



April 26, 2024

The Honorable Deanne Criswell
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

SUBJECT: Public Comment on FEMA Policy FP-104-009-11, Version 3, *Consensus-Based Codes, Specifications and Standards for Public Assistance*

Dear Administrator Criswell:

The Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors—National Association (PHCC) appreciates the opportunity to review the latest update to FEMA’s Recovery Interim Policy FP-104-009-11 (Consensus-Based Codes, Specifications and Standards for Public Assistance, Version 3).

PHCC submitted comment to FEMA in August 2021 on its previous version of the Recovery Interim Policy regarding our concerns it did not support the inclusion of all consensus-based codes: with the inclusion of the Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) and Uniform Mechanical Code (UMC) in Version 3, PHCC applauds FEMA for listening to those concerns (which were shared by a substantial number of other stakeholders) and taking a step in the right direction to ensure the policy is inclusive of more consensus-based codes.

In addition to the updates in Version 3, PHCC strongly recommends further refining the policy to specifically include state-based consensus codes for the plumbing and mechanical trades. The inclusion of the UPC and UMC is a much-needed improvement. But language in the policy needs to be clear that jurisdictions using consensus-based plumbing and mechanical codes that are not based on models offered by entities such as the International Code Council (ICC) or International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) must at least have codes in place that are equally as stringent. Without this clarification, disaster assistance may not be afforded to jurisdictions in dire need.

For example, Wisconsin, Kentucky, and Illinois are three states that use their own state plumbing code, a code that is based in a historic consensus-based approval process. Additionally, New Jersey uses the National Standard Plumbing Code (NSPC). The skilled trades, design professionals, and inspection authorities of the affected areas are all educated to the codes approved in those jurisdictions. By better recognizing these nuances, FEMA can avoid causing potential confusion and delay in times of crisis where swift action is critical for public safety and the workforce must be mobilized promptly to provide solutions for affected citizens.



PHCC members are prepared to start recovery work in times of crisis consistent with rigorous jurisdictional code requirements. FEMA can maximize the effectiveness of this interim policy by being inclusive of all model code organizations and state adopted codes for the plumbing and mechanical trades. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joseph Cornetta

President

Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors—National Association