



The Value of Building Codes and Inspections

Building construction regulation can be traced back to more than 4,000 years ago. As technology advances, we are increasingly aware of ways to ensure the health and safety of building occupants and how to avoid building-construction failures.

The main purpose of building codes is to protect public health, safety, and general welfare as they relate to the construction and occupancy of buildings and structures. Codes are regulations governing the design, construction, alterations, and maintenance of structures and these same codes specify the minimum requirements to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of the building's occupants and protect from tragedy caused by fire, structural collapse, and deterioration. In addition to structural integrity, codes ensure electrical, plumbing, mechanical system safety, accessibility, and energy efficiency.

Equally important as the codes, is the building inspection. The purpose of the inspection is to verify compliance with the minimum safety standards set forth in the adopted codes. At the time of inspection, the inspector will review all work done, compare it to the approved plans or building code for compliance, and issue final inspection reports and occupancy permits (if applicable).

Check out [this pamphlet](#) developed by the [International Code Council](#) to learn more about the history and importance of building codes. For more information about building safety codes and local requirements, contact your local building department.

Additional Info: [Building Codes - How They Help You](#); [Building Safety Month](#); [Code Enforcement Explained](#); [National Electrical Safety Month](#)

May is Building Safety Month

[Building Safety Month](#), first observed in 1980, is an international campaign celebrated each May to raise awareness about building safety and the importance of building codes, permits, and inspections. Code officials, plan reviewers, inspectors, architects, builders, engineers, design professionals, contractors, and staffers are among the 64,000 members of the [International Code Council](#) that created Building Safety Month and all work together to provide the first line of defense against building disasters and to ensure the safety of the buildings where we live, work and play.

Check out the [event website](#) to find resources, tips, and educational materials, including their extensive [Safety Toolkit](#). The month-long campaign introduces a new theme each week, covering a variety of building safety topics.

Week 1: [Energy and Innovation](#)

Week 2: [Training the Next Generation](#)

Week 3: [Water Safety](#)

Week 4: [Disaster Preparedness](#)

May is National Electrical Safety Month

This campaign, spearheaded by the [Electrical Safety Foundation International](#), seeks to educate key audiences on steps that can be taken to reduce the number of electrically related fires, fatalities, injuries, and property loss. Resources for the 2021 campaign, "Connected to Safety", are available on the [event page](#). The resource library covers topics such as *Temporary Power Safety* and *Making your Home Safe and Efficient*.



NATIONAL
PUBLIC
HEALTH
WEEK

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK
Building Bridges to Better Health

April 5-11 2021

National Public Health Week 2021

National Public Health Week 2021 will take place virtually April 5-11, 2021. Check out the [events page](#) for a list of events taking place each day. Join the conversation on social media with the #NPHW tag. Working together, we can build healthier communities and the healthiest nation. You can learn more about National Public Health Week at www.nphw.org.



National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction May 3-7, 2021

Falls from elevation are a leading cause of death for construction employees. Each year in the U.S. more than 310 construction workers are killed and more than 10,350 are seriously injured by falls from heights.

Construction is a growing field with employment increasing steadily. According to the [Center for Construction Research and Training](#), the number of fatalities in construction climbed between the years 2011 and 2017 but began a slow downward trend in 2018. The [CPWR Data Bulletin](#) suggests "... falls are preventable, and ongoing fall prevention efforts, including the National Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction, are effective."

The [National Safety Stand-Down](#) is an effort to raise fall hazard awareness and save lives. Join the safety stand-down by taking a break to discuss the dangers of fall hazards and the importance of fall prevention with your colleagues. Even if your workplace is not subject to fall hazards, this is a great opportunity to discuss other hazards that do affect your colleagues.

Fall prevention training resources are available on the [OSHA website](#), including a Fall Prevention Training Guide for employers available in [Spanish](#) and [English](#). The guide includes Toolbox Talks on ladder safety, scaffolding safety, and roofing work safety.

