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INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL VOTES TO INCLUDE NEW YORK CITY'S HIGH-RISE EMERGENCY EVACUATION STANDARD IN THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE

*New York City's Photoluminescent Regulations to Serve as Model for Municipalities across the
Country*

Signifying a shift toward enhanced high-rise building evacuation safety in the post 9/11 environment, the International Code Council (ICC) membership has voted to revise the International Building Code to include New York City's standard for photoluminescent path markings. Following the ICC's vote, the International Building Code will include the standard for the installation of the glow-in-the-dark path markings in the stairwells of most new high-rise buildings over 75 feet in height, as already required in New York City. The vote was made on May 24th at the ICC's Final Action Hearing in Rochester, New York.

Designed to glow in the dark when lighting and emergency lighting fails, photoluminescent path markings enable people inside buildings to safely use enclosed staircases in the event of an emergency evacuation. Under the new requirements, photoluminescent strips will be placed on steps, handrails, and the perimeter of enclosed stairwells in new high-rise buildings built in municipalities across the country that use the International Building Code. When emergency lighting fails, the strips will help building occupants navigate their way out of the building in a safe manner.

"As more cities move to build high-rise commercial towers, it is important to standardize the system of symbols and signage that help people find their way out in the event of an emergency. A calm, organized evacuation can save lives. With more buildings across the country using photoluminescent materials, building occupants will be better protected from trips and falls commonly found to occur in dark stairwells during emergency evacuations. My team and I are pleased that the lessons New York City learned after 9/11 are resonating," said Buildings Commissioner Patricia Lancaster, FAIA. "I would like to thank my staff, especially Executive Architect James P. Colgate who drafted the photoluminescent regulations for New York City, for their commitment to educating the industry about the role photoluminescent technology plays in building safety."

"Participation is such an important part of the International Code Development Process," said International Code Council Government Relations Senior Vice President Sara Yerkes. "Dedicated volunteers from all around the country work to update the International Codes to ensure they provide the highest level of safety for communities across the nation. I am especially pleased to see the New York City Buildings Department becoming actively involved in the process."

New York City was the first major city in the country to adopt photoluminescent regulations. In 2004, Mayor Bloomberg signed Local Law 26, requiring all high-rise office buildings over 75 feet tall to be equipped with photoluminescent path markings as recommended by the World Trade Center Building Code Task Force. The Task Force was convened by Mayor Bloomberg in the wake of the 9/11 attacks to modify New York City's Building Code to ensure public safety in new and existing high-rise office buildings. The photoluminescent regulations in the current New York City Building Code have been incorporated into the new NYC Construction Codes submitted to the City Council for review and consideration.

The International Code Council, a membership association dedicated to building safety and fire prevention, develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Most U.S. cities, counties, and states that adopt codes choose the International Codes developed by the International Code Council.

To learn more about photoluminescent regulations, visit the Buildings Department's website at www.nyc.gov/buildings or call 311. To learn more about the International Code Council, visit the ICC's website at <http://www.iccsafe.org>.

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