

Building Safety Week

Story ideas

Economic impact

According to the International Code Council, every dollar spent on building safer and stronger reduces losses from high wind damage, floods, earthquakes, and other disasters by an average of \$4. Other economic benefits of building to the latest codes can include energy savings, reduced maintenance costs, lower insurance premiums, and fewer safety concerns.

In addition, when it comes to selling your house, Oregon law now requires full disclosure of remodeling work and whether permits were obtained to ensure that the house is safe for future occupants. If work is not permitted, instead of closing on your home, you'll have to scramble to catch up with permits, inspections, and additional repair work if the installations weren't made to code.

Disaster protection

Many advances in building safety and fire prevention codes have been the result of lessons learned from past events. For example, the International Code Council approved a change to the International Building Code related to the World Trade Center collapse on Sept. 11, 2001. And ICC will consider 19 proposed code changes in September that address findings from the National Institute of Standards and Technology's World Trade Center investigation. Learning from past events saves lives and better protects property in the future.

Tips for consumers

Here are three things homeowners can do to ensure the safety and value of their home:

- Insist on permits. It simply doesn't pay to cut corners when it comes to your biggest financial asset, your home.
- Check a contractor's CCB license. This ensures the contractor is legally licensed and bonded to work in Oregon. *Beware of a contractor willing to work without permits.*
- Use — or insist the contractor uses — licensed plumbers and electricians. Along with homeowners working on their own homes, only licensed plumbers and electricians are legally allowed to do plumbing or electrical work in Oregon. Professional licenses reflect four years of intense training and annual continuing education and ensure that contractors are qualified to do the work.

For more tips, go to <http://www.permitsprotect.info>.

Resources

Building Codes Division: <http://www.bcd.oregon.gov>, <http://www.permitsprotect.info>

Construction Contractors Board: <http://oregon.gov/CCB>

Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office: <http://www.oregon.gov/OOHS/SFM>

International Code Council: <http://www.iccsafe.org>

Oregon Building Officials Association: <http://www.oboonline.org>