Learn more at the [OSHA event website](#).

Free Webinar Series: Protecting the Workforce from COVID-19

Learn how to protect your workforce from COVID-19. Iowa State University is offering a free 4-module program through the month of September geared towards manufacturing and construction companies. Webinars will cover employees in the pandemic era, personal hygiene and preparing the facility, PPE and training, supervisory response, communication strategy/policy.

Details and registration found at <https://sh.ae.iastate.edu/>



April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month

When driving down the road, how many times do you look at the car next to you, or the car driving by in the opposite direction, and see a phone in their hands? Even once is too many. In 2019, distracted driving killed 3,142 people, which is a 10% increase from 2018.

To make our roads safer, the [National Safety Council](#) has declared April as [Distracted Driving Awareness Month](#). Follow National Safety Council on social media during the month of April for more information on the #JustDrive campaign.

Every one of us has a responsibility to make the roads safer. Demonstrate your commitment to safety by having a safe driving policy that addresses distracted driving. The National Safety Council has created a safe driving [policy template](#) and [policy guide](#) that can assist you with implementing your own policy.

Occupational Hearing Conservationist Certification Course

The Heartland Center is a sponsor of CAOHC-Approved Hearing Conservationist Certification and Recertification Courses with Course Director, Laura Kauth. The hybrid courses provide online instruction via Zoom and a face-to-face day of hands-on, practical training. The certification course is in April, recertification course is in May. Details can be found on the [Heartland Center website](#).

Certification Course Dates

Monday, April 12-14 – Online

Thursday, April 15, 2021 – On site

Recertification Course Dates

Monday, May 24 - Online

Tuesday, May 25 OR Thursday, May 26



Heartland Center Trainee Featured in Dare to Discover Campaign

Every year, the University of Iowa showcases student researchers, scholars, and creators through the [Dare to Discover](#) campaign. The 2021 showcase features 39 students across campus and includes one of our Heartland Center Trainees.

Chelsea Hicks is a PhD student in the Occupational Injury Prevention program and is expected to graduate in May. Through her research, Chelsea seeks to understand how stressor events impact trends in violence. Disasters, such as the Iowa flood of 2008, can have deeper impacts than what's at face value.

In her [Dare to Discover profile](#), Chelsea describes why her research matters: "Climate research shows that extreme weather events will continue to increase in frequency as time progresses... Understanding the impact natural disasters have on violence trends can aid in communities being better positioned to prepare and recover from disaster events."

Dr. Bill Field Comments on OSHA Radon Standards

The March edition of The Radon Reporter features an article written by Dr. Bill Field. Titled "[The OSHA Radon Standard](#)" the article discusses the ionizing radiation standard for radon. In the article, Field explains that while there is overwhelming evidence that protracted radon decay product exposure is a serious health threat, OSHA standards, have remained unchanged since 1971.

The largest occupational workforce is at risk of incidental radon exposure in a typical workplace such as an office, a store, a school, etc. "...based on current federal occupational exposure guidelines for workers, private office workers can receive an annual cumulative radon exposure of up to 12 WLM, which is three times more cumulative radon exposure than a radon-exposed underground miner can receive."

Dr. Bill Field, Professor of Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of Iowa College of Public Health and Deputy Director at the Heartland Center, is recognized as one of the foremost authorities on radon. He has been performing radon-related research, and outreach, for over 25 years pioneering novel methods for reconstructing radon exposure for large epidemiology studies.

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If the Heartland Center newsletter provides you with valuable information, please consider sharing it with your colleagues, friends, and family. If you received this newsletter by email you can forward the email, or share the [PDF version](#). Consider printing a copy and posting it to the bulletin board at your job, or sharing [the subscription link](#) with anyone who might like quarterly information on OSH. Thanks as always for your time and readership!



Continuing Education Programs

Check out the Heartland Center's online events calendar at HeartlandERC.org to keep track of our upcoming continuing education events.

Follow the Heartland Center on social media for regular occupational health and safety updates:



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