code

or product approvals when the code was written. Local building officials are legally required to adopt building standards in their jurisdiction. In most cases they obtain formal approval from their city council or mayor. As such, these codes are legal and binding resolutions. In an effort to provide maximum protection, the codes try to bring as much detail to the actual standards as possible, including reference to specific external standards by date.

When external standards are revised, it is not an automatic inclusion into the actual codes being referenced. For instance, if a local jurisdiction adopts the 2006 codes, it would not include any standards that may have been published after the code cycle that was done in 2004. When a standard is revised, updated or created, it requires effort on the part of all interested parties to submit the revisions to the applicable building code bodies for inclusion in the next version of the codes. With the next code cycle being 2015 for some codes and 2018 for others, it does not help products that are trying to enter the market in the interim that need newer references.

TRI is working with other roofing industries to collaborate on options that might allow the incorporations of newer revisions in a shorter timeframe. By partnering with the code agencies we are hopeful of navigating toward a path that meets everyone's needs. The drafting of codes several years in advance has been a long-term practice that allows newer products time to identify compliance requirements prior to the implementation date. This is still a good policy, but with the rapid growth of new products, there isn't time to get these newer standards, or revised ones, recognized when the code cycles are completed so far in advance. With everyone's input we can find an equitable resolution.

